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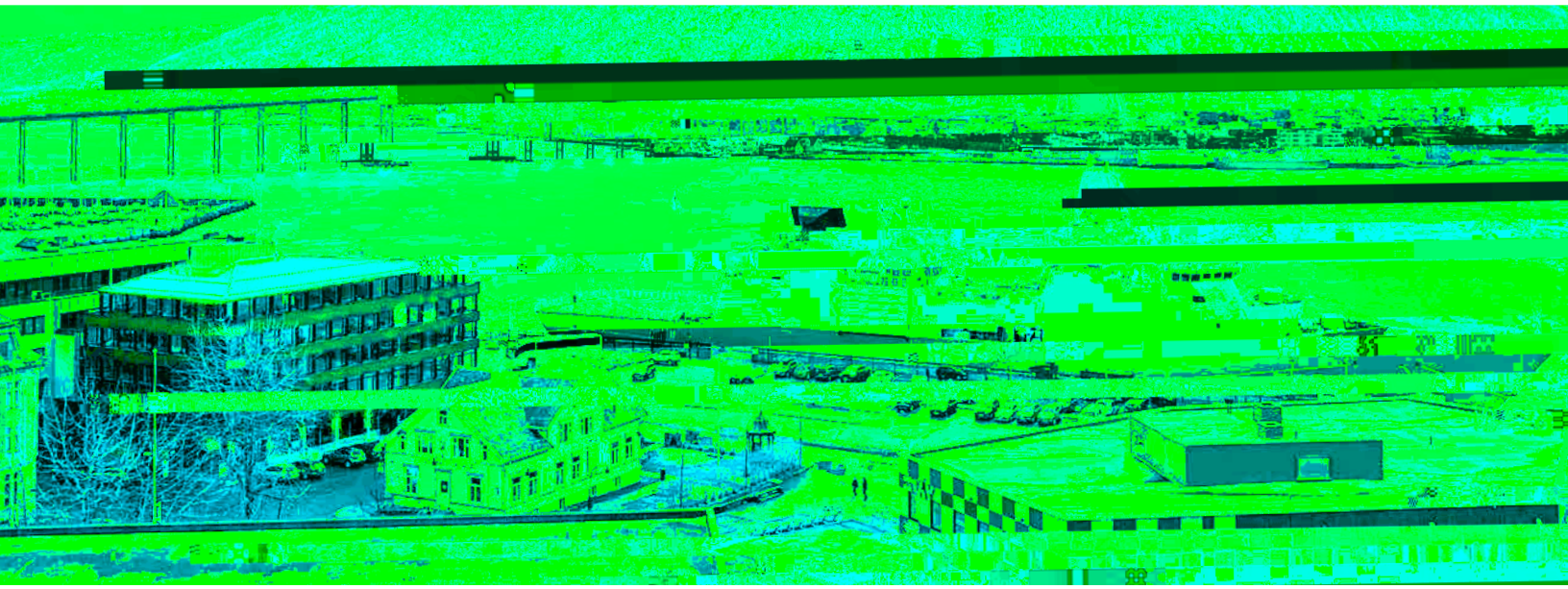

to a significantly altered Arctic region, so as to provide accurate and timely insights and analysis. The 2022 National Security Strategy asserts that climate threats are "at the center of shaping U.S. security in the decades to come."[4]

Three key questions emerge from these priority threats: How will Arctic change impact U.S. security interests at home and abroad? What are the key threats posed by Russia and how are they best addressed? How do China's Arctic interests play into their larger intentions and ambitions? This paper briefly explains these critical threats and questions, and then offers six targeted recommendations to better address their intersections in the evolving, contemporary environment.

THREAT #1: ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE

A warming climate is the key driving force behind changes in the Arctic that have facilitated new opportunities and risks, piquing the strategic commercial, scientific, and security interests of public and private sector actors around the globe. In recent decades the Arctic has been warming around four times faster than the global average[5] with direct impacts identified for geographies as far-ranging as the eastern seaboard of the United States[6] to the Sahel region of Africa[7] and beyond. Reduced Arctic sea ice also expands the maritime domain, and "the general trend of increased traffic will drive up demand for Coast Guard resources to manage risks to maritime safety and security."[8]

Direct climate impacts are only one dimension of risk posed by accelerating warming. China may be the "pacing threat" of the U.S., but climate change is the "shaping threat."[9] Climate change has immense consequences for low lying nations, global coastlines, extreme weather events, critical infrastructure, and human and economic security. Research demonstrates the potential for triggering global climate tipping points—"critical threshold beyond which a system reorganizes, often abruptly and/or irreversibly"[10]—is more likely at lower levels of warming than had previously been expected, adding urgency to the need to dramatically reduce emissions and actively sequester carbon.need to dramatically56C /P [illegible]thi6 (or en-

THREAT #2: RUSSIA

Within the post-February 2022 context—with Russia waging a genocidal[15] war against Ukraine—Russia's ongoing military buildup in the Arctic region takes on new meaning and contributes to heightened global tensions not seen since the Cold War. In the year following their full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has doubled down on its Arctic ambitions and elevated the Arctic from strategic priority number three to priority number one in its updated Maritime Doctrine.[16] At the same time, NATO is poised to strengthen its northern flank with the addition of Finland and Sweden, who pivoted from Enhanced Opportunity Partners to seeking full accession to NATO following Russia's extreme violation of Ukraine's sovereignty.

In addition to conventional military threats posed by Russia, there are increased concerns about risks from nuclear weapons. In February 2023, Russia announced it was suspending participation in New START, the last remaining nuclear arms control agreement between the United States and Russia.[17] There are additional transboundary environmental security threats developing in the Arctic as a result of the combined threats from radioactive materials from Russia's Cold War legacy,[18] their desire to unleash industry by extending a moratorium on commercial inspections[19] and waiving environmental impact assessments, plus a demonstrated track record of poor transparency and purposeful obfuscation of detection.[20]

THREAT #3: CHINA

China asserts itself as a "near Arctic state" in order to gain strategic access and influence, though this is not a recognized status.[21] Among the risks posed by climate change is the way it can be leveraged to legitimize access to geo-strategic regions like the Arctic. Part of China's justification is the relevance of Arctic change to their interests, including sea level rise impacts to the Chinese homeland. By this logic, every state in the world could consider themselves to be "near-Arctic states" because of the global impacts of changes in the Arctic. China seeks to strengthen Arctic scientific cooperation which has strong dual-use potential for China's military and intelligence

March 22, 2021, Sabetta, Tyumen region, Russia, The Yamal icebreaker moves into ices. Image source: Shutterstock.com

apparatuses.[22] China also seeks to gain presence and build equities in the Arctic through data and space. For instance, in November 2022 China's satellite navigation system BeiDou became the such system approved for ship tracking and for use in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) by the International Maritime Organization.[23] The Chinese Community Party has also linked their ambitious polar orbiting satellite plans to their ability to increase persistent observation and consolidate power at home.[24]

The relationship between China and Russia has in recent years strengthened, particularly as relations with the U.S. have deteriorated. This relationship is fraught, however, and the history is complex. Prior to February 2022, Russia had been interested in China's financing of key projects such as LNG from Yamal, but was careful to not give China too much leverage in their relationship and to avoid sensitivities such as engaging with China's military in the Russian Arctic. In

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of fifth generation fighter jets out of Alaska's Eielsen Air Force Base. Fighter jets can deploy from this geostrategic location to anywhere in the Northern hemisphere—including the Indo-Pacific—in one sortie, and is a key re-fueling location.[36]

The most comprehensive description of ODNI's mission for National Intelligence Managers states that, "NIMs serve as the single focal point within the ODNI for all activities related to their portfolios. They are the Director of National Intelligence's principal advisors for community oversight and coordination of their respective mission area. NIMs integrate the Intelligence Community's collection and analytic efforts for their designated region, country, functional issue, or topic."[37]

The combination of factors that have elevated the Arctic's strategic significance in recent years argues for an elevation of the region within the intelligence community, so as to give it persistent senior leadership attention and focused linkages to the policy community. This particular initiative—creating an Arctic NIM—would eliminate the need for different NIMs (Maritime, Air, Western Hemisphere) to tackle Arctic related taskings in an ad hoc way, as is currently the case. Creating an Arctic NIM would send an important message to all U.S. intelligence agencies about the region's elevated significance, as well as that of climate change, and further strengthen a whole of region understanding of the Arctic.

Recommendation #3

Hire environmental security and climate-speci c expertise into the IC in order

and successful policy support apparatus. Larger numbers of non-IC experts with appropriate clearances will also enable a more routine and streamlined IC production cycle of whole-of-government policy support on the Arctic. The aforementioned mainstreaming of climate analysis into IC production would be much easier given the broader interagency framework we recommend be created to support the IC's policy work.

Recommendation #5

Implement a long-term program of Intelligence Community civilian training and integration with Arctic allies and partners

This initiative would better develop and strengthen long-term and meaningful collaboration with U.S. Arctic allies and partners. This effort would be accomplished by a combination of assigning IC analysts within U.S. embassy country teams, as well as rotational opportunities to embed IC analysts within allied intelligence agencies. Such an effort has already been successfully developed among Five Eyes members, but could be extended to U.S. allies and partners in the Arctic as well. This initiative would not only deepen allied intelligence relationships but also strengthen area expertise within the IC, including greater understanding of pertinent languages, cultures and histories, regional dynamics, and lessons-learned from centuries of operating in the harsh Arctic environment.

The U.S. intelligence and defense communities have a long track record of successful programs in other regions that develop foreign area officer expertise, as well as assigning analyst experts to support U.S. defense attachés abroad, and embedding analysts into allied partner organizations. Therefore, it is not difficult to conceptualize how this new initiative could successfully develop a cadre of experts immersed in the region, providing long-term mutual benefits.

Recommendation #6

Create a NATO Center of Excellence (COE) on High Latitude Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

There are currently numerous NATO accredited COEs which provide specific expertise and experience, allowing NATO members to pool distinctive multi-national expertise under one entity to tackle specific aspects of warfare within its area of focus.[38] Drawing upon past successful NATO Centers of Excellence, this initiative seeks to create a new COE focused on High Latitude ISR which could better integrate and improve NATO ISR interoperability within conditions specific to the high latitudes.

This effort would also assist in strengthening the seams of the three U.S. combatant commands with Arctic equities, and enable NATO allies and partners to better coordinate limited sensors, collectors, and analysts. These efforts could address the dual need for greater sensing of changes in the Arctic throughout the year and heightened all-domain awareness.

There is no greater force multiplier within the IC than joint, collaborative, and integrated partnerships. This effort would enhance NATO's Arctic early warning and situational awareness capabilities by providing concept development, experimentation, doctrine development, standardization, exercises, education, training, and lessons learned. All of these enhanced capabilities would provide the analysis and conceptual underpinning to better leverage existing nation-level multi-domain observation sites and assets. This would lead to an increase in burden sharing arrangements and diminish national tendencies to stove-pipe intelligence collection and analysis to certain tactical regions (Bering Strait/Alaska vs. Northwest Passage/Canada vs. Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom-Norway/Europe), enabling a more pan-Arctic ISR

ENDNOTES

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