

## 12 strategic maps show the Royal Navy's centrality to making Britain the world's 'pivotal power' by 2050

- Experts argue the UK can reach a 'truly enviable position' in geopolitics by focusing nation's armed forces and resources on the Royal Navy, especially in the Euro-Atlantic area and the Wider North;
- Map shows Russia's shadow fleet threatens 99% of UK data in undersea cables, with disruption warned as 'akin to a major military attack';
- New publication finds collaboration between the 'CRINK' coalition (China, Russia, Iran, North Korea) poses a threat to the international order 'as dangerous as the period prior to the First World War'.

A new geopolitical atlas published by the Council on Geostrategy and the Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre asserts the world has entered an era as dangerous as the period before the First World War. Through 12 visualisations, it calls for urgent re-commitment to seapower, emphasising the Royal Navy's mission to ensure readiness for warfighting remains central to protecting the United Kingdom's (UK) national security and economy.

*Britain's world: The strategy of security in twelve geopolitical maps* uses visual data to frame the UK's position against great power competition and collaboration between authoritarian regimes.

The central finding is that, with a greater injection of resources into defence, the UK can emerge as the 'pivotal power of the mid-21st century', central to key alliances, such as NATO and AUKUS. However, this demands prioritising an integrated maritime strategy to counter escalating threats to economic infrastructure and the nation's outer defence perimeter, ensuring the Royal Navy is prepared to respond.

The atlas details specific vulnerabilities facing the UK, including the fourth map identifying that 99% of Britain's data relies on 60 major subsea cables, facilitating £1.15 trillion in global financial transactions daily. It adds that Russian attempts to target Critical Undersea Infrastructure (CUI) through its 'shadow fleet' are growing, and that widespread disruption to CUI would be 'akin to a major military attack.'

The sixth visualisation shows the 'CRINK' coalition as a network seeking to dismantle the existing free and open international order. It finds, for example, that North Korea supplies an estimated 50-60% of Russia's artillery expenditure in Ukraine, with China acting as a 'decisive enabler'. Map 12, meanwhile, warns Britain to 'prepare for war in the Wider North', comprising the Arctic and North Atlantic, with the Russian Northern Fleet able to project firepower over vast swathes of the region.

The visualisations also make a powerful economic case, noting that the maritime domain is a ‘national growth engine’ with its industries contributing over £116 billion in turnover – more than rail and aviation combined – despite being ‘politically peripheral’. It highlights that the UK is projected to overtake Japan and become the world’s fifth-largest economy by 2030, as shown in the fifth visualisation. It also makes clear that technology companies and utility providers are essential ‘maritime actors’ in national security, with the ninth map making the case for integrating the Royal Navy’s mission with private enterprise.

**James Rogers, Co-founder (Research) at the Council on Geostrategy, and Andrew Young, Fellowships Officer at the Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre, said:**

‘Britain has a natural asymmetry; while most nations are land-focused, the UK looks out across the sea.’

‘If it manages to resource, integrate, and especially focus its armed forces on the Royal Navy, it has the potential to emerge in a truly enviable position by the mid-21st century – pivotal to the geopolitics of the world.’

‘If the UK attempted to retreat from geopolitical competition, history and current threat assessments suggest that the repercussions of such disengagement would soon be felt on British soil.’

**In his foreword for the geopolitical atlas, Gen. Sir Gwyn Jenkins KCB OBE RM, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, said:**

‘The vulnerability of our undersea infrastructure demands that we confront malign state tactics in the depths; much like the pirates of old, attacks on these networks are assaults on civilisation itself.’

‘[T]hese maps are crucial. They turn doctrine into terrain, and policy into place.’

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**Notes to editors:**

1. **Publication:** *Britain's World: The Strategy of Security in Twelve Geopolitical Maps*
2. **Authors:** James Rogers (editor and author), Andrew Young (Editor), Benedict Baxendale-Smith, Prof. James Bergeron, Prof. John Bew CMG, Dr Hillary Briffa, Dr Marc De Vore, Prof. Klaus Dodds, Dr Andrew Ehrhardt, William Freer, Chris Hague, Dr Carl S.P. Hunter OBE, Dr William D. James, Prof. Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, Charlotte Kleberg, Paul Mason, Matthew Palmer, Prof. Kevin Rowlands, Jack Richardson, Viktorija Starych-Samuoliene, Grace Theodoulou,

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3. The Council on Geostrategy was launched on 2nd March 2021. More information can be found on our [website](#), including our [mission statement](#).
4. The Council on Geostrategy has an [Advisory Board](#) of 16 individuals with experience in politics, the military, diplomacy and academia.

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