Inside the 2 September edition

Anxiety on Ukraine's frontline; shuttle diplomacy's death; exploring sea and sky

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A reader recently wrote with the suggestion Weekly revisit key events to help put them into greater perspective. It is an excellent thought, and something we do when we can.

How lucky, then, that Moscow correspondent Shaun Walker has provided a catch-up on the conflict in Ukraine. Two years on, the war in east Ukraine rarely makes headlines, though every day it brings new casualties. And there are fears of a new offensive, backed by Russia. I hope you appreciate the perspective provided by this update on the frontlines.

Migration across the Mediterranean is another story that seems to have slipped from the front pages. Although the numbers of those seeking refuge from strife and conflict have fallen, loaded boats do still make the crossing. We report on the latest round of EU-related talks and dig into the mystery surrounding a tweet from Germany that changed history for so many.

Elsewhere, we look at France's burkini ban, student politics in India, peace in Colombia and a new government for Tunisia. And we showcase exclusive reporting from the Guardian's defence and security correspondent Nick Hopkins on how UN contracts are benefiting the Assad regime in Syria.

From the UK, we headline closures and cuts being planned to combat a rising deficit in the National Health Service. And we visit the motorway service centre in Gloucester where the food is winning acclaim. Sounds worth the drive!

On the Comment pages, regular columnist Natalie Nougayrède finds France increasingly isolated by its political choices. World affairs editor Julian Borger argues that shuttle diplomacy has lost its way. And Observer stalwart Will Hutton says that Britain will not escape unscathed from its decision to leave the European Union.

On the letters page, you shared views on Australia's detention system, what's wrong about New Zealand (surely nothing!) and Weekly's unique use of idiomatic (British) English. We welcome letters for publication, especially from any of our new readers. Please send them along by clicking here or emailing weekly.letters@theguardian.com.

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The deeper-read back of the book showcases several outstanding reads. From the heavens, we take a look at light pollution and the implications of our vanishing night sky. And from the ocean's depths, we report on a marine mission that seeks to shed light on planet's deep and dark places. From the more terrestrial, our book reviews mull over religion, gender, and fortune and failure in California's Silicon Valley.