

# WORLDWIDE THREATS

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—————  
May 10, 2022  
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## **WORLDWIDE THREATS**

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**TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Manchin, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Blackburn, and Hawley.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Chairman REED. Good morning. The Committee meets today to receive testimony on the worldwide threats facing the United States and our international partners.

I would like to welcome Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines and Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency Lieutenant General Scott D. Berrier. Thank you both for joining us, and please convey the committee's gratitude to the men and women of the Intelligence Community for their critical work.

We must start by addressing the illegal war Vladimir Putin is waging in Ukraine. Over the past 2½ months, Russia's unprovoked aggression has inflicted horrific suffering upon innocent civilians in Ukraine, threatened European security, and caused serious consequences for the global economy. In the face of this senseless violence, the Ukrainian military has performed tremendously, supported by the United States and the international community. A formidable array of our global allies and partners have joined in solidarity to impose severe sanctions on Russia and provide support to Ukraine. We cannot overstate the scale and importance of this unity.

I want to commend the Biden administration and the leaders of the Intelligence Community for the unprecedented and skillful release of intelligence over the last several months that exposed Russia's aggressive intentions and deceitful activities ahead of its invasion of Ukraine. Intelligence officials are understandably cautious about revealing hard-won insights on adversaries, but this strategy has proven highly effective in strengthening the international community's response and creating dilemmas for Vladimir Putin. This is a great example of competing effectively in the information domain, and I hope we will continue to make use of this kind of creative tradecraft.

With that in mind, Russia's strategy in Ukraine seems to be evolving. Director Haines, General Berrier, I would ask for your assessment of the Ukraine conflict in the larger context of the evolving international order, as well as the implications for the United States' approach to security in the European theater going forward.

We must also stay focused on our long-term strategic competition with China. In addition to its economic and socio-political growth, China has studied the United States' way of war and focused on offsetting our advantages. Beijing has made concerning progress in this regard and holds its own expansive geostrategic ambitions. As we speak, China is watching how the nations of the world respond to Russia. In considering a potential invasion of Taiwan, President Xi is scrutinizing Putin's playbook and the international response.

However, there is broad consensus that our comparative advantage over China is our network of partners and allies in the region and globally. Strengthening that network should be at the center of any strategy for the Indo-Pacific region, and the maturation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or "Quad," involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, presents a strategic opportunity to establish a durable framework.

I would ask our witnesses to share what military and non-military factors are most likely to impact Chinese decision-making with respect to potential action against Taiwan.

Turning to Iran, in the 4 years since then-President Trump pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, Iran has made key nuclear advances. It has decreased "breakout time" to several weeks, from a year under the agreement. It has increased uranium enrichment to 60 percent, instead of just under 4 percent allowed under the agreement. Iran has hardened its infrastructure and replaced damaged equipment with more advanced models, and while negotiations to return Iran to the JCPOA are in the final stages, the final outcome has not yet been determined.

Beyond its nuclear advances, Iran and Iranian proxies continue to mount drone and rocket attacks in the region, including against bases in Iraq and Syria with a United States military presence. Saudi Arabia, and now also the United Arab Emirates have also come under attack. Director Haines, given these current dynamics I would like your thoughts on how to best de-escalate tensions with Iran while preserving space to return to the JCPOA.

Finally, this year's threat assessment again highlights the challenges posed by environmental degradation from climate change. I understand it is the DNI's [Director of National Intelligence] view that climate change will increasingly exacerbate risks to United States national security interests, as issues like rising temperatures, poor water governance, pollution, changing precipitation patterns, and other climate effects are likely to lead to an array of human challenges, such as food and water insecurity and threats to human health.

We live in a complex and dangerous global security environment. From Russia's aggression in Europe to China's influence in the Indo-Pacific to countless other malign actors around the world, prevailing in this environment will require resolute, thoughtful strategies.

I look forward to our witnesses' insights into these issues, and I thank them again for their participation.

Let me now turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Inhofe.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES INHOFE**

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming our witnesses.

When our witnesses testified before this committee last year, they provided a dire assessment of the threats to our national security. It is clear and, I really cannot overstate this, the security situation we face today is significantly more dangerous and complex than it has ever been, or certainly was a year ago. The Chinese threat is beyond anything we ever dealt with before. This year, Beijing announced a 7.1 percent defense budget increase. They have had two decades of real growth with no signs of slowing down and, as the chairman alluded to, Putin's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine shows the danger posed by the nuclear-armed Russia to our security, those of our allies, and international order.

Iran's malign behavior continues throughout the Middle East, and terrorist groups like ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and al Qaeda are growing in strength across Africa. Despite this reality, President Biden's budget request is inadequate. It does not deliver the real growth the military needs, and that is the 3 to 5 percent increase that we established some 5 years ago. As I have said it before, inflation is the new sequestration that we consider today, and it is making everything we do more difficult.

So I look forward to hearing from both of you about how our threats have evolved ever since last year and how the Intelligence Community is changing to respond to the national security strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Now let me recognize Director Haines.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE AVRIL HAINES, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Ms. HAINES. Thank you very much, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and to provide testimony alongside General Berrier on the intelligence community's annual assessment of worldwide threats to United States national security.

Before I start I just want to take a moment to publicly thank the men and women of the Intelligence Community for their extraordinary work to keep us safe. I know how privileged I am to be part of this community of truly talented people, to be given a chance to do something useful in service to my country, and I thank you for support for their work.

Broadly speaking, this year's assessment focuses, much like last year's assessment, on adversaries and competitors, critical transnational threats, and conflicts and instability, and these categories often overlap. Cybercrime, for example, is a transnational threat while also being a threat that emanates from state actors. One of the key challenges of this era is assessing how various threats and trends are likely to intersect so as to identify where their interactions may result in fundamentally greater risk to our

interests than one might otherwise expect or where they introduce new opportunities. This year's Annual Threat Assessment highlights some of these connections as it provides the IC's baseline of the most pressing threats to United States national security.

The assessment starts with threats from key state actors, beginning with the People's Republic of China (PRC), which remains an unparalleled priority for the Intelligence Community, and then turns to Russia, Iran, and North Korea. All four governments have demonstrated the capability and intent to promote their interests in ways that cut against United States and allied interests.

The PRC is coming ever closer to being a peer competitor in areas of relevance to national security, is pushing to revise global norms and institutions to its advantage, and is challenging the United States in multiple arenas—economically, militarily, and technologically. China is especially effective at bringing together a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to demonstrated strength and to compel neighbors to acquiesce to its preference, including its territorial and maritime claims and assertions of sovereignty over Taiwan.

A key area of focus for the IC is President Xi Jinping's determination to force unification with Taiwan on Beijing's terms. China would prefer coerced unification that avoids armed conflict, and it has been stepping up diplomatic, economic, and military pressure on the island for years to isolate it and weaken confidence in its democratically elected leaders. At the same time, Beijing is prepared to use military force if it decides this is necessary.

The PRC is also engaged in the largest-ever nuclear force expansion and arsenal diversification in its history. It is working to match or exceed United States capabilities in space and presents the broadest, most active and persistent cyber espionage threat to United States Government and private sector networks.

Russia, of course, also remains a critical priority and is a significant focus right now in light of President Putin's tragic invasion of Ukraine in February, which has produced a shock to the geopolitical order with implications for the future that we are only beginning to understand but are sure to be consequential. The IC, as you know, provided warning of President Putin's plans, but this is a case where I think all of us wish we had been wrong.

Russia's failure to rapidly seize Kyiv and overwhelm Ukrainian forces has deprived Moscow of the quick military victory that it had originally expected would prevent the United States and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] from being able to provide meaningful military aid to Ukraine. The Russians met with more resistance from Ukraine than they expected, and their own military's performance revealed a number of significant internal challenges, forcing them to adjust their initial military objectives, fall back from Kyiv, and focus on the Donbas.

The next month or two of fighting will be significant as the Russians attempt to reinvigorate their efforts, but even if they are successful we are not confident that the fight in the Donbas will effectively end the war. We assess President Putin is preparing for prolonged conflict in Ukraine, during which he still intends to achieve goals beyond the Donbas. We assess that Putin's strategic goals are probably not changed, suggesting he regards the decision in late

March to refocus Russian forces on the Donbas as only a temporary shift to regain the initiative after the Russian military's failure to capture Kyiv.

His current near-term military objectives are to capture the two oblasts in Donetsk and Luhansk with a buffer zone, encircle Ukrainian forces from the north and the south to the west of the Donbas in order to crush the most capability and well-equipped Ukrainian forces who are fighting to hold the line in the east, consolidate control of the land bridge Russia has established from Crimea to the Donbas, occupy Kherson, and control the water source for Crimea that is to the north. We also see indications that the Russian military wants to extend the land bridge to Transnistria.

While the Russian forces may be capable of achieving most of these near-term goals in the coming months, we believe that they will not be able to extend control over a land bridge that stretches to Transnistria and includes Odessa without launching some form of mobilization. It is increasingly unlikely that they will be able to establish control over both oblasts and the buffer zone they desire in the coming weeks.

But Putin most likely also judges that Russia has a greater ability and willingness to endure challenges than his adversaries, and he is probably counting on United States and EU [European Union] resolve to weaken as food shortages, inflation, energy prices get worse.

Moreover, as both Russia and Ukraine believe they can continue to make progress militarily, we do not see a viable negotiating path forward, at least in the short term. The uncertain nature of the battle, which is developing into a war of attrition, combined with the reality that Putin faces a mismatch between his ambitions and Russia's current conventional military capabilities likely means the next few months could see us moving along a more unpredictable and potentially escalatory trajectory. At the very least, we believe the dichotomy will usher in a period of more ad hoc decision-making in Russia, both with respect to the domestic adjustments required to sustain this push as well as the military conflict with Ukraine and the West.

The current trend increases the likelihood that President Putin will turn to more drastic means, including imposing martial law, reorienting industrial production, or potentially escalatory and military actions to free up the resources needed to achieve his objectives as the conflict drags on or if he perceives Russia is losing in Ukraine. The most likely flashpoints for escalation in the coming weeks are around increasing Russian attempts to interdict Western security assistance, retaliation for Western economic sanctions, or threats to the regime at home.

We believe that Moscow continues to use nuclear rhetoric to deter the United States and the West from increasing lethal aid to Ukraine and to respond to public comments that the United States and NATO allies that suggest expanded Western goals in the conflict. If Putin perceives that the United States is ignoring his threats he may try to signal to Washington the heightened danger of its support to Ukraine by authorizing another large nuclear exercise involving a major dispersal of mobile intercontinental missiles, heavy bombers, strategic submarines.

We otherwise continue to believe that President Putin would probably only authorize the use of nuclear weapons if he perceived an existential threat to the Russian state or regime, but we will remain vigilant in monitoring every aspect of Russia's strategic nuclear forces. With tensions this high there is always an enhanced potential for miscalculation, unintended escalation which we hope our intelligence can help to mitigate.

Beyond its invasion of Ukraine, Moscow presents a serious cyber threat, a key space competitor, and one of the most serious foreign influence threats to the United States. Using its intelligence services proxies, wide-ranging influence tools, the Russian Government seeks to not only pursue its own interests but also to divide Western alliances, undermine United States global standing, amplify discord inside the United States, and influence United States voters and decision-making.

To finish with our state actor threats, the Iranian regime continues to threaten United States interests as it tries to erode United States influence in the Middle East and trends its influence and project power in neighboring states and minimize threats to regime stability. Meanwhile, Kim Jong-un continues to steadily expand and enhance Pyongyang nuclear and conventional capabilities, targeting the United States and its allies, periodically using aggressive, potentially destabilizing actions to reshape the regional security environment in his favor and to reinforce its status quo as a de facto nuclear power.

The assessment continues to focus on a number of key global and transnational threats, including global health security, transnational organized crime, the rapid development of destabilizing technologies, climate, migration, and terrorism. I raise these because they pose challenges of a fundamentally different nature to our national security than those posed by the actions of nation states, even powerful ones like China and Russia.

We look at the Russia-Ukraine war and can imagine outcomes to resolve the crisis and the steps needed to get there, even though unpalatable and difficult, and similarly we view the array of challenges Chinese actions pose and can discuss what is required, how we think about tradeoffs. But transnational issues are more complex, require significant and sustained multilateral effort, and though we can discuss ways of managing them all of them pose a set of choices that will be more difficult to untangle and will perhaps require more sacrifice to bring about meaningful change. This reflects not just the interconnected nature of the problems but also the significant impact increasingly empowered non-state actors have on the outcomes and the reality that some of the countries who are key to mitigating threats posed by nation states are also the ones we will be asking to do more in the transnational space.

For example, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is putting a strain on governments and societies, fueling humanitarian and economic crises, political unrest, and geopolitical competition. Low-income countries with high debts face particularly challenging recoveries, now exacerbated, in some cases, by increasing food security resulting from the Russia-Ukraine crisis, and these shifts will spur migration around the world, including on our southern border.

The economic impact has set many poor and middle-income countries back years in terms of economic development, and is encouraging some in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to look to China and Russia for quick economic and security assistance to manage their new reality. We see the same complex mix of interlocking challenges stemming from the threat of climate change, which is exacerbating risks in United States national security interests across the board but particularly as it intersects with environmental degradation and global health challenges.

Terrorism, of course, remains a persistent threat to United States persons and interests at home and abroad, but the implications of the problem are evolving. In Africa, for example, where terrorist groups are clearly gaining strength, the growing overlap between terrorism, criminal activity, and smuggling networks has undermined stability, contributed to coups and an erosion of democracy, and resulted in countries turning to Russian entities to help manage these problems.

Global transnational criminal organizations continue to pose a direct threat to the United States through the production and trafficking of lethal, illicit drugs, massive theft including cybercrime, human trafficking, and financial crimes, and money-laundering schemes. In particular, the threat from illicit drugs is at historic levels, with more than 100,000 American drug overdose deaths for the first time annually, driven mainly by a robust supply of synthetic opioids from Mexican transnational criminal organizations. In short, the interconnected global security environment is marked by the growing specter of great power competition and conflict while transnational threats to all nations and actors compete not only for our attention but also for finite resources.

Finally, the assessment turns to conflicts and instability highlighting a series of regional challenges of importance to the United States. Iterative violence between Israel and Iran and conflicts in other areas, including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, have the potential to escalate or spread, fueling humanitarian crises and threatening United States persons. Africa, for example, has seen six irregular transfers of power since 2020, and probably will see new bouts of conflict in the coming year as the region becomes increasingly strained by a volatile mixture of democratic backsliding, intercommunal violence, and the continued threat of cross-border terrorism.

Finally, most important of all we are focused on our workforces and their families. The IC continues to contribute to the government-wide effort to better understand potential causal mechanisms of anomalous health incidents and remains committed to ensuring afflicted individuals receive the quality care they need. The safety and well-being of our workforce is our highest priority, and we are grateful to Members of this Committee for your continued support on these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our assessments, and I look forward to your questions.

[Please see the document provided by Ms. Haines in lieu of a written statement in Appendix A.]

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Madam Director.

General Berrier, please.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL SCOTT BERRIER,  
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

General BERRIER. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of this committee, it is a privilege to testify today as part of the Intelligence Community's 2022 assessment of worldwide threats to United States national security. On behalf of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) I want to express how much we appreciate your support and partnership. Thank you.

DIA fills a unique intelligence role by providing strategy, operational, and tactical intelligence to our warfighters, defense planners, policymakers, and the acquisition community. We examine conflict across all warfighting domains to assess foreign capabilities and understand our adversaries' intent. DIA's dedicated professionals, in partnership with our Intelligence Community colleagues, allies, and foreign partners, deliver timely and relevant intelligence on the threats and challenges facing our Nation. DIA has a highly resilient workforce that has overcome difficult challenges posed by the pandemic. Today my goal is to convey DIA's insights to you, and the American public, on the evolving threat environment as we understand it.

As I look at the global landscape today, I want to begin with Russia and its invasion of Ukraine, which is now in its third month. Russian military capabilities have been used to violate the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, and they pose an existential threat to United States national security and that of our allies. The invasion has demonstrated Russia's intent to overturn the United States-led, rules-based, post-Cold War international order, expand its control over the former Soviet Union, and reclaim what it regards as its rightful position on the world stage.

Moscow's underestimation of Ukraine's effective resistance, Russia's substantial battlefield losses, and Western resolve to support Ukraine, has undermined Moscow's assault on Kyiv and improved prospects that Ukraine can successfully defend its sovereignty. Moscow has now shifted its focus to eastern Ukraine, where it appears to be prioritizing defeating Ukrainian forces in the Donbas. In response to stiff Ukrainian resistance, Russia has resorted to more indiscriminate and brutal methods that are destroying cities, infrastructure, and increasing civilian deaths. Negotiations remain stalled as both sides focus on the outcome of the battle in the Donbas, while partnerships with Ukraine and warning of potential escalation remain key priorities for DIA.

Turning to China, it remains a pacing threat and a major security challenge. Beijing has long viewed the United States as a strategic competitor. China is capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. The PLA [People's Liberation Army], which has already fielded sophisticated weapons and instituted major organizational reforms to enhance joint operations, is nearing the status of a global competitor to the United States, its allies and partners, and is a credible peer competitor in the region. China's current nuclear force expansion is historic.

The United States faces military and intelligence threats from competitors, particularly Russia and China, who have and are developing new capabilities intended to contest, limit, or exceed United States military advantage. State and non-state actors are selectively putting these capabilities into play globally and regionally. These capabilities also span all warfighting domains—maritime, land, air, electronic warfare, cyberspace, information, and space. They include more lethal ballistic and cruise missiles, growing nuclear stockpiles, modernized conventional forces, and a range of gray zone measures such as the use of ambiguous unconventional forces, foreign proxies, information manipulation, cyberattacks, and economic coercion.

Strategic competitors and other challengers are exerting increasing military pressure on neighboring states. Russia has invaded Ukraine, China is threatening Taiwan, and Iran, through its proxies, threatens neighbors in the Middle East and United States forces while also enriching uranium to new levels. North Korea continues to threaten South Korea, Japan, and the United States with nuclear-capable ballistic missiles of increased range and lethality.

Transnationally, the terrorist threat will also persist, and we need to understand more about the lessons learned from our experience supporting military and intelligence operations in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Turning back to my own organization, I take the health, safety, and well-being of my workforce very, very seriously. DIA remains actively engaged in investigating Anomalous Health Incidents, AHIs. My agency has the process and procedures in place to quickly respond to reports from employees or their families who believe that they have been impacted by AHL. We are also partnering with other members of the IC to determine the origin and cause of the reported events.

I am honored to lead DIA. My intent in this hearing is that this helps Congress and our Nation better understand the threats and challenges we face from foreign adversaries and competitors. I look forward to your questions, and thank you for your continued support.

[Please see the prepared statement of General Berrier in Appendix B.]

Chairman REED. Thank you, General.

Let me remind my colleagues that at the conclusion of this open session there will be a classified session in SVC-217, and the witnesses may defer some responses to that classified session.

Director Haines, your description of the unfolding battle in the Ukraine suggests that it is moving to a battle of attrition over a long term and that the objectives of the Russians are to destroy the Ukrainian forces and also disrupt the international coalition through economic pressures, gasoline prices, and other factors we are witnessing.

That leads us to, at least me, to the question of how effective are our economic sanctions and what more can we do to bring pressure to the people of Russia so that they are less supportive of this effort?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Chairman. I think from our perspective the economic sanctions and the export controls have had a pretty significant impact on Russia, and among the indicators that one might look at are, for example, the fact that we are seeing close to about, we predict, approximately 20 percent inflation in Russia, that we expect that their GDP [gross domestic product] will fall about 10 percent, possibly even more over the course of the year.

We have seen not only the sanctions enacted by the United States and Europe and other partners around the world having these impacts but also the private sector taking action on its own to remove itself. So things like the fact that oil production services and companies pulled themselves out will have an impact on Russia's capacity to produce, and that is a major revenue source, obviously, for Russia. We have seen other indicators of essentially the private sector impact in these areas, and on the export controls we are seeing how things like export controls on semiconductors and so on are affecting their defense industry.

So I think that is a very significant impact, essentially, although obviously time will tell as we move forward.

Chairman REED. Are you sensing any popular unease, perhaps, in terms of these economic factors that could translate into a political resistance to the regime?

Ms. HAINES. Well, I know many of us saw the protests that erupted after the invasion and then the crackdown that occurred, essentially, in Russia, including passing laws that would provide for very significant punishments in the event that one protested on these issues. So we have seen those reduced, actually, and when we have looked at effectively polling and so on that indicates where it is that the Russian people are, what we see is that the majority of the Russian people continue to support the special military operation. I think it is just very hard, frankly, for information to get into Russia, to the Russian people. They have a very particular perspective that they are being fed by the government during this period.

Chairman REED. Thank you.

General Berrier, what do you believe the Chinese are taking away from their close scrutiny of the Russian activities in Ukraine?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think the Chinese are going to watch this very, very carefully. It is going to take some time for them to sort out all elements of diplomatic information, military, economic, that has occurred with this crisis.

I think they are thinking about future operations probably against Taiwan and how difficult that might be. They are probably also thinking about the scrutiny that they would come under should they entertain thoughts or operations like that.

Chairman REED. Thank you.

Final question, Director Haines. I think you indicated in your testimony that cyber interference in our elections is a distinct possibility. Is that something that your agency, or the agencies, are following and taking preemptive steps?

Ms. HAINES. Yes, absolutely, Senator. We are well positioned to essentially monitor for the potential of election influence, including efforts through cyber.

Chairman REED. One other final, final question. Are you surprised that the Russians have not used cyberattacks against third parties or against the United States directly up to this point? I think that was a concern we all had from the beginning of this operation.

Ms. HAINES. I think what we have seen is the Russians have obviously attacked Ukraine, and we have attributed a variety of attacks to them in that context, including, for example, destructive wiper attacks against Ukrainian Government websites, DDoS attacks against their financial industry. They also were engaged in attacks intended to get at command-and-control communications in Ukraine during the invasion. That attack had an outsized impact. In other words, we assessed that they intended to focus in on Ukrainian command and control but ultimately they ended up affecting a much broader set of VSATs, essentially, you know, very small terminals outside of Ukraine, including in Europe.

Yet we have not seen the level of attacks, to your point, that we expected, and we have a variety of different theories for why that might be the case, including the fact that we think that they may have determined that the collateral impact of such attacks would be challenging for them in the context of Ukraine, also that they may not have wished to essentially sacrifice potential access and collection opportunities in those scenarios.

Then in terms of attacks against the United States, I think they have had a longstanding concern about the potential for escalation in cyber, vis-à-vis the United States. That does not mean that they will not attack at some point, but it has been interesting to see that they have not during this period.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much.

Senator Inhofe, please.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For both of you, the lack of an independent intelligence community significantly worsened Putin's decision-making in Ukraine. What do you think President Xi in China is learning about his intelligence communities? Both of you.

Ms. HAINES. Thank you. Senator Inhofe, I think it is a really interesting question. I would prefer to answer it perhaps in closed session. Would that be all right, sir?

Senator INHOFE. That is fine. General, any comments to make in this open session?

General BERRIER. Senator, I will take the DNI's lead on that.

Senator INHOFE. I suspected that. Thank you.

The Biden administration has offered Iran significant sanctions relief in return to the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement. General Berrier, would you expect Iran to spend at least some of this sanctions relief on its terrorist proxies and missile programs? Do you agree that if the IRGC [Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps] has additional money that they would increase their targeting of Americans and our allies? Let's say could they increase that targeting?

General BERRIER. Yes, Senator, they could increase targeting against our partners in the region as well as United States forces if they had increased funding.

Senator INHOFE. I appreciate that very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Let me recognize Senator Shaheen, please.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Good morning and thank you both for your testimony this morning.

I returned a couple of weeks ago from the Western Balkans with Senator Tillis and Senator Murphy. We visited Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo. One of the things we heard in that region was a great deal of concern about Russian meddling and the potential, particularly in Bosnia, for that to further destabilize the country. Are you all following what is going on in that part of Europe, and are you equally concerned?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. So I will just start and obviously hand it over to my colleague as well, but yes, we are concerned about this. This is something we have been working with NATO on, in particular, to try to help them be more resilient in this context. Both information and cyber issues are obviously at stake, but I think managing how it is that Russia develops and what kind of activities they engage in worldwide during this crisis and beyond will be a critical aspect of our work moving forward.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can I just, before you begin, General, can I just ask you to speak to NATO and U4 in Bosnia, because as you know, the authorization for U4 is going to end this fall in Bosnia, and there is a real concern about Russia's willingness to allow that to continue. So what are we doing to ensure that the troops are not taken out of Bosnia and a void left that provides a real vacuum for instability?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think that is a policy question and I would refer it to the Department of Defense.

Senator, to the earlier portion of your question, I believe this is a key component of strategic competition, and this is where I think with our partners and allies and certainly NATO we have to be able to identify that kind of malign activity and expose it and help our partners and future partners be aware of it and do more to counter it. Yes, we are aware of it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Well, I would say that that policy decision needs to be viewed very closely by everybody so that we do not wind up with a vacuum there that we are not able to address.

I want to go to what is still happening with ISIS because, as you both know, we have thousands of ISIS family members who are still being held in camps in northern Syria. They are posing a persistent challenge, not only humanitarian but the potential breeding ground for terrorists. So are we watching closely what is going on there, and what are we doing to try and address what is happening in those camps?

General BERRIER. From the perspective of the Department of Defense and DIA we are watching very, very closely what is happening in those camps, what has happened since the break-in, and really with our CENTCOM partners trying to monitor ISIS capability as it evolves over time and what is happening with those families and where they are moving. This is a problem that we partner with CENTCOM and the Defense Counterterrorism Center, and really the National Counterterrorism Center. It is a huge focus for everybody.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do we have a strategy for how to deal with it?

General BERRIER. We have an intelligence collection strategy to monitor it.

Senator SHAHEEN. We are seeing the Taliban in Afghanistan renege on everything they said they would do post troop withdrawal. Obviously, one of those is continuing their relationship with al Qaeda and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan. How concerned are you that we might see terrorist activity spread out of Afghanistan to the rest of the world?

General BERRIER. Senator, I am more concerned about ISIS-K [The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Kharasan] in Afghanistan and the fact that they have had some successful and catastrophic attacks within Afghanistan, which does not portend well for the future. Al Qaeda has had some problems with reconstitution leadership, and to a degree I think the Taliban have held to their word about not allowing al Qaeda to rejuvenate so far. But it is something that we watch very, very carefully.

Senator SHAHEEN. There was an election in the Philippines yesterday, and the winner of that election, Mr. Marcos, is not likely have as positive a view to the United States. Are you concerned that that is going to have an impact on how China is going to view activity in the Philippines, and do we expect there might be any spillover in terms of illegal substances from the Philippines now that Duarte is no longer doing his extra legal killing of people suspected of being drug kingpins?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think it is early in the process with the elected Marcos to determine whether or not he will be anti-United States or pro-United States I know that we would like to have the Philippines as a key intelligence partner in the region. I think there is a lot of effort going on to do that. So we will wait to see what percolates in our relationship, and I will just end it there.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Fischer, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our panel today.

Last week, in the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Under Secretary of Research and Engineering Heidi Shyu stated, quote, "Strategic competitors of the United States are rapidly developing their nuclear arsenal in new and novel ways with a clear intent of increasing their reliance on these weapons in their security strategies," end quote.

Director Haines, do you agree with that statement?

Ms. HAINES. Yes.

Senator FISCHER. General, do you?

General BERRIER. Yes.

Senator FISCHER. Throughout the war in Ukraine, Putin and other Russian leaders have overtly threatened nuclear use, including the Russian state TV airing an animated video showing the British Isles being completely destroyed by a nuclear attack.

General, in the United States we view nuclear weapons primarily as tools of deterrence, but do you think what we are seeing indi-

cates Russian leadership views nuclear weapons as tools of coercion and intimidation?

General BERRIER. Yes. I believe they view those as tools of coercion and intimidation.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. General, also, the Defense Intelligence Agency's 2021 report on China's military power states, quote, "The accelerating pace of the PRC's nuclear expansion may enable the PRC to have up to 700 deliverable nuclear warheads by 2027. The PRC likely intends to have at least 1,000 warheads by 2030, exceeding the pace and size the DOD projected in 2020," end quote.

I know what you say is limited in this setting, but is it your assessment that China's nuclear forces will stop expanding when it reaches that point of 1,000?

General BERRIER. It is my assessment that they would continue to develop the weapons they have.

Senator FISCHER. Director Haines, is that the view shared by the rest of the IC, that China's arsenal is going to continue to grow past that point in time?

Ms. HAINES. I mean, our assessment basically says that China will continue to essentially expand their nuclear arsenal and diversification for a period of time. It is unclear how long that will be.

Senator FISCHER. But do you anticipate it will continue past the 1,000 warheads that we have looked at in the past?

Ms. HAINES. I think for us to get into numbers we should do that in closed session.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

General, as the statement notes, China's nuclear expansion is larger and more rapid than previous assessments projected. Admiral Richard has made a similar point noting, quote, "When I first testified here we were questioning whether or not China would be able to double that stockpile by the end of the decade, and they are actually very close to doing it on my watch," end quote.

What are the implications of the fact that this threat is evolving faster than we have anticipated, and how should we factor that in our assessments?

General BERRIER. Senator, we can get into much more detail in the closed session, but I would just say from a strategic competition perspective and nuclear deterrence this makes it much more challenging for us to defend. When you factor in Russian nuclear capability with Chinese capability, I think it is a problem for Strategic Command and the Department.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Also, General, if we can move to a different theater now. If ISIS and al Qaeda are able to operate in Afghanistan without consistent or effective CT [cyber threat] pressure how long does the Intelligence Community assess it will take for either organization to reconstitute their external attack capabilities?

General BERRIER. We assess ISIS probably a year, slightly longer, and longer for al Qaeda.

Senator FISCHER. Last October we heard from Secretary Kahl. He told the committee that we could see ISIS-K generate the capability in 6 to 12 months. Then in March we heard from General McKenzie that the capability might be 12 to 18 months. So I look

forward to hearing more about how and why these intelligence estimates have shifted forward. I think that is important for this committee to know and it is important to understand when we look at the dramatic reduction we have seen in our intelligence collection in the region since our withdrawal. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Senator Gillibrand, please.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Director Haines, thank you so much for your testimony. I want to talk a little bit about advanced persistent threats, and I want to know what type of support are you providing, critical infrastructure providers, to deal with APTs [advanced persistent threats]. Specifically, I am concerned if this war in Ukraine does escalate, that attacks from Russia will come to American businesses and our critical infrastructure. I know this is generally the job of CISA, but in your engagement with critical infrastructure providers what are the biggest areas of need that they have shared with you, and are there any additional authorities that would be helpful to you in enabling you to support critical infrastructure providers in securing their networks?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator, and I know this has been a major issue focus for you and, in fact, that you have supported some of the things that have been done in New York with Reserves, for example, in this area, which have been really effective. I know that General Nakasone has been looking at expanding that around the United States in different ways.

I think for us we have, quite obviously, heightened awareness of cyber threats to critical infrastructure, and it has been a driving force behind a number of sorts of cyber defense measures that we have taken in the Intelligence Community to support, in effect, as you say, CISA and FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] and others in doing their work.

One is lowering thresholds for reporting. We have asked for network owners to really lower their threshold for reporting suspected malicious activity. That is critical from our perspective in order for us to be able to identify what the threat is.

Another is just making more information publicly available. We are increasing the amount of information that we release to the private sector, both to help combat the rise in cybercrime, and recently in our efforts to posture industry for potential Russian cyberattacks, for example, something that we have been trying to get out to do significantly more briefings on and help industry, in effect, get ready for things so they can take action that would make them more resilient in these circumstances. This includes some close-hold releases so as to dampen malicious cyber actors warning before mitigations can be put into place.

Another has been our significant outreach to the private sector. DHS partners held over 90 engagements with more than 10,000 partners, just even on the Russia piece, and it includes sharing preventative measures to help these partners mitigate vulnerabilities. Another has been facilitating hunt teams on networks. We have also asked company owners to actively hunt for Russian techniques, essentially, on their networks and to facilitate

those have provided lists of vulnerabilities, indicators of compromise to look for on a company's networks.

But those are just some of the things that are focused on helping on the infrastructure piece. Thank you.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Director. Do you need any additional authorities or resources to amplify this effort?

Ms. HAINES. So we have asked for resources in our fiscal year 2023 budget that are designed to help with this effort, and so absolutely in that sense. We have not identified particular authorities that we need, but I will tell you that we will come to you if we do. Thank you.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. Director Haines and General Berrier, I saw that the Annual Threat Assessment notes that advances in dual-use technology could, quote, "enable development of novel biological weapons that complicate detection, attribution, and treatment," end of quote.

I have advocated for a one-health security approach where we incorporate people across multiple disciplines, including the Intelligence Community to increase our biodefense and prevent the next pandemic.

In the context of ongoing biological threats, how would you suggest we develop a multidisciplinary approach like this? Where can we prepare and prevent both naturally occurring diseases but also deliberate threats?

Ms. HAINES. I can start on this. I am very passionate about this issue. I completely agree with you. I think we have not, in the Intelligence Community, been able to work with other parts of, for example, the Federal Government, even in the scientific community within the Federal Government as effectively as we need to.

We have been developing mechanisms in the Intelligence Community to do some more. We are working more with the National Labs than we ever have before. We are working more with HHS [Department of Health and Human Service], with CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], with others, to try to make sure that we are also supporting their work and that we can understand some of the issues that they see as critical to our work. So that has been a big piece of our effort in the Intelligence Community within the national counterproliferation. Senator, we have been doing a major effort on essentially working with global health and we actually now have a new national intelligence manager that works on these issues specifically and is hoping to support that kind of outreach on this. I would be happy to give you a brief at some point in more detail if that is useful.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

General BERRIER. Senator, for DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] I think it is about partnerships. So it is a partnership between the National Center for Medical Intelligence (NCMI), the Defense Counterproliferation Center, as well as NCPC. The role, really, for DIA and NCMI is to provide warning on these pandemics. So I am passionate about it as well, and I think it is an area that is going to expand in the coming months and years as we look forward to this, and I look forward to engaging you, perhaps at DIA, on this topic.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.  
Senator Cotton, please.

Senator COTTON. General, what is your assessment on the state of the fighting between Russia and Ukraine in eastern and southern Ukraine today?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think I would characterize it as the Russians are not winning and the Ukrainians are not winning, and we are at a bit of a stalemate here. What has been the most interesting evolution for me, in watching how the Russian forces have misstepped, is really the lack of a non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps. When I think about small unit tactics and how this has unfolded between Ukraine and Russia I think the NCO corps is a big piece of this, and I think the Ukrainians have that about right.

Senator COTTON. Who faces greater risk from a stalemate—Russia or Ukraine?

General BERRIER. I think we have to take a wait-and-see approach on how this evolves and what is in the decision calculus for Putin and his generals as this unfolds.

Senator COTTON. A stalemate, to be clear, does not mean an armistice or peace. It means continued but indecisive fighting in which both sides are losing personnel, equipment, weapons, and vehicles. Right?

General BERRIER. I think it is attrition warfare and it depends how well the Ukrainians can maintain what they have going on with weapons and ammunition and how the Russians decide to deal with that, either through mobilization or not, and decide to go with what they have in the theater right now.

Senator COTTON. Which side do you think, at this point, is more capable of generating additional combat power in the form of trained and motivated troops—Russia or Ukraine?

General BERRIER. Ukraine.

Senator COTTON. Even though it is one-third the size of Russia?

General BERRIER. Yes.

Senator COTTON. Why do you say that?

General BERRIER. Because I think the Ukrainians have it right in terms of grit and how they face the defense of their nation. I am not sure that Russian soldiers from the far-flung military districts really understand that.

Senator COTTON. Fighting to defend one's own home from a war of aggression is a highly motivating factor, is it not?

General BERRIER. Yes, it is.

Senator COTTON. Russians probably are not terribly motivated to be the next wave of recruits into Vladimir Putin's war of aggression?

General BERRIER. I would say not, based on what we have seen.

Senator COTTON. If that is the case, and this stalemate, as you call it, continues not just for weeks but for months, which side do you think faces the greater possibility of a decisive breakout—the Russians, with their ill-trained and unmotivated troops, or the Ukrainians, with their supremely motivated troops?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think right now with the stalemate and as it stands, if Russia does not declare war and mobilize this stalemate is going to last for a while, and I do not see a breakout on either side. If they do mobilize and they do declare war, that

will bring thousands more soldiers to the fight, and even though they may not be as well-trained and competent they will still bring mass and a lot of more ammunition.

Senator COTTON. What are the prospects of a catastrophic collapse of morale and will among Russian forces?

General BERRIER. It remains to be seen. I think the Russians still are a learning organization. If appropriate lessons could be applied with leadership you might see that turn around.

Senator COTTON. Do you know the current count on how many generals have been killed in Ukraine, on Russia's side?

General BERRIER. I think the number is between eight and ten.

Senator COTTON. Do you know how many generals we lost in 20 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan?

General BERRIER. Not many.

Senator COTTON. Those we lost were happenstance, right? The bad guys got a lucky shot at a convoy or helicopter.

General BERRIER. Yes.

Senator COTTON. Does the fact that Russia is losing all these generals, and as you pointed out they have no trained NCO corps, suggest to you that these generals are having to go forward to ensure their orders are executed in a way that General Berrier never would have to go forward if he was in a combat command because he could count on the captains and lieutenants and the Sergeant Berriers to execute his orders?

General BERRIER. Yes.

Senator COTTON. It sounds to me like the balance of forces here are moving more decisively in Ukraine's favor and will continue to over time as long as we continue to support them with the arms and the intelligence that they need.

General BERRIER. Well-led forces that are motivated and have what they need can do a lot.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Senator Blumenthal, please.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to pursue Senator Cotton's line of questioning if I may. In my exchange with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff several weeks ago I commented that our approach to Ukraine seemed somewhat schizophrenic. We say we want Ukraine to win but we are afraid of what Putin may do if he loses. I have urged, since 2014, that we provide more lethal weapons to Ukraine.

When I visited Ukraine recently with some of my colleagues, a bipartisan trip, one of them asked President Zelenskyy, "Are you fearful about the Russian prospect of invasion?" It was a number of weeks before the invasion. He said, "The Russians invaded us in 2014. We have been fighting them since then." In my view the implication is that we have failed over a period of years, under different administrations, to provide Ukraine with the arms that it needs to counter and deter increased Russian aggression there.

So my question to you is, do you agree that we should increase the kind of military aid, as well as humanitarian assistance and economic sanctions, that we have been providing, by orders of magnitude that will enable Ukraine to win, and would you also agree that if we simply provide more of that kind of aid—tanks, artillery,

armored personnel carriers, even planes, Stinger and Javelin missiles, all of the arms that Ukraine needs to fight lethally and defensively—that Putin may engage in sword-rattling and threats and implications of what he might do, but enabling Ukraine to win ought to be our objective.

Let me ask you first, General.

General BERRIER. Senator, in your statement there it really gets at national level of decision-making on what our policy should be with regard to arming Ukraine. My role as the Director of DIA is to keep an eye on this conflict and provide information to decision-makers so that they can make those kinds of decisions.

In terms of what Putin might do to escalate, I think the best that we can do, rather than describing what those escalatory measures would be, would be to understand what they might do and be ready, in terms of indications and warning, to be able to notify decision-makers that that was actually occurring or about to occur.

So I take an intelligence perspective of the conflict itself and leave the policy to decision-makers.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Do you—and I will ask Ms. Haines the same—think there is a serious, immediate prospect that Putin would engage in the use of tactical nuclear weapons?

General BERRIER. Right now we do not see that, and I think that is a huge warning issue for us and something that we are very, very focused on.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Ms. Haines?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I think, on the first part of your question, you know, as General Berrier said, obviously we try to provide the intelligence to help policymakers like you make these decisions. Among the questions that come up in that discussion are whether or not, frankly, Ukraine can absorb additional assistance and how much of it, and that is very hard for us to tell. We have, in fact, more insight, probably, on the Russian side than we do on the Ukrainian side, but that is something, obviously, for the Defense Department to work through as they go through this.

But we also, obviously, get asked this question of whether or not certain actions will escalate things with Russia, as you indicate, and if so, how, and that really gets to the second part of your question, because I think obviously we are in a position, as you have identified, where we are supporting Ukraine but we also do not want to ultimately end up in World War III, and we do not want to have a situation in which actors are using nuclear weapons.

Our view is, as General Berrier indicated, that there is not a sort of an imminent potential for Putin to use nuclear weapons. We perceive that, as I indicated in my statement, as something that he is unlikely to do unless there is effectively an existential threat to his regime and to Russia, from his perspective. We do think that that could be the case in the event that he perceives that he is losing the war in Ukraine and that NATO, in effect, is sort of either intervening or about to intervene in that context, which would obviously contribute to a perception that he is about to lose the war in Ukraine.

But there are a lot of things that he would do in the context of escalation before he would get to nuclear weapons, and also that

he would be likely to engage in some signaling beyond what he has done thus far, before doing so.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. My time has expired.

Senator KING. [Presiding.] On behalf of the chairman, Senator Blackburn.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much to each of you for being here today.

Ms. HAINES, I want to come to you. We have talked a lot about Ukraine and Russia this morning, and I appreciate your frankness in this. But let me ask you about Wagner and the proxies and what you are seeing, not only in Ukraine but also what you are seeing when it comes to Libya and to other areas and the aggressiveness of the use of the proxies.

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. We can probably go into more detail in closed session.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay.

Ms. HAINES. But I could just say, more generally, that we do see Wagner being used, in effect, in Ukraine. We see that that is something—

Senator BLACKBURN. How about Africa?

Ms. HAINES. Yes, absolutely. Wagner has been historically present in Africa, and it is a more recent event, obviously, in the current crisis that Russia deployed them effectively in Ukraine.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. All right.

General Berrier, do you have anything you want to add on that?

General BERRIER. Senator, we track ISIS in Africa, Syria, other places. I think we will get into a richer discussion in the closed session about Wagner operations in Ukraine.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. That is helpful. Let me ask you also—and by the way, thank you for the China map [retained in Committee records]. I will say this. I think we could have a picture of the globe and say that is where China is seeking to be aggressive. It is something that is not lost on me, that they are anxious right now to expand their reach.

But let's talk about DIA and how is the DIA collaborating with our allies and our partners to counter Beijing's cyber espionage operations?

General BERRIER. Senator, we are. We are closely collaborating with our Five Eyes partners, in this case, our Australian and New Zealand partners, on this very issue, along with our partners over at the National Security Agency with General Nakasone.

There is a concerted effort by the Five Eyes to understand these activities in cyberspace emanating from China. So we are working that very, very closely and we can provide more details in a closed session.

Senator BLACKBURN. Can you provide us with some of the lessons learned from the Russia-Ukraine conflict that help to inform some of this work?

General BERRIER. Cyber activity?

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes, sir.

General BERRIER. So I think the key there would be information operations and disinformation operations and their level of effectiveness on the Russian side, or ineffectiveness on the Russian side, and then looking at the level of effectiveness on the Ukrainian side.

When I compare and contrast information operations I think the Ukrainians have been much more successful in the information operations and space. Russians have had some success with cyber activities in the Ukraine, and I think the PRC and Xi are looking at all of that as they sort of unwind this conflict and learn lessons from that.

Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, how is the intel community utilizing AI and machine learning as they look at applications, look at how Beijing is continuing to move forward? So how are you preferencing some of the new technologies that can help us in this effort?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. We are using artificial intelligence, and in particular, machine learning, across the board for our mission set. Just to give you an example of the kind of things that we are able to do with it, I think it has been extraordinary in terms of helping us with analysis, being able to focus in on certain datasets that we are able to effectively manipulate more easily and without as many human resources, effectively to identify patterns. We are able to use that then, have analysts that are educated and experts take that information and use it in their analysis in different ways.

We have something called an Artificial Intelligence Unit Project that is really looking at across the Intelligence Community at different applications of artificial intelligence and machine learning and then trying to leverage those so that we can actually allow other elements to build off of the work that is being done by another element that they might not have thought of before and also doing it at sort of a cheaper cost and so on.

So there are a variety of ways in which we are doing it. It is hard to talk about it in an unclassified way, but certainly this is a major area of effort and investment, and we can provide you with further details if that is useful.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you. My time has expired. I will come to you for a written response on the recent article that quoted a senior intel source, about referencing the uptick in Al-Shabaab activity. So thank you very much.

Senator KING. On behalf of the chair, Senator Warren.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Senator King.

It is paramount to our national security that we keep our most sensitive secrets properly protected and classified, particularly when protecting sources and methods. But I am very concerned about the levels of over-classification and pseudo-classification that we are seeing across the Federal Government. Everyone understands the need to protect information about most sensitive capabilities from our enemies, but our classification system has spiraled out of control, when it means, for example, that our own four-star generals cannot share information with their fellow three-stars. It is hard to see how that level of classification is making America safer.

Over-classification also reduces public scrutiny of important issues and it can hamper accountability. Director Haines, you lead the Intelligence Community. You have years of experience in these matters. Do you think that over-classification is a national security problem?

Ms. HAINES. I do, Senator. I have stated this explicitly. I do think it is a challenge. As long as I have been in government, frankly, there have been blue-ribbon commissions that have looked at this, have said there is significant over-classification. This is a challenge, as you indicate, from a democratic perspective but it is also a challenge from a national security perspective because if we cannot share information as easily as we might otherwise be if it were appropriately classified then that obviously affects our capacity to work on these issues.

It is a very challenging issue, as I know you know well. In other words, there are technical aspects to it. There are cultural aspects to it.

Senator WARREN. Let us talk about that just a little bit, and I want to say I agree with you that over-classification has been a problem across administrations. The Obama administration put out two different Executive orders aimed at improving classification and information sharing, but that was more than a decade ago and obviously the problem persists.

Let me ask this a different way. Director Haines, would you support the Administration releasing a new Executive order on classification practices to ensure that we are protecting national security information while keeping our commitments to open government?

Ms. HAINES. Without knowing exactly what it would say it is sort of hard for me to say I would support an Executive order on that subject. I mean, I am constantly looking for additional ways in which we might try to help address this issue, and we have a number of ways that we are investing in the Intelligence Community issues. But, yeah, I—

Senator WARREN. I appreciate that, and I am not asking you to sign a blank check here.

Ms. HAINES. No. Fair enough.

Senator WARREN. But you are the President's principal advisor on intelligence matters, and I am just asking if you would be supportive if the President wanted to take that step.

Ms. HAINES. Well, I am supportive of what the President wants to take steps within his authority, and it is an appropriate policy to do, so yes, in that sense I would be.

Senator WARREN. Okay. Let me ask this then from one more perspective, and that is during the Ukraine crisis we have seen that a well-functioning, declassification system can be incredibly powerful. The work by the Biden administration to expose what the Intelligence Committee knew about Putin's plans seriously hurt Russia's credibility and it strengthened our response to an illegal and immoral war. My understanding is that it took reshuffling of resources to make that happen, and I applaud that, but we need more of it.

The most recent numbers that I have seen is that we spend \$18 billion protecting the classification system and only about \$102 million—do the math fast in your head, about 5 percent of that number—on declassification efforts, and that ratio feels off in a democracy.

With that in mind, Director Haines, are there any lessons learned from Ukraine about how we can expedite declassification when there is a compelling reason to do so?

Ms. HAINES. I think there are lessons to be learned from Ukraine, and it will be easier to talk about this in closed session, but I think there is some value that we could discuss in closed session on those issues.

I do think it has helped to help other people understand the value of ensuring that we are classifying things at the appropriate level and how declassification can support foreign policy in different ways. So I think that is all to the good.

Senator WARREN. Good. You know, in a democracy we have a duty to be accountable to the public, and when we keep secrets from Americans there needs to be a compelling public interest in doing so. In too many cases it seems that public officials err on the side of secrecy because the information could be embarrassing, or even worse, just because it is easier not to be accountable to the American people.

So I urge all of our agencies to address this problem, and I look forward to working with you on it. Thank you.

Senator KING. On behalf of the chairman, Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Senator. Good morning.

Director Haines, in your best assessment does Russia intelligence closely monitor our Secretary of Defense?

Ms. HAINES. I think Russian intelligence tries very closely to monitor all of our senior leaders.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. So you believe that, noted, that when he said that Russia weakened and that the United States will move heaven and earth to arm Ukraine, do you believe that is right he should say that?

Ms. HAINES. Yes. I think the Secretary of Defense—

Senator TUBERVILLE. Do you believe Russia blames the United States Intelligence Community for helping Ukraine shoot down a Russian plane carrying hundreds of people?

Ms. HAINES. I am sorry, sir. Can you repeat the question?

Senator TUBERVILLE. Do you believe Russia blames us, our intelligence agency, for Ukraine shooting down a plane with hundreds of troops on board? Do you think Russia blames us for that?

Ms. HAINES. Which plane are you thinking of?

Senator TUBERVILLE. There was a plane recently that was shot down, a Russian plane, that 100 troops. Do you believe that they blame our intelligence agency for that?

Ms. HAINES. I do not know, sir.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Okay. Do you believe that Russia blames our United States intelligence for sinking their flagship, Moskva? Do you think they blame us for that?

Ms. HAINES. I do not know, sir. We have not seen any direct reporting.

Senator TUBERVILLE. To what extent do you assess that Russia believe it is at war with the West and the United States? Do you think that they believe they are at war with us?

Ms. HAINES. Russia has historically believed that they are in a conflict, in effect, with NATO and the United States on a variety of issues, including in cyber and so on.

Senator TUBERVILLE. So you believe that they are fighting us—that they are fighting us as well as they are fighting Ukraine. Correct?

Ms. HAINES. In a sense. Their perception—

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yeah. Yeah, because we are arming them and we are talking. Okay.

General BERRIER, does the United States or Ukraine have air superiority over the war zone? Which one has air superiority?

General BERRIER. Senator, I would call that an air standoff right now. I mean, the Russians can fly a tactical aircraft over the line of troops in a local area but they cannot expand into western parts of Ukraine without coming under an air threat.

Senator TUBERVILLE. But Ukraine is more than we are, the United States, obviously, because we not involved in their air space.

General BERRIER. No, we are not involved.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Would you say that Russia possess strong air defenses?

General BERRIER. I think the Russians have very credible air defense systems.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Does Ukraine have any counter measures to thwart Russia artillery rockets? Does Ukraine have any air defenses?

General BERRIER. Ukraine has air defenses. They also have counter-battery radars that allow them to defend themselves from incoming artillery, or at least see it.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Would you agree that anyone in Ukraine right now is under serious threat? Obviously they are. Correct?

General BERRIER. I would agree they are.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Okay. In the past 2 weeks we have seen several high-profile visitors take trips to active war zone. Our Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Speaker of the House, First Lady. This is for both of you. What is our Intelligence Community doing to lessen the risk of a high-ranking official—how are we protecting these people going to Ukraine, our people going to Ukraine?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think that would be a discussion for the closed session.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Okay. So we could guarantee that the First Lady was safe when she went to Ukraine. We could guarantee that, 100 percent. Correct? Both of you. I am just asking.

General BERRIER. I would not say that, no. I would not say that.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Is it your best advice that we do not go to Ukraine right now, any of us, any of us in here?

General BERRIER. Senator, I would not say that. I would say with proper planning and coordination that it is possible.

Senator TUBERVILLE. General, 100 percent. One hundred percent, can we guarantee going into a war zone—our Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State went on a train.

General BERRIER. Senator, I do not think we can ever guarantee anything 100 percent.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Well, that is kind of the point I am making. You know, we are kind of poking the bear here, saying, you know, we are bragging about it. Even President Biden said today, "Wait a minute. We have got to cut back on this pointing that, how many generals have been killed and we are part of it." I totally agree with that. I totally agree that, hey, we want to help Ukraine. Obviously, we all do. But we do not want to take that

step forward to where we get a lot of our men and women involved in this. It looks like to me we that we are taking way too many changes of sending people over there for a photo op other than doing the right thing, which we are doing. But we just do not need to step over that path.

Thank you for what you are doing, but I think all of us need to look at that point of, hey, there is a point of no return here if we cross that line. If we were on the other side, the same way, and we had somebody helping, we had a plane shot down, a ship sink, and then bragging about killing generals, as Senator Cotton said, we are walking a tightrope here.

That is just the only point I want to bring up. Thank you very much.

Senator KING. On behalf of the chair, Senator Kelly.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Haines, again, looking at your office's 2022 Annual Threat Assessment it is clear there is a lot going on in the world right now, and I understand that resources are finite and tradeoffs often have to be made. That is in, a large part, what makes your job very challenging. Clearly the situation in Ukraine is taking up a lot of bandwidth right now, and I would presume that INDOPACOM [United States Indo-Pacific Command] requires significant amount of resources as well to fully understand the threat environment, and these two things are obviously related.

But what about some other regions in the world? In light of the worldwide threats you have articulated here today do you feel the Intelligence Community has the necessary resources in place to confidently understand the threat environment in other places, such as Afghanistan, northern Syria, Pakistan, and Iran?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I mean, I think, like all good bureaucrats that we could spend more money on these issues. There is no question. I think certainly that is true. But we are doing our very best, as you indicate, to ensure that we are not taking our eye off the ball, essentially across the globe, on issues that are also of critical importance among the ones that you have identified.

Senator KELLY. Thank you. I want to ask a specific question about the MQ-9, the Reaper drones. So the Air Force has been reluctant to invest in upgrading the platform and proposes to retire it, potentially like in 2035, even as the demand from combatant commanders for the system remains high. You know, their argument has been that the platform is not survivable in China-Russia scenario. I think it is pretty clear that it would be survivable in a Russian scenario now.

Do you have an opinion on the continued utility of reconnaissance platforms such as the MQ-9, particular as we face increased activity in the so-called gray zone, below the threshold of armed combat?

Ms. HAINES. Yeah.

General BERRIER. Go ahead.

Ms. HAINES. No, no.

General BERRIER. Senator, I have been the beneficiary of MQ-9 operations for the last 20 years. It is an outstanding platform. It has done great things. With increasing threats emanating from

China and their ability to reach out and touch those kinds of things I totally understand why the Air Force wants to divest of that platform. The efficacy of that in the coming years in low-intensity conflict, counterterrorism operations, it will always be useful in a low air defense kind of environment, but in the high-end environment I do not think it is very survivable.

Senator KELLY. But we have looked at the Russian surface-to-air missile threat environment as high end. It turns out like a lot of things, day 1 of the war is much different than day 60 or 90 or 180, of any conflict. I am concerned that not only this platform, but sometimes we look at divesting from platforms that could provide incredible utility further along in the timeline.

General, I have got another question for you here in my last minute, anti-satellite ban on ASAT [antisatellite weapon] testing. The Administration recently announced this. It is a policy I agree with. Russia, China, they do not share this goal, nor do they abide by any kind of similar policy. The Russians and the Chinese both, over the last, about decade and a half, have performed ASAT tests, the Russians more recently.

The DIA's 2022 report on challenges to security in space lists orbital debris as a significant challenge to space operations and concluded that the debris endangers spacecraft of all nations in low-Earth orbit, including astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the ISS [International Space Station], but also China has a space station as well.

Given the fact that both the Russians and Chinese conduct manned space operations what would be your assessment as to why they continue to put their people in harm's way by conducting these dangerous tests?

General BERRIER. Senator, I think they value that capability in space as an asymmetric advantage over our superior technology and continue to pursue those kinds of capabilities. Whether or not they would actually use it is another discussion.

Senator KELLY. Do you expect them to do more anti-satellite tests?

General BERRIER. We have not seen evidence that they plan, in the near future, of doing more, but I would expect as they go through their development processes they will do more tests.

Senator KELLY. All right. Thank you, General, and thank you, Director Haines.

Chairman REED. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Kelly.

Senator Rounds, please.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin by thanking both of you for your continued service to our country.

Director Haines, in April, Secretary Blinken told Congress that Iran's attempts to assassinate former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo were real and ongoing, and this month Israeli press reported that an agent for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force was thwarted from an assassination attempt on a United States general in Germany.

Why is Iran apparently so emboldened right now and how can the Intelligence Community and national security communities at large change this dangerous trend and deter Iran from these malicious actions?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I think we should probably pick this up in closed session. What I think I can say in open session is a fair amount of their motivation in this area we assess to be in relation to Soleimani as part of their sort of efforts for revenge, and it is a particularly challenging area, I think, to deter them from action in this space. But we can discuss more specifics, I think, in closed session. Thank you, sir.

Senator ROUNDS. Very well. Director Haines once again. The crisis at the United States southern border has literally exploded under this Administration and continues to deteriorate. Reuters reported that United States officials at the Department of Homeland Security are preparing for as high as 9,000 arrests per day. As the economic and political conditions in Latin America continue to spark waves of migration that put pressure on our southern border, how serious does the Intelligence Community see this as a threat to our country, and also, how and to what degree is the Intelligence Community shifting resources to address the surge at our southern border?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. We have stood up a migrant crisis cell, which is essentially a cell that helps to bring together intelligence from across the community to support DHS's efforts, and it is really looking south of the border at effectively migrant movements that may be coming towards the southern border, so that we can help them to prepare, in effect, for encounters on the border.

Senator ROUNDS. Are you in agreement with the assessment that there could be as many as 9,000 arrests a day? Is that an assessment that you would concur with?

Ms. HAINES. Sir, I do not look at those particular questions. That is within the Department of Homeland Security.

Senator ROUNDS. I am just curious because when you are doing your planning to determine what your needs are, clearly in order for you to do the planning you have got to have an assessment of what the expected flow would be. I am just curious. It is not meant as a gotcha question.

Ms. HAINES. No, no, no. Of course. We do not assess our needs along the border because we do not actually have needs along the border. In other words, that is sort of the DHS role is to figure out how can we plan for the number of incidents or encounters that they will have on the border. For us, what we are trying to do is understand what are the drivers, what are the ultimate flows that are likely to occur, and we try to set up intelligence so that we can actually provide some indication and warning of here is where you are likely to see an increase in the flow, either south or north or how it is and where it is coming from, ultimately. Does that make sense?

Senator ROUNDS. It does. It just catches me a little bit by surprise that in your planning that most certainly you have to have a good communication with Homeland Security. I am assuming there is a good communication there—

Ms. HAINES. Of course.

Senator ROUNDS.—and that based upon what their needs are is really what you are doing, is providing them with additional resources. You are also, at the same time, gathering intel based on

the possibility, the strong possibility that individuals would try to come in through the southern border. Based upon that I was just curious, and I know that we are in a public discussion, but nonetheless I think it is something that has been talked about publicly, and the fact that we have got folks from all over the world that are using that as an entryway into the United States, and most certainly you are aware of that.

Ms. HAINES. Absolutely. No, I am not trying to sort of duck the question or anything. I think, you know, we see a very high flow. There is no question. What happens is the Department of Homeland Security, we have somebody who is a liaison that sits within their sort of spaces that tells here are the requirements, and they basically are looking for indications and warning of, you know, we are likely to see a flow along this part of the border, that sort of thing, as opposed to us being able to help them determine, okay, today you are going to see X number of people coming through the southern border as a whole.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Just one other quick question. The Intelligence Community and Congress are working to flesh out the Foreign Malign Influence Center's mission, the budget and size, among other issues. But with the 2022 midterms almost here we are probably behind the curve a little bit.

What are the major roadblocks stopping the IC from standing up this intelligence center?

Ms. HAINES. We have just gotten appropriations, basically, through the fiscal year 2022 budget, which has been great, and we are currently building up the Foreign Malign Influence Center. We already has the Election Threat Executive so we have been doing work on what the threats might be to our elections. That is now pulled into the Foreign Malign Influence Center, and we effectively have the budget for up to 12 people in the Foreign Malign Influence Center under this context and we have asked for funding for fiscal year 2023, essentially to be able to expand it by about three people but also to allow us to access expertise and knowledge that we think is critical, and really just to help facilitate what the community is doing across the board on these issues.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator Kaine, please.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to our witnesses. I want to ask about two items. The first is undersea cables. Ninety-five percent of global communication rely on a robust undersea cable network, 500,000 miles across the sea floor globally. Internet, global banking transactions, the SWIFT system, diplomatic cables, encrypted military communications are a few of the myriad applications that rely on this network.

Two NATO commands, the Joint Support and Enabling Command in Ulm, Germany, and Joint Force Command in Norfolk are monitoring threats against undersea cables in the Atlantic, but the vast majority of these cables are controlled by private sector companies. In the United States, France, Spain, Japan, China, these companies and contractors who work with them, such as Google

and Amazon, oversee the planning, production, design, deployment, and maintenance of the cables.

To what extent is the DOD and IC looking at integrating and communicating with these private actors so that we can monitor threats to the cables?

General BERRIER. Senator, I am going to take that one for action and do a little homework to get you a fulsome answer.

Senator KAINE. I would like, additionally, to know whether China, Russia, or other malign actors have an organic capability to map our networks, to cut into or tap into them, to listen to military or other government communications. So I would like a response back to that.

Here is my second question, unless, Director Haines, you have something to offer on the undersea cable.

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, sir. I actually would love to do it in closed session if that is all right.

Senator KAINE. I will look forward to that.

Ms. HAINES. Okay.

Senator KAINE. Now a question about intelligence estimates of the strength of other militaries. I think there were a number of estimates that the Afghan military would perform much better than they did, and there were a number of estimates that the Russian military was much stronger than it has proven to be. What are we doing to assess why we overestimated the strength of both of those militaries and recalibrating the way we assess military strength of other nations?

General BERRIER. Senator, I will start. We are taking a holistic view of how we do analysis and evaluate foreign militaries. It starts with the relationships that we have with our foreign partners, understanding their militaries, understanding their understanding of adversary militaries, and working an all-source assessment to have granularity inside the capabilities of these militaries.

Certainly the ANDSF [Afghan National Defense Security Forces] was an issue. Certainly the overestimation of Russian capability was an issue. But if you back up, if you look at Russia's growth since the early 2000s, their war in Chechnya, their war in Georgia, what they did in Ukraine, their operations in Syria, and you understand the reforms that they went through, we saw that from the outside. What we did not see from the inside was sort of this hollow force, lack of NCO corps, lack of leadership training, lack of effective doctrines. So those are the intangibles that we have got to be able to get our arms around as an Intelligence Community to really understand.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator WICKER, please.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Berrier, let me quote from your prepared statement. "Beijing appears willing to defer the use of military force as long as it considers that unification with Taiwan can be negotiated and that the cost of conflict outweigh the benefits."

General Berrier, I believe the United States should prepare Taiwan and send a clear message to Beijing that a military invasion would be too costly. I also believe the primary objective of the

United States and its allies, with regard to Taiwan, should not be so much to repel a Chinese attack but to prevent it from ever occurring.

General, from your assessment of China's capabilities and timeline as well as Taiwan's current defensive posture, what needs to be done? What can the United States be doing for or supplying to Taiwan in order to prevent a Chinese attack from ever occurring?

General BERRIER. Senator, thank you for that question. First I would say that I believe the PRC would rather not do it by force. I think they would rather do this peacefully, over time. There are some things that we can do with Taiwan. I think they are learning some very interesting lessons from the Ukrainian conflict, like how important leadership is, how important small-unit tactics are, how important an NCO corps is, and really effective training with the right weapon systems and what those system, with the right people, would be able to do to thwart that.

I think we have to engage with our INDOPACOM partners within the Department of Defense, the Taiwan military and leadership, to help them understand what this conflict has been about, what lessons they can learn, and where they should be focusing their dollars on defense and their training.

Senator WICKER. Is their NCO corps where it should be at this point?

General BERRIER. They have a largely conscript force. I do not believe it is where it should be.

Senator WICKER. So the volunteer part of their armed forces, is that where it should be, the non-conscript?

General BERRIER. They have a very short enlistment period. I can provide you additional details in a written response.

Senator WICKER. Okay. You also have written that the PLA Navy is the largest navy in the world and has the capability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets from its submarine and surface combatants. You later have written that Russia is fielding its new, quote, "ultra-quiet" submarine, capable of threatening North America from the Pacific Ocean.

General, do you assess that China and Russia will continue to grow both of their naval fleets and invest in new capabilities?

General BERRIER. Yes, I do believe they will both invest in new capabilities and grow their fleets.

Senator WICKER. Is the United States on pace to build and commission as many ships as China is building?

General BERRIER. I would refer that question to the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations.

Senator WICKER. But surely the Intelligence Community has an assessment of that.

General BERRIER. DIA has an assessment of Russian naval capabilities and Chinese PLAN [People's Liberation Army Navy] capabilities.

Senator WICKER. DIA is familiar with what the public plans of the Navy are at this point.

General BERRIER. Broadly, but I think the Navy will make those investment decisions based on how they perceive the threat as well,

and we will certainly collaborate with our partners in the Navy on any of that.

Senator WICKER. Let me switch to Afghanistan. Director Haines, you submitted the 2022 Office of Director of National Intelligence Annual Threat Assessment. On Afghanistan, the report says that the Taliban takeover threatens United States interests, that 500,000 Afghan refugees could attempt to cross into surrounding countries, and that almost certainly terrorist groups will establish and expand safe havens from which to plot attacks.

Madam Director, given these assessments in your office's Annual Threat Assessment, would you assess that the chaotic United States withdrawal from Afghanistan has left the Homeland more susceptible to terrorist attacks?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I agreed with what General Barrier indicated earlier on about the threat, essentially, that we are seeing from al Qaeda and from ISIS-K, which is to say that we see ISIS-K as the more concerning threat. At this point, we do not assess that they currently have the capability to essentially affect external attacks directed from Afghanistan to the United States at this stage, but they could build that capability over time, and they certainly have the intent to do so.

With al Qaeda, we are not seeing as much of a threat, and that does not mean that it could not grow over time, and that is obviously something that we are monitoring during this period.

Senator WICKER. General Berrier, has the exit from Afghanistan left our Homeland more vulnerable?

General BERRIER. Senator, I would not more vulnerable, but this is certainly an issue that the Intelligence Community has to keep on the warm plate, if you will, to make sure that we can monitor those networks, what they are doing, and where they are migrating to.

Senator WICKER. Thank you both.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.

Senator King, please.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Director, I am concerned about the leaks last week, the details of intelligence that is being shared with the Ukrainians, both in terms of sources and methods, alerting the Russians, what we know, perhaps how we know it, and also feeding Vladimir Putin's paranoia about conflict with the West. Are you actively pursuing the source of those leaks from last week?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. We obviously always actively pursue any information that we have that indicates that anybody may be disclosing classified information, you know, without authorization.

Senator KING. I hope you will pursue that because I think sometimes leaks are embarrassing. We do not worry too much about them. But I think in this case they were harmful, and I hope that this will be an active investigation.

A question to both of you. We all believe that the Intelligence Community did a really excellent job of predicting the invasion, alerting the world as to what was going on, what the disposition of Russian troops were, the involvement of Belarus, all of that. What we missed was the will to fight of the Ukrainians and the

leadership of Zelenskyy. We also missed that in Afghanistan. Within 12 months we missed the will to fight. We overestimated the Afghans' will to fight, underestimated the Ukrainians will to fight.

I realize will to fight is a lot harder to assess than number of tanks or volume of ammunition or something, but I hope that the Intelligence Community is doing some soul-searching about how to better get a handle on that question, because we had testimony, in this committee and in the Intelligence Committee, that Kyiv was going to fall in 3 or 4 days and war would last 2 weeks, and that turned out to be grossly wrong. Are you looking at this question of how to assess will to fight and domestic leadership?

Ms. HAINES. Yes, Senator. You heard from General Berrier, obviously, a number of things that DIA is doing. For the Intelligence Community writ large we have a process at the National Intelligence Council taking a look at these issues. I would say that it is a combination of will to fight and capacity, in effect, and the two of them are issues that are, as you indicated, quite challenging to provide effective analysis on. We are looking at different methodologies for doing so.

Senator KING. This is your lane, assessing military capability, and a big part, as you testified earlier, the reason the Ukrainian war is going the way it is is that the Ukrainians are fighting for their land and the Russians do not have the same will to fight.

I hope that this is something you are focused upon, because again, I think we failed on this question in Afghanistan, and in Afghanistan we had testimony over and over that the government would last 6 months or a year beyond the departure of United States troops. It lasted minus 2 weeks. Is this something that you are focused upon?

General BERRIER. Senator, I am focused on it, and I really appreciate this dialogue because I think there is an important nuance that we have to discuss. One is the will to fight and the other is the capacity to fight. In closed briefings we talked about this capacity to fight, and given the correlation of forces that the Russians had and what the Ukrainians had, it was the thought of senior analysts that it was not going to go very well, for a variety of factors.

But there was never an Intelligence Community assessment that said the Ukrainians lacked the will to fight. Those assessments talked about their capacity to fight—

Senator KING. Yeah, but there was not an assessment that they did either. The assessment was Ukraine would be overrun in a matter of weeks. That was grossly wrong.

General BERRIER. Grossly wrong but not a question of will to fight. It was capacity at that time, as the DNI [Director of National Intelligence] just said.

So we are taking a look at that, and we are—

Senator KING. Are you saying Ukrainians' will to fight has not been an important part of this struggle?

General BERRIER. No, I am not saying that. I think it has been everything.

Senator KING. That is what we did not know. Correct?

General BERRIER. Well, we assessed their capacity to face the size of the Russian forces that were amassed on their border was going to be very difficult for them.

Senator KING. Well, I all I am saying is the Intelligence Community needs to do a better job on this issue.

General BERRIER. I think the Intelligence Community did a great job on this issue, Senator, and we will—

Senator KING. General, how can you possibly say that when we were told, explicitly, Kyiv would fall in 3 days and Ukraine would fall in 2 weeks? You are telling me that was accurate intelligence?

General BERRIER. We were really focused on the Russian forces at the time, and so when we backed—

Senator KING. We were wrong about that too, were we not? We overestimated the Russians.

General BERRIER. Well, the Intelligence Community did a great job in predicting and talking—

Senator KING. I acknowledged that at the beginning of my question. I understand that. Yes, they did. What they failed at was predicting what was going to happen after Russia invaded.

General BERRIER. As I look at the totality of the entire operation I think the enormity rests on the predictions of what the Russians were going to do versus whether or not the Ukrainians were going to be successful.

Senator KING. Well, if you do not concede there was a problem on this then we have got a problem.

General BERRIER. Senator, I did not say that. We are going to take a hard look at this, but I think in the totality of the entire operation there were a lot more successes than failures.

Senator KING. I will not argue that point. I am just trying to make a point that I think there was a major issue that we missed that had a significant influence on how this has unfolded, and had we had a better handle on the prediction we could have done more to assist the Ukrainians earlier.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator King.

Senator Hawley, please.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Haines and General, is it your sense that Beijing thinks that it has a window of opportunity to invade Taiwan before Taiwan and the United States modernize and get into better position to deter any such invasion? Let us start with you, Director.

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. It is our view that they are working hard to effectively put themselves into a position in which their military is capable of taking Taiwan over our intervention. We can talk in closed session about timelines and so on for how quickly they think they may be able to achieve that, but I think that is something that they are trying to achieve, even as, what General Berrier stated earlier is true, which is to say that they would prefer not to have to use military force to take Taiwan. They would prefer to use other means.

Senator HAWLEY. General, do you want to comment on this?

General BERRIER. Well, I know there are a lot of dates out there, Senator—2027, 2030, 2049. Certainly it is on their mind. We are not really sure what lessons Xi Jinping is taking away from this conflict right now. We would hope that they would be the right ones. But I think it is going to take some time to sort out whether

or not he believes this is a window or that his timeline would extend.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me ask you about something that Admiral Davidson said when he was Commander of PACOM [Pacific Command]. He told the committee last March that he worried about a Chinese invasion of Taiwan in the next 6 years. That is his testimony. His successor, Admiral Aquilino, has similarly said that he views the timeline to be shrinking.

Based on the indicators—Director, let me start with you on this—based on the indicators available to the Intelligence Community, do you agree that the threat to Taiwan is acute between now and 2030?

Ms. HAINES. Yes. I think it is fair to say that it is critical or acute between now and 2030. I think that is absolutely fair. What is hard to tell is how, for example, whatever lessons China learns coming out of the Russia-Ukraine crisis might affect that time, as well as, as you indicated, whether or not our capabilities, Taiwan's capabilities, other decisions that will have to be made between now and then that will affect the timeline.

Senator HAWLEY. General, you said just a second ago that you hoped China would learn some lessons from the Ukraine conflict. What is it that you are hoping that they take away?

General BERRIER. Just how difficult a cross-strait invasion might be and how dangerous and high risk that might be. We saw—

Senator HAWLEY. Sorry. But do you not think that the Chinese military is significantly more capable than the Russians? As it turns out, just to pick up what Senator King was pressing you on, we pretty dramatically overestimated the strength of the Russian military. I would be surprised, for one, if China's military strength proves to so attenuated. I mean, do you not think that we are dealing with a significantly more formidable adversary in China?

General BERRIER. I think China is a formidable adversary.

Senator HAWLEY. So, I mean, back to lessons learned. Unfortunately, I think one lesson they can draw from the Ukraine conflict is that deterrence did not work in Ukraine. I mean, Russia invaded Ukraine. I, for one, do not want to be having this conversation about Taiwan in any period of years, not next year, not in 5 years, not in 10 years.

So my sense of urgency on this is we better figure out how deterrence is going to work in Taiwan, because if China is successful in a fait accompli that is going to look a lot different than a Russian scenario in Ukraine. Would you not agree with that?

General BERRIER. I do agree with that.

Senator HAWLEY. So just to that end, Director, let me come back to you. One of the things that the Intelligence Community was able to give us lead time on was a potential Russian invasion of Ukraine. I mean, we are very clear on that, that there was a strong likelihood of that, and you had that month in advance, actually.

I am curious if you think that we would get similar strategic warning about a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan?

Ms. HAINES. I mean, it is too early to tell, honestly, whether or not that would be the case, and obviously, you know, in a kind of classic intelligence way we would sure as hell not promise anything at this stage.

Senator HAWLEY. General, let me ask you about something that has long been a concern of mine, and even more so now, and that is what I think of as the simultaneity problem, simultaneous conflicts in Western Europe, with Russia and with China.

Do you worry that Beijing might see an opportunity to invade Taiwan in the very near future, should the United States get drawn into an actual conflict, a kinetic conflict with Russia?

General BERRIER. I think that is a remote possibility.

Senator HAWLEY. Which part is remote?

General BERRIER. The part that China would see that as a window to open to take advantage of that, based on the fact that they probably are not ready to do that right now.

Senator HAWLEY. So you do not think they have the capacity right now to invade Taiwan?

General BERRIER. I did not say that.

Senator HAWLEY. Well, I am trying to drill down on what you mean when you say that they would not do it.

General BERRIER. I think they probably have—actually, could we take this into the closed session?

Senator HAWLEY. Sure. Yeah, absolutely. My time has expired so I will take it up with you then.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Hawley.

Senator Manchin, please.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, just real quick, back on Taiwan again. Do you think Taiwan is prepared to defend itself? In your evaluation of what Taiwan has been doing, the only thing I keep seeing is they want more F-16s, and we think they are going to be able to go to air war with China and defend Taiwan? I do not think so.

General BERRIER. I think Taiwan could do more, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. Are you all strategically giving them different things that they can use, whether it be in the sea or on land, to protect their island?

General BERRIER. I think they are in close consultation with our partners in INDOPACOM and within the Department of Defense.

Senator MANCHIN. Mm-hmm. How about Ukraine? Can Ukraine win now that we have, as Senator King so rightfully pointed out and Senator Hawley followed up on, we misread that one. Are we reading it now, they have the ability to win if we continue to support, without us being pulled into a land war with them? On their own, can they win?

General BERRIER. I think that is a difficult prediction to make. Right now I think where the agency is at is a prolonged stalemate should no factor change on either side. In other words, the Russians continue to do what they are doing, and we continue to do what we are doing for the Ukrainians. I see that as a stalemate, not a—

Senator MANCHIN. Director Haines, how do you evaluate this? I am sure that you have been kept up to speed on this and evaluating them. My other concern you might want to answer is our ability to maintain and manufacture the weapons that are needed to not only help Ukraine, not only to backfill our allies, but also

keep our own supply chains up. Are we running critically low? Could it be that we could put ourselves in a dangerous situation?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I think a few things. One is, just taking your last question first, something we can do maybe a little bit in closed session is talk about not just our military assistance to Ukraine but also a number of other countries that have provided military assistance to Ukraine.

Senator MANCHIN.—ask the question, are you concerned about the ability to have the supplies that are needed for us, for our allies, and what Ukraine is going to need to sustain and hopefully win this war?

Ms. HAINES. So that is why I was talking about the allies piece. No, I am not concerned because I think, frankly, between all of us there is the capacity to provide the kind of assistance that they are asking for.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. Can you identify the hot spots we are very much concerned about, other than China, because we know China is the challenge we have. Other hot spots that we are worried about that could rise up during this very difficult time, and the geopolitical interests that we have in the world. I mean, in Iran? North Korea? Some of the one you are more watching and concerned about.

General BERRIER. The agency is worried about North Korea for sure, and their ballistic missile development timeline, as well as potential nuclear testing. We are always thinking about Iran and the actions that they have to pull malign influence within the region against our neighbors and certainly United States forces there. We are always thinking through how to sustain partnerships to be able to keep a beat on these threats.

Senator MANCHIN. Director Haines, are you concerned about basically the tensions that we have with UAE [United Arab Emirates] and with Saudis and also their more visual movements, intentional movements towards China for support or basically the yuan being used now as the currency that they are accepting for payment of energy, things of this sort that could also put us in a more precarious situation with UAE and Saudis?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. I mean, obviously, as you indicate, we are always looking at efforts that both China and Russia make to try to make inroads with partners of ours across the world, and UAE and Saudi Arabia are examples of that in both respects.

Senator MANCHIN. Cybersecurity is my final one for you all. Right now it seems like it is a convoluted area where people would report, whether it is private companies in America that are getting hacked and what is going on but also who is in charge? Where do they go? What is the chain right now within the Federal Government, in military especially, on cyber, that you consider the premier spot that we should be working with, or are we putting things together? Are we still so fragmented throughout our agencies?

Ms. HAINES. I mean, my experience is it has gotten better over the years. I would never say it is perfect. It is one of those things that continues to be worked through. But there is a very clear chain of command with respect to taking action—

Senator MANCHIN. Who is taking the lead? Who takes the lead?

Ms. HAINES. When it comes to offensive cyber operations to defend the country, obviously the Department of Defense does so. When it comes to defending, you know, helping to defend the infrastructure and critical—right, exactly, resilience—it is the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, and everybody has a role to play, and we obviously support, in the Intelligence Community, all of them in the work that they are doing.

Senator MANCHIN. What about the National Cybersecurity—how about the center? How do you all evaluate the National Cybersecurity Center?

Ms. HAINES. You mean the National Cybersecurity Director, the new position—

Senator MANCHIN. All the stakeholders are involved in that. That is why I am saying it is convoluted. Who is taking the lead? Who is the lead person? Who is the lead agency?

Senator KING. CISA [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Administration].

Ms. HAINES. Yeah, CISA is the main—

Senator MANCHIN. How do you evaluate that?

Ms. HAINES. I think they are doing very well, yeah.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. No further questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Manchin.

Senator Sullivan, please.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the witnesses for their hard work during a challenging time. I want to focus a lot on the issue of energy, and I will relay a story I had with Senator McCain and a Russian dissident who has now been arrested, Vladimir Kura-Murza. He is in jail right now in Russia.

About 4 years ago, I asked him what was the number one thing we could do to undermine the corrupt Russian regime, to undermine Vladimir Putin, and he said, “The number one thing? That is easy, Senator. Produce more American energy.” Produce more American energy.

So I want to talk a little bit about that. In your assessment, is energy independence—so a couple of years ago we were the largest producer of natural gas in the world, the largest producer of oil in the world, the largest producer of renewables in the world—is that good for America’s national security, General?

General BERRIER. Senator, thanks for the question. As we have watched this conflict unfold what we—

Senator SULLIVAN. I have a got a lot of questions. I gave you a softball. Can you answer the question? Is that good for America’s national security to be energy independent and the world’s energy superpower?

General BERRIER. Certainly energy independence is a good thing.

Senator SULLIVAN. How about you, Director?

Ms. HAINES. Yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. Thank you for the straightforward answer.

Now, in this conflict with Ukraine, what does our ability to produce energy, how do the Russians view that and how do our allies view that? We all know Vladimir Putin uses energy as a weapon. How are you assessing the ability of the United States to fill

the void that the Germans and others have with regard to getting energy from Russia to now get it from the United States? Is there a lot of interest in that and is that a good thing for our national security? General?

General BERRIER. I certainly believe that our European allies see this as a national security issue for sure, and they are thinking through new ways of developing and getting after their energy needs, for sure.

Senator SULLIVAN. How about getting some from the United States?

General BERRIER. If the United States had excess capacity I am sure that would be something that they would welcome.

Senator SULLIVAN. Do you see that, Director, similarly?

Ms. HAINES. Yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask with regard to China. Almost 70 percent of China's crude oil supply came in the form of imports. What is your assessment of how China's energy dependence could or would impact its military operations during a potential cross-strait conflict? In your assessment, when you read up on China's weaknesses, are they concerned about their energy dependence with regard to national gas and oil being a major, major importer?

General BERRIER. If there is a way we could take this into the closed session to discuss that, that would be better, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay.

General BERRIER. I do believe they are concerned about their dependence on energy.

Senator SULLIVAN. Director?

Ms. HAINES. Yes, absolutely.

Senator SULLIVAN. Do you see that as a strategic advantage we have in our great power competition with China and Russia, the fact that we cannot only produce energy for our own country—and I am talking all of the above—renewables, oil, gas. Do you see that as a strategic advantage for our Nation?

General BERRIER. I see it as an advantage.

Ms. HAINES. Yeah. I mean, I think, frankly, our capacity to work with our allies on this issue has been a strategic advantage, and our ability to work with them in order to actually help to mitigate against Russia using energy as a weapon has been a major issue.

Senator SULLIVAN. China's dependence on energy, should there be some kind of conflict between us and China?

Ms. HAINES. Yes. The relationship with Russia will be relevant under those circumstances, obviously.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask one final question, and it is not really a question on intel. You know, we are getting ready to vote here on a \$40 billion package. My team and I are looking through it. It is a lot. How do you assess our NATO partners' commitment, finally, to hitting 2 percent of their GDP for their annual military budgets? I mean, we have now 100,000 troops over in Europe. I fully support what the President has been doing in that regard. But if there was ever a time that countries had to kind of wake up and say, you know what, for 40 years we promised it at 2 percent. The wolf is at the door, or maybe the bear is at the door, or the dragon is at the door, whatever metaphor you want.

Are you seeing a shift? Because the Germans made a big announcement. My understanding is Canada still will not even hit 1 percent of GDP for their defense budget. Are you seeing a shift in our NATO allies to say, you know what, it is time for us to pull our own weight here. The Americans are doing it, once again. Look, I support everything we are doing, but, you know, \$40 billion, that is a lot of money. My constituents have got a lot of needs too, and we still have NATO allies, Canada one, who just freeloader, and it is getting a little tiring.

What is your assessment of our NATO partners' commitment to finally hitting 2 percent now that it is very clear that there is a brutal dictator on their doorstep?

Ms. HAINES. I think we have seen, obviously, as you indicated in the opening to your question, just a number of countries now announce an increase in their defense budget, and I think that is something that we are going to see them follow through on, at least in part.

Senator SULLIVAN. General?

General BERRIER. I think this has had a galvanizing effect on our NATO partners, and I think most of them will come around.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, and again, I did not start by saying the intel you were providing us and everybody else prior to the war was exceptional, and the intel ops that you did were also really impressive. So I appreciate that.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

Senator Peters, please.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Haines, the 2022 Annual Threat Assessment states, quote, "China presents the broadest, most active and persistent cyber espionage threat to the United States Government and private sector networks," end of quote. The assessment specifically discusses the capacity for China to conduct surveillance as well as disrupt critical infrastructure.

My question for you, ma'am, is does the ODNI [Office of the Director of National Intelligence] believe that China would use their cyber capacity to shape other countries' decisions such as the Russians are known to do? Do you believe that is in the cards as well?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. Yes. I mean, I think in the sense that, in particular, our assessment is that China is pursuing significant cyber capabilities, in this area in particular, to deter the United States from taking action in the event of a conflict, for example, in their region.

Senator PETERS. Thank you. Media coverage during the weeks leading up to Russia's invasion often used open-source evidence to support the Administration's intelligence estimates. Examples here range from images provided by Maxar's commercial satellite network to Russian military communications that were intercepted by tech-savvy civilians.

My question for you, General Berrier, is how is the proliferation of technology and information accessibility for average citizens impacting the realm of professional intelligence work within your agency?

General BERRIER. From the perspective of this war between Russia and Ukraine the plethora of open-source data that is available

to enrich our assessments has been amazing. Just think of the third-party damage assessment work that is happening right now using images because most Ukrainian citizens have a cellphone. It has been really, really rich, and then you combine it with the other open-source data that is available, publicly available, and can be purchased.

For us it has been enlightening and will probably shape how we do intelligence operations and analysis going forward in the future. We just have to be careful that we use the right rules at the right time to make sure that we are safeguarding information and that we are not violating any laws or policies.

Senator PETERS. That actually leads to the next question, and you mentioned you are looking at how you integrate that into how you collect information. Is there anything that Congress should be doing to help you better enable your abilities to harness the potential for open-source information?

General BERRIER. I think we are budgeted for it, Senator, and we are looking forward to the work ahead as we go forward on this issue.

Senator PETERS. Good.

Director Haines, the Biden administration has done an admirable job certainly of crafting a coalition of nations to impose sanctions, enforce export controls against Russia for their illegal invasion. This includes our trans-Atlantic partners, many of them who are now giving up on Russian hydrocarbons, something that I think we all would have thought was absolutely unthinkable just a short while ago, as well as our global partners, Japan and Taiwan, actively engaged.

What has been noticeable, though, is to see that much of the world is still not with us. They may not be with Russia, and I am not saying they are with Russia, but they are not subscribing to our call for a global coalition of democracies to stand against Ukraine. This includes India, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, and particularly other nations in the global south in which the United States certainly has very friendly relations with but we have not yet been able to get them to join the Ukrainian cause.

As the United States will need to certainly build an even more robust coalition of nations in the future to counter potential Chinese aggression, I believe it is imperative that the United States understand how to win over these non-aligned nations living certainly in a multi-polar world.

So my question to you, in your view what steps should the United States take to build a broader coalition for potential future conflicts, similar to what we are seeing right now?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. From the Intelligence Community perspective we have done a lot of thinking about how we can help to facilitate, frankly, the policy community in this area, to your point, and one of the things that we did in the context of Ukraine that I think is possible for us to do in other areas, and that we have discussed with the policy community about, is basically working key allies and partners who are influencers, in effect, within specific regions, to try to get out to them as much intelligence as we can, obviously being mindful of sources and methods. But just to lay the groundwork so that then the policy community

can work with those countries to effectively provide for the kind of coalition that you describe.

I do think it is an absolutely fundamental piece. I mean, the fact that the UN (United Nations) General Assembly managed to garner 141 votes, I think it was, against Russia on the Russia-Ukraine piece was pretty extraordinary. I do think that our capacity to share intelligence in advance of that moment was critical to getting that kind of coalition together, and I hope we can do that in the future.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Peters.

Senator Rosen, please.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Chairman Reed, and I really appreciate the witnesses. I appreciate you both for being here today and for your service.

Director Haines and General Berrier, given that the Annual Threat Assessment was written before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has Russia's loss and expenditure of military equipment, personnel, and resources in Ukraine, coupled with their, frankly, poor performance, changed our overall threat of Russia and their military capabilities, and—like I said, this was written before that—how do you assess we may need to adjust our planning going forward, seeing as what we are learning?

General BERRIER. I will start with that one, Senator. I think, you know, as we have watched the Russians falter here and the losses that they have sustained we believe that they are going to be set back conventionally for a number of years as they try to recoup these losses and replace all of the equipment and soldiers that they have lost.

I think we should back up our assessment really for NATO and what that threat really looks like, also factoring in their nuclear capabilities and what that means for NATO going forward.

Ms. HAINES. I will just add to this. I think, as we talk to the analysts about this, and obviously before each of the threat hearings we discussed this because the threat hearings came after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and as you indicate the assessment was done beforehand, and I think the overall threat level has not so much changed as it is the question of how it is evolving, to General Berrier's point.

I think our view is that the ground combat forces have been degraded considerably. It is going to take them years to basically manage, to the extent that they are able, to rebuild that, in effect, and that may end up meaning that they have greater reliance, in effect, on asymmetric tools during this period. So they rely more on things like cyber, nuclear, precision, et cetera, and that is obviously a shift in the way in which they are exercising their efforts for influence, and so on.

Senator ROSEN. Well, and knowing that we also know, to everyone else's point here too, that the world is watching. So Director Haines, how do you assess the threat level to Taiwan? Has it increased? Does China feel more emboldened now that Russia has invaded Ukraine? Then I will give the second part of that to you, General. Does China see this as an opportunity, maybe this period,

to invade Ukraine as we might be distracted, the world might be distracted with the Ukraine crisis?

Ms. HAINES. Thank you, Senator. It is hard to tell, honestly, at this stage. What we see is evaluating what is happening in the Russia-Ukraine crisis. They are still evaluating. The crisis obviously still continues. So what lessons they learn during this period is not really concluded yet, and so it is a little bit harder to tell whether or not is an increased threat of accelerating their efforts toward Taiwan or less so.

I would say that thus far the IC has not assessed that the Russia-Ukraine crisis is likely to accelerate their plan, vis-à-vis Taiwan, and the kinds of lessons that we think are possible that are relevant, just to give you maybe two, one is they were surprised by the degree to which the United States and Europe came together to enact sanctions, and that is something, obviously, they are going to be looking at in the context of Taiwan.

The second one, I think, is this point that really General Berrier made earlier a little bit, which is to say that one of the issues for them is the confidence they have that they are able militarily to take action in Taiwan over our intervention. That will play into their decision-making over time, we think, and seeing what happened in Russia, that might give them less confidence, in some respects, over what it is that is likely to happen.

General BERRIER. Senator, the only thing that I would add is on a day-to-day basis with Chinese military activity I am not seeing anything that would tell me that they are thinking about trying to take advantage of this time that they think that they might have.

Senator ROSEN. Let me ask one additional follow-up on that. What is your assessment of our ability to conduct military operations in both theaters should something occur?

General BERRIER. We have significant capabilities in both theaters. It would depend on what the variables were with each situation and what that meant. But that is why we have four-star combatant commanders in USEUCOM [United States European Command] and INDOPACOM.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Rosen, and thank you, Madam Director and General. We have a vote scheduled at 11:45. We will reconvene in SVC-217 for the classified session at noon, 12 o'clock.

At this time I will recess or adjourn the open session. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

## ANOMALOUS HEALTH INCIDENTS

1. Senator SHAHEEN. Director Haines, I am concerned with the seemingly conflicting information provided by the Intelligence Community (IC) through the release of unclassified summaries of reports by Central Intelligence Agency-led working group and an Intelligence Community expert panel in late January and early-February 2022, respectively. How is the IC improving coordination within the IC and interagency on future releases, increasing transparency with the public and enhancing communication with victims?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

2. Senator SHAHEEN. Lieutenant General Berrier, did the Defense Intelligence Agency substantively contribute to either the Central Intelligence Agency-led or IC expert panel reports?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

3. Senator SHAHEEN. Lieutenant General Berrier, does the Defense Intelligence Agency agree with the findings of those reports?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

4. Senator SHAHEEN. Lieutenant General Berrier, does the Defense Intelligence Agency have additional information beyond what is contained in those reports that you believe would serve to further inform Congress on this matter and, if so, will you transmit that information, consistent with the appropriate security clearance protocols?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

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 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ANGUS S. KING

## CHINA COMMISSION

I believe we must establish an unbiased and non-partisan commission to examine a grand strategy for our approach to China, similar in intent to President Eisenhower's Solarium Project. We need to think of a holistic approach to create a stable international order in which China (or Russia) cannot dictate regional developments.

5. Senator KING. Director Haines, LTG Berrier, in order to avoid the US trying to "spend our way out of conflict," what are China's primary areas of influence the United States and allies should focus on countering that will provide the most significant impact?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

6. Senator KING. Director Haines, LTG Berrier what would be the greatest benefit this commission could deliver?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

7. Senator KING. Director Haines, LTG Berrier what would put us in the best position to avoid the United States and China from escalating conflict and careening into a war with China?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

8. Senator KING. Director Haines, LTG Berrier, what are the 'toughest problems' OUTSIDE of military imbalances?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## BUREAU OF CYBER STATISTICS

Director Haines, in the hearing you stated: "And these categories of—often overlap Cybercrime, for example, is a transnational threat, while also being a threat that emanates from state actors. One of the key challenges of this era is assessing how various threats and trends are likely to intersect so as to identify where their interactions may result in fundamentally greater risk to our interests than one

might otherwise expect or where they introduce new opportunities.” I believe that it is time to establish a Bureau of Cyber Statistics.

9. Senator KING. Director Haines, how do you think the IC, DoD, and commercial enterprises would benefit from a BCS and CISA compiling and analyzing cyberattack and cyber probing activities?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JONI K. ERNST

WORLDWIDE THREATS

10. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, China continues to posture and prepares to invade Taiwan, Russia invaded Ukraine 77 days ago, and the threat of terrorism against the Homeland has increased, all in the last year. Deterrence by appeasement and negotiation has proven in most theaters. Since January 2021, have global threats to the US decreased in any region of the world?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

GLOBAL SECURITY

11. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier where has the United States neutralized or slowed the momentum of any great power or violent extremist threat?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

BRICS SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

12. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier the economic partnership of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, known as BRICS has increased their share of global GDP threefold in the past 15 years. Do you have concerns that this economic partnership is a pre-cursor for a collective security partnership?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

BRICS SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

13. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier what options on the table do we have to interdict that?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

RUSSIA/CHINA RELATIONS

14. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier specifically, regarding Russia and China going forward – what does the future of this relationship look like in your view, and what future security cooperation is in their plans?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA BELT AND ROAD

15. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, China’s military basing interests span multiple countries along Africa’s Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Mediterranean coasts. What are some of the concerns you have with China expanding its military and logistical footprints?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA BELT AND ROAD

16. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, what steps are being taken to counter China and its desire to implement the Belt and Road initiative?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA AND IRAN

17. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, how will this deal deepen China’s influence within the Middle East and undercut our efforts to isolate Iran and its terrorist proxies, and what can be done to disrupt this partnership?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CRITICAL MINERALS

18. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, the critical minerals requirement will increase as much as seventeen-fold between now and 2040. If we do not pursue domestic mining or ally-shored mining for critical minerals like copper, lithium, and cobalt, we will reach an unacceptable level of risk regarding our energy security?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

TRANSITIONING ENERGY

19. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the risks associated with energy transition? How can we buy down that risk?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. A globally based clean energy transition would shift the primary energy mix away from carbon-intensive fuels toward low-carbon energy sources. Although the share of fossil fuels in the global energy mix has remained at approximately 80 percent for decades, the International Energy Agency forecasts a decline to about 50 percent by 2050 based on the collective pledges of global nations. We anticipate a probable risk will be supply, demand, and service shortages because of the scale of the transfer from largely centralized energy production systems to a distributed power generation model to provide energy during peak use periods.

Mismatches between the demand and supply reductions could bring price and service volatility as hydrocarbon demand declines, according to an intergovernmental agency report. Exporters with low-cost resources hold an oil and gas production advantage during a demand-driven energy transition, which could exacerbate disruptions in major producing countries and significantly affect global supply and prices, according to the same report. The prospects of social and political turmoil in some producing countries probably will increase during the energy transition period as lower global oil and gas demand puts financial strains on those that rely heavily on hydrocarbon revenues.

Globally available alternative energy technologies—such as solar photovoltaics and wind—are subject to risks arising from trade in energy producing and distribution equipment and raw materials, according to an intergovernmental agency report. Critical raw material supplies are of particular concern because many clean energy technologies are mineral intensive and supplies are more concentrated in a smaller number of countries than oil and natural gas supplies, according to an academic report. China continues to seek and secure rare-earth minerals and associated mining rights that are essential in these technologies, according to the same report.

A survey of institutional investors on required rates of return for new energy projects found that uncertainties associated with the energy transition have already started to alter the risk preferences of investors in fossil fuel projects, according to an academic energy research institute. Investors are demanding a much higher rate of return to justify investments in oil and coal projects. These changes in risk preferences probably will affect the volume of available supplies if there is insufficient investment into the sector, which may lead to potential price volatility depending on demand projections.

DIA does not provide analysis on how the United States could buy down energy transition risks. This question is outside of our defense intelligence mandate. We defer this question to other United States Agencies, Departments, and U.S. policy-makers who may have specific recommendations on how to reduce energy transition risks.

ALLY SHORING, ENERGY

20. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, are other countries, particularly in South America, open to working with the United States to secure energy supply chains as it relates to oil and natural gas?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

NUCLEAR THREAT, IRAN DEAL

21. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, do you believe that Iran's threat and aggression toward the Middle East is likely to be worse in the context of a renewed nuclear agreement or in the absence of one?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. In the absence of a renewed nuclear agreement, Tehran is likely to take more aggressive nuclear, cyber, diplomatic, and military steps to impose costs, demonstrate resolve, and increase leverage for potential future negotiations. If an agreement is reached, Tehran likely would seek to avoid regional actions in the short term that it views could jeopardize sanctions relief, although the regime will balance such caution with a perceived need to respond to adversary action. Over the long term, Tehran almost certainly will continue to take destabilizing actions in the region consistent with its goal of establishing itself as a leading power in the Middle East, including attacks against United States and partner interests.

## COUNTER TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA

22. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, the 2022 Worldwide Threat Assessment notes that “al Qaeda remains intent on striking United States interests; it is more capable of striking U.S. interests in the regions where its affiliates operate rather than in the Homeland. The primary threat to the United States abroad from al Qaeda emanates from the countries where its strongest affiliates currently operate—Yemen, Somalia, and West Africa—and will vary based on local circumstances.” Global counterterrorism pressure is shifting as the United States and its allies and partners reprioritize to other more pressing threats, including global-power competition. In the Sahel region of West Africa, the United States has relied on France as the primary partner to contain the al Qaeda and Islamic State threats in Mali. The French are now withdrawing. How will the changing counterterrorism posture in the Sahel affect the global terror threat?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## WAGNER GROUP, WEST AFRICA

23. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, how is the presence of Russian Wagner Group mercenaries affecting state fragility in the Sahel region of West Africa and terrorist recruitment in this region?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## CRITICAL TECHNOLOGIES

24. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, China continues to steal technologies from United States small businesses. What three or four specific technologies do you believe are the most important for the U.S. to protect right now? I am asking for specific technologies, not broad categories.

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

25. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, what types of intelligence support your assessments on al Qaeda and ISIS–K threat assessments?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## INTELLIGENCE

26. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, what are our intelligence blind spots, especially in regards to Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Mali?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## INTELLIGENCE

27. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, what is the intelligence community’s assessment on foreign fighter flows—are they going into Afghanistan from Syria and elsewhere?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## NON-STATE THREATS

28. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, has the United States shift in resources towards geostrategic competition, particularly focusing on Ukraine these past six months, created opportunities for terrorist and non-state malign actors to expand or strengthen?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## TERRORIST UAS CAPABILITIES

29. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, are terrorists and non-state actors like al Qaeda, ISIS–K, Houthis, and Hezbollah seeking UAS capabilities?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

SOLOMON ISLANDS

30. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, on April 19, 2022, China announced it signed a wide-ranging security pact with the Solomon Islands. I am concerned that the agreement would allow Chinese naval deployments and basing in the region. What is your assessment of the additional threat posed by The People's Liberation Army Navy should the Solomon Islands be used to refuel or host Chinese ships?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

SOLOMON ISLANDS

31. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier if the People's Liberation Army Navy gain access and placement in the Solomon Islands, what is your assessment of the risk posed to the United States in the contingency of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

SOLOMON ISLANDS

32. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, if the People's Liberation Army Navy gain access and placement in the Solomon Islands, what is your assessment of the risk for resupply of Australia in the event of an emergency, and the additional risk for United States forces in the region?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA

33. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the risk of Chinese naval basing in the Pacific?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA

34. Senator ERNST. Director Haines, Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the risk of Chinese naval basing on Papa New Guinea to the United States and Australia?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA

35. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, China significantly expanded military infrastructure in the South China Sea and continue to fortify their island bases. For example, the Chinese improved Woody Island to accommodate an enlarged harbor. What is your assessment of the additional risk posed by these upgrades to U.S. forces in the region?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

TAIWAN

36. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the above in a Taiwan contingency?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA

37. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the above as a risk to our allies in the region?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

CHINA/TAIWAN

38. Senator ERNST. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of the likelihood the war in Ukraine is altering China's calculus towards military action on Taiwan?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN S. SULLIVAN

LESSONS LEARNED IN UKRAINE

39. Senator SULLIVAN. Director Haines and Lieutenant General Berrier, the ongoing and illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine has profoundly changed the security dynamic in Europe but the reverberations of this conflict are being felt in the Indo-Pacific. The surprising ineptitude of the Russian military and European solidarity manifested in military aid to Ukraine and economic sanctions against Russia is no doubt causing planners in China and Taiwan to reevaluate their assumptions about what a cross-Strait military conflict would look like. As CIA Director William Burns stated this past Saturday, "I don't think for a minute that this has eroded Xi's determination over time to gain control over Taiwan ... But I think it's something that's affecting their calculation about how and when they go about doing that." What is your assessment of how the PRC and Taiwan are analyzing and reacting to the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

40. Senator SULLIVAN. Director Haines and Lieutenant General Berrier, do you assess the war in Ukraine is verifying plans and assumptions or disrupting them?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

41. Senator SULLIVAN. Director Haines and Lieutenant General Berrier, do you assess the PRC's logistics system to be vulnerable to disruption in a cross-Strait military conflict?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

PRC ENERGY VULNERABILITY

42. Senator SULLIVAN. Director Haines and Lieutenant General Berrier, do you believe a global interdiction and blockading campaign against these main maritime supply routes would impact and limit the PRC's operations in a military conflict?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN

PROXY GROUPS

43. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, what impact does Wagner's introduction of novel capabilities in Africa have on United States operations in the region?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

44. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, how effective are Russian proxies at anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) with regard to United States efforts in prosecuting a counterterrorism campaign in Africa?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

45. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, in July 2020, AFRICOM released a rare public statement concerning Wagner's role in Libya, what is your assessment of the immediate and long-term impacts of this statement?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

46. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, what is your assessment of AFRICOM's public statement on potentially delegitimizing Wagner's efforts?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

47. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, how did other proxy forces react to AFRICOM's public statement?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

## UKRAINE

48. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, what is your assessment of reasoning why Moscow's cyber capabilities have not been leveraged to the full extent in Ukraine?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

49. Senator BLACKBURN. Lieutenant General Berrier, how is the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) deterring Beijing's ambitions in space?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## TALIBAN

50. Senator BLACKBURN. Lieutenant General Berrier, as Russia and Iran collaborate to damage United States credibility, how does the IC approach the security landscape in Afghanistan and Central Asia?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

51. Senator BLACKBURN. Lieutenant General Berrier, in the past nine months, to what capacity, if any, have we shared intelligence or have United States officials met with the Taliban?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

52. Senator BLACKBURN. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your current assessment of Taliban intelligence capabilities in countering al Qaeda?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

## CYBER

53. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, what vulnerabilities in the IC infrastructure have advances in AI/ML highlighted?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

54. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, how is the AI Unity Project leveraging existing cyber capabilities within the National Intelligence Agency?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

55. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, what are the short- and long-term visions for interagency collaboration to enhance the AI Unity Project?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

## SOMALIA

56. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, a recent article quotes an unnamed senior intelligence official saying, "there is an uptick in al-Shabaab activities" and "there has been no pressure on al-Shabaab at this point, and they have freedom of movement." With this in mind, what is the importance of countering-ISIS and al-Shabaab to maintain our influence in Somalia?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

57. Senator BLACKBURN. Ms. Haines, how have counterterror operations been impacted by the reduction in United States troops in Mogadishu, and how has this changed al-Shabaab's actions?  
Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

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 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOSH D. HAWLEY

58. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, Russia has sent a large portion of its military to fight in Ukraine, but there are reports that it has withheld certain capabilities in order to deter – or perhaps use against – NATO. Can you confirm that Moscow has withheld certain forces from the fight in Ukraine, and if so, can you tell us here what those forces are and why they're being withheld?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

59. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, the Russian military is suffering significant losses in Ukraine not just in manpower, but in munitions, logistics, and other critical resources its military needs to fight. What is your assessment of how long it will take Russia to regenerate in response to these losses, particularly given international sanctions on Russia's defense sector?  
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

60. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, what is your assessment of these losses' impact on Russia's ability to execute a fait accompli against one of the Baltic states in the next one to five years?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

61. Senator HAWLEY. Director Haines, China and Russia declared a "no limits partnership" just weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Given Russia's performance in the war, how has China reassessed its relationship with Moscow?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

62. Senator HAWLEY. Director Haines, do you believe a weakened Russia diminishes or strengthens China's hand, given the asymmetry of their partnership?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

63. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, as we divine lessons from the conflict in Ukraine, what specific observations is China making about modern military operations, for example, about the premium on logistics, the challenges of defense suppression, or the vulnerability of surface ships to cruise missile attack?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

64. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, you are aware of press reports that United States targeting intelligence enabled Ukraine's killing of Russian generals and the Black Sea cruiser. What regulates the type and extent of targeting intelligence that the United States will share with Ukraine?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

65. Senator HAWLEY. Director Haines, how are the Russians responding to these public leaks of United States intelligence linked to the killing of Russian generals?

Director HAINES. [Deleted.]

66. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, has Russia alerted its non-strategic nuclear forces during the conflict, particularly in the vicinity of Kaliningrad?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

67. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, are there any other indicators that suggest Russian might conduct preemptive escalation?

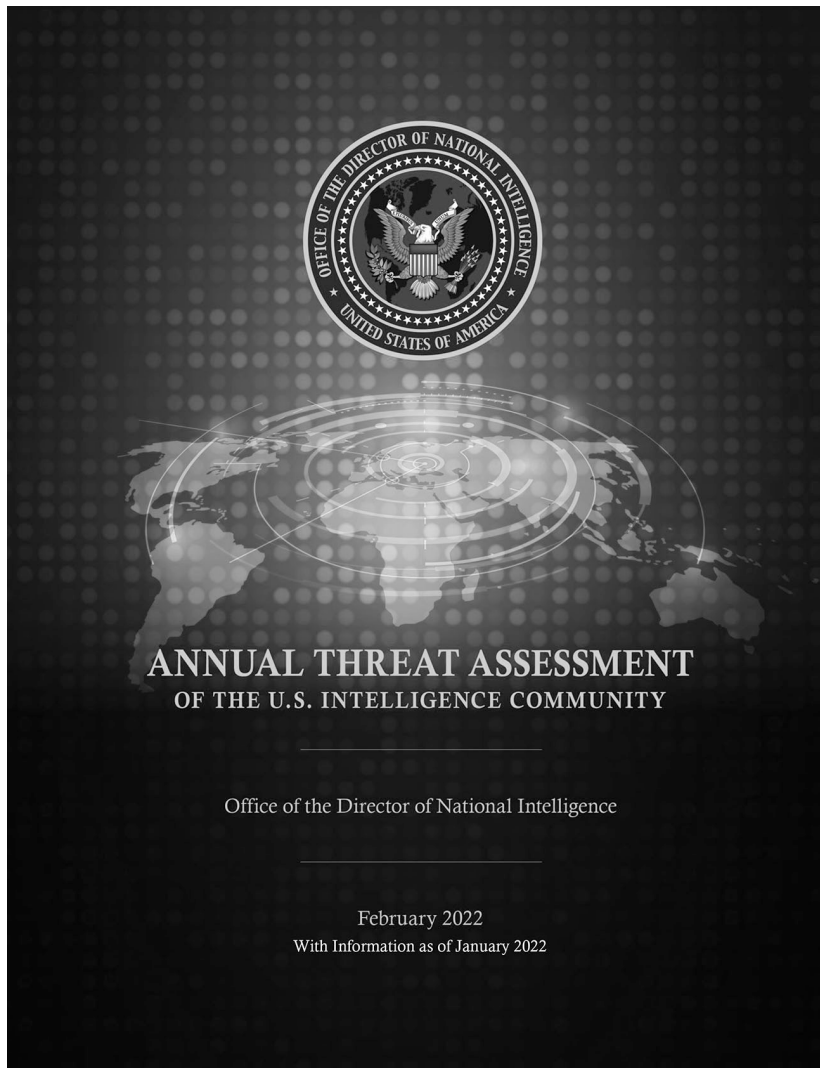
Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

68. Senator HAWLEY. Lieutenant General Berrier, against what targets and with what effects would you expect Russian nuclear employment?

Lieutenant General BERRIER. [Deleted.]

APPENDIX A

The following document was provided by Ms. Haines in lieu of a written statement.



## ANNUAL THREAT ASSESSMENT OF THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

February 7, 2022

### INTRODUCTION

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This annual report of worldwide threats to the national security of the United States responds to Section 617 of the FY21 Intelligence Authorization Act (P.L. 116-260). This report reflects the collective insights of the Intelligence Community (IC), which is committed every day to providing the nuanced, independent, and unvarnished intelligence that policymakers, warfighters, and domestic law enforcement personnel need to protect American lives and America's interests anywhere in the world.

This assessment focuses on the most direct, serious threats to the United States during the next year. The order of the topics presented in this assessment does not necessarily indicate their relative importance or the magnitude of the threats in the view of the IC. All require a robust intelligence response, including those where a near-term focus may help head off greater threats in the future, such as climate change and environmental degradation.

As required by the law, this report will be provided to the congressional intelligence committees as well as the committees on the Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

*Information available as of 21 January was used in the preparation of this assessment.*

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## FOREWORD

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In the coming year, the United States and its allies will face an increasingly complex and interconnected global security environment marked by the growing specter of great power competition and conflict, while collective, transnational threats to all nations and actors compete for our attention and finite resources. These challenges will play out amidst the continued global disruption resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, contention over global efforts to deal with a changing climate, increasingly powerful non-state actors, and rapidly evolving technology, all within the context of an evolving world order where the continued diffusion of power is leading actors to reassess their place and capabilities in an increasingly multipolar world. These challenges will intersect and interact in unpredictable ways, leading to mutually reinforcing effects that could challenge our ability to respond, but also introducing new opportunities to forge collective action with allies and partners against both the renewed threat of nation-state aggression and emerging threats to human security. The 2022 Annual Threat Assessment highlights some of those connections as it provides the Intelligence Community's (IC's) baseline assessments of the most pressing threats to U.S. national interests, while emphasizing the United States' key adversaries and competitors. It is not an exhaustive assessment of all global challenges and notably excludes assessments of U.S. adversaries' vulnerabilities. It accounts for functional concerns, such as weapons of mass destruction and cyber, primarily in the sections on threat actors, such as China and Russia.

Competition and potential conflict between nation-states remains a critical national security threat. Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang have demonstrated the capability and intent to advance their interests at the expense of the United States and its allies. China increasingly is a near-peer competitor, challenging the United States in multiple arenas—especially economically, militarily, and technologically—and is pushing to change global norms and potentially threatening its neighbors. Russia is pushing back against Washington where it can—locally and globally—employing techniques up to and including the use of force. In Ukraine, we can see the results of Russia's increased willingness to use military threats and force to impose its will on neighbors. Iran will remain a regional menace with broader malign influence activities, and North Korea will expand its WMD capabilities while being a disruptive player on the regional and world stages. Major adversaries and competitors are enhancing and exercising their military, cyber, and other capabilities, raising the risks to U.S. and allied forces, weakening our conventional deterrence, and worsening the longstanding threat from weapons of mass destruction. As states such as China and Russia increasingly see space as a warfighting domain, multilateral space security discussions have taken on greater importance as a way to reduce the risk of a confrontation that would affect every state's ability to safely operate in space.

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to strain governments and societies, fueling humanitarian and economic crises, political unrest, and geopolitical competition as countries, such as China and Russia, seek advantage through such avenues as "vaccine diplomacy." No country has been completely spared, and even when a vaccine is widely distributed globally, the economic and political aftershocks will be felt for years. Low-income countries with high debts face particularly challenging recoveries and the potential for cascading crises leading to regional instability, whereas others will turn inward or be distracted by other challenges. The IC continues to investigate the concerning incidences of Anomalous Health Incidents and the danger they pose to U.S. personnel.

Ecological degradation and a changing climate will continue to fuel disease outbreaks, threaten food and water security, and exacerbate political instability and humanitarian crises. Great power competition and disputes between wealthy and low-income nations will threaten progress on the collective action that will be needed to meet global goals for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Other transnational challenges will pose an array of direct and indirect threats to the United States. They will interact in complex and cascading ways with each other and with threats posed by great power competition, increasingly empowered non-state actors, the pandemic, and climate change. Emerging and disruptive technologies, as well as the proliferation and permeation of technology into all aspects of our lives, pose unique challenges. The scourge of transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, violent extremism, and endemic corruption in many countries will continue to take their toll on American lives, prosperity, and safety. Both state and non-state cyber actors threaten our infrastructure and provide avenues for foreign malign influence threats against our democracy. We will see continuing potential for surges in migration from Afghanistan, Latin America, and other poor countries, which are reeling from conflict and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic and political conditions in Latin America continue to spark waves of migration that destabilize our Southern neighbors and put pressure on our Southern border. Finally, ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and Iran and its militant allies will take advantage of weak governance to continue to plot terrorist attacks against U.S. persons and interests, including to varying degrees in the United States, and exacerbate instability in regions such as Africa and the Middle East.

Regional instability and conflicts continue to threaten U.S. persons and interests. Some have direct implications for U.S. security. For example, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan threatens U.S. interests, including the possibility of terrorist safe havens re-emerging and a humanitarian disaster. The continued fighting in Syria has a direct bearing on U.S. forces, whereas tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan remain a global concern. The iterative violence between Israel and Iran, and conflicts in other areas—including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—have the potential to escalate or spread, fueling humanitarian crises and threatening U.S. persons, as in the case of Al-Shabaab, which is leveraging continued instability in East Africa and the lack of security capacity of regional states to threaten U.S. interests and American lives.

The 2022 Annual Threat Assessment Report supports the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's transparency commitments and the tradition of providing regular threat updates to the American public and the United States Congress. The IC is vigilant in monitoring and assessing direct and indirect threats to U.S. and allied interests. As part of this ongoing effort, the IC's National Intelligence Officers work closely with analysts from across the IC to examine the spectrum of threats and highlight the most likely and impactful near-term risks in the context of the longer-term, overarching threat environment.

## CHINA

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### REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

*The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will continue efforts to achieve President's Xi Jinping's vision of making China the preeminent power in East Asia and a major power on the world stage. The CCP will work to press Taiwan on unification, undercut U.S. influence, drive wedges between Washington and its partners, and foster some norms that favor its authoritarian system. China's leaders probably will, however, seek opportunities to reduce tensions with Washington when it suits their interests.* China will maintain its statist economic policies because China's leaders see state direction as necessary to reduce dependence on foreign technologies, enable military modernization, and sustain growth—ensuring CCP rule and the realization of its vision for national rejuvenation.

- Beijing sees increasingly competitive U.S.–China relations as part of an epochal geopolitical shift and views Washington's diplomatic, economic, and military measures against Beijing as part of a broader U.S. effort to prevent China's rise and undermine CCP rule.
- The CCP is increasing its criticism of perceived U.S. failures and hypocrisy, including the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and racial tensions in the United States.
- Beijing is increasingly combining growing military power with its economic, technological, and diplomatic clout to strengthen CCP rule, secure what it views as its sovereign territory and regional preeminence, and pursue global influence.
- However, China faces myriad—and in some cases growing—domestic and international challenges that probably will hinder CCP leaders' ambitions. These include an aging population, high levels of corporate debt, economic inequality, and growing resistance to China's heavy-handed tactics in Taiwan and other countries.

*China uses coordinated, whole-of-government tools to demonstrate strength and compel neighbors to acquiesce to Beijing's preferences, including its territorial and maritime claims and assertions of sovereignty over Taiwan.*

- Beijing will press Taiwan to move toward unification and will react to what it views as increased U.S.–Taiwan engagement. We expect that friction will grow as China continues to increase military activity around the island, and Taiwan's leaders resist Beijing's pressure for progress toward unification. China's control over Taiwan probably would disrupt global supply chains for semiconductor chips because Taiwan dominates production.
- In the South China Sea, Beijing will continue to use growing numbers of air, naval, and maritime law enforcement platforms to intimidate rival claimants and signal that China has effective control over contested areas. China is similarly pressuring Japan over contested areas in the East China Sea.

*Beijing will continue to promote the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to expand China's economic, political, and military presence abroad. Beijing will adjust its approach to BRI in response to publicity and sustainability challenges, and diversify project selection in an attempt to improve the initiative's brand and minimize international criticism.* China also will promote new international norms for technology and human rights,

emphasizing state sovereignty and political stability over individual rights. It will continue to erode the vestiges of freedom in Hong Kong.

China will remain the top threat to U.S. technological competitiveness as Beijing targets key sectors and proprietary commercial and military technology from U.S. and allied companies and institutions. Beijing uses a variety of tools, from public investment to espionage to advance its technological capabilities. Beijing's willingness to use espionage, subsidies, and trade policy to give its firms a competitive advantage represents not just an ongoing challenge for the U.S. economy and its workers, but also advances Beijing's ability to assume leadership of the world's technological advancement and standards.

China will continue deepening diplomatic, defense, and technology cooperation with Russia to challenge the United States.

#### **MILITARY CAPABILITIES**

*China will continue pursuing its goal of building a world-class military that will enable it to secure what it views as its sovereign territory, establish its preeminence in regional affairs, and project power globally while offsetting perceived U.S. military superiority.*

- Beijing is accelerating the development of key capabilities it believes the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) needs to confront the United States in a large-scale, sustained conflict.

The PLA Navy and Air Force are the largest in the region and continue to field advanced platforms that improve China's ability to establish air superiority and project power. The PLA Rocket Force's (PLARF) short-, medium-, and intermediate-range conventional systems can hold U.S. forces and bases in the region at risk. In 2020, the PLARF fielded its first operational hypersonic weapons system, the DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle-capable medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM), which could challenge U.S. missile defense systems.

We expect the PLA to continue to pursue the establishment of overseas military installations and access agreements to enhance its ability to project power and protect China's interests abroad.

#### **WMD**

*Beijing will continue the largest ever nuclear force expansion and arsenal diversification in its history. Beijing is not interested in agreements that restrict its plans and will not agree to negotiations that lock in U.S. or Russian advantages.* China is building a larger and increasingly capable nuclear missile and bomber force that is more survivable, more diverse, and on higher alert than in the past, including nuclear missile systems designed to manage regional escalation and ensure an intercontinental strike capability in any scenario.

- China is building hundreds of new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) silos.
- As of 2020, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) had operationally fielded the nuclear-capable H-6N bomber, providing a platform for the air component of the PRC's nascent nuclear triad.
- China conducted a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) flight test that flew completely around the world and impacted inside China.

## SPACE

*Beijing is working to match or exceed U.S. capabilities in space to gain the military, economic, and prestige benefits that Washington has accrued from space leadership.*

- China's space station began assembly and crewed missions in 2021, with full operational capability expected between 2022 and 2024. China also plans to conduct additional lunar exploration missions, and it intends to establish a robotic research station on the Moon and later, an intermittently crewed lunar base.
- The PLA will continue to integrate space services—such as satellite reconnaissance and positioning, navigation, and timing—and satellite communications into its weapons and command-and-control systems to erode the U.S. military's information advantage.

*Counterspace operations will be integral to potential military campaigns by the PLA, and China has counterspace weapons capabilities intended to target U.S. and allied satellites.* The PLA is fielding new destructive and nondestructive ground- and space-based antisatellite (ASAT) weapons.

## CYBER

*We assess that China presents the broadest, most active, and persistent cyber espionage threat to U.S. Government and private sector networks. China's cyber pursuits and export of related technologies increase the threats of attacks against the U.S. homeland, suppression of U.S. web content that Beijing views as threatening to its control, and the expansion of technology-driven authoritarianism globally.*

- China almost certainly is capable of launching cyber attacks that would disrupt critical infrastructure services within the United States, including against oil and gas pipelines and rail systems.

China leads the world in applying surveillance and censorship to monitor its population and repress dissent, particularly among minorities. Beijing conducts cyber intrusions that affect U.S. and non-U.S. citizens beyond its borders—such as hacking journalists—to counter perceived threats to the CCP and tailor influence efforts.

- China's cyber-espionage operations have included compromising telecommunications firms, providers of managed services and broadly used software, and other targets potentially rich in follow-on opportunities for intelligence collection, attack, or influence operations.

## MALIGN INFLUENCE

*China will continue expanding its global intelligence and covert influence posture to better support the CCP's political, economic, and security goals, increasingly challenging U.S. influence.* China is attempting to exploit doubts about U.S. leadership, undermine democracy, and extend Beijing's influence, especially in East Asia and the western Pacific, which Beijing views as its traditional sphere of influence.

- China will continue spreading COVID-19 misinformation and downplaying its early failures while casting blame on the West. Its misinformation includes claims that the United States created COVID-19.

- Beijing probably is reviewing publicly disclosed Russian influence operations and gaining experience from operations that use social media and other technologies against societies in Asia and elsewhere.
- Beijing is intensifying efforts to mold U.S. public discourse, pressure perceived political opponents, and muffle criticism on such issues as religious freedom, suppression of democracy in Hong Kong, and oppression of the Uyghurs as well as other minorities.

## RUSSIA

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### REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

*We expect that Moscow will remain an influential power and a formidable challenge to the United States amidst the changing geopolitical landscape during the next decade. It will continue to pursue its interests in competitive and sometimes confrontational and provocative ways, including pressing to dominate Ukraine and other countries in its "near-abroad," while exploring possibilities to achieve a more stable relationship with Washington.*

- We assess that Russia does not want a direct conflict with U.S. forces. Russia seeks an accommodation with the United States on mutual noninterference in both countries' domestic affairs and U.S. recognition of Russia's claimed sphere of influence over much of the former Soviet Union.
- Russia's officials have long believed that the United States is trying to undermine Russia, weaken President Vladimir Putin, and install Western-friendly regimes in the former Soviet states and elsewhere, which they conclude gives Russia leeway to retaliate.

Russia continues to prepare for a military attack against Ukraine, with well over 100,000 troops massed near the Ukraine border, including Russian military forces in Belarus, occupied-Crimea, and the separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine. Moscow is sending more forces. In mid-December 2021, Russia issued a statement demanding that NATO provide formal security guarantees, including putting an end to the possibility that Ukraine might join the Alliance.

*We assess that Moscow will continue to employ an array of tools to advance its own interests or undermine the interests of the United States and its allies. These will be primarily military, security, and intelligence tools, with economic cooperation playing a smaller role. We expect Moscow to insert itself into crises when Russia's interests are at stake, the anticipated costs of action are low, or it sees an opportunity to capitalize on a power vacuum.* Russia probably will continue to expand its global military, intelligence, security, commercial, and energy footprint and build partnerships aimed at undermining U.S. influence and boosting its own.

- In the Middle East and North Africa, Moscow is using its involvement in Syria, Libya, and Sudan to increase its clout, undercut U.S. leadership, present itself as an indispensable mediator, and gain military access rights and economic opportunities.
- In the Western Hemisphere, Russia has expanded its engagement with Venezuela, supported Cuba, and used arms sales and energy agreements to try to expand access to markets and natural resources in Latin America, in part to offset some of the effects of sanctions.
- In the former Soviet republics, Moscow is well positioned to increase its role in the Caucasus and, if it deems necessary, intervene in Belarus and Central Asia to halt instability after widespread anti-government protests, as it did in Belarus after the fraudulent 2020 election and early this year in Kazakhstan.
- We expect Russia to continue to use energy as a foreign policy tool to coerce cooperation and force states to the negotiating table, as it recently did in 2021, when Russia stopped coal and electricity

exports to Ukraine. Russia also uses its capabilities in COVID-19 vaccine development and civilian nuclear reactor construction as a soft-power tool in its foreign policy.

Russia uses corruption as an effective foreign policy tool to further its geopolitical goals and buy influence in other countries; however, it also serves as a long-term domestic vulnerability as well as a drag on Russia's economic performance and ability to attract investment.

- Russia has used corruption to help develop networks of patronage in countries, including Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Ukraine, to influence decisionmaking, and help carry out Russia's foreign policy objectives.
- Russians regularly identify corruption as one of the country's biggest problems, which has been a recurrent cause of public protests and a key theme of imprisoned Russian opposition figure Aleksey Navalnyy's campaign against the Kremlin.
- We assess that Russia would need to reduce corruption and state control of the economy, and improve the rule of law in Russia to attract investment and expand growth beyond 1-3 percent per year.

#### MILITARY CAPABILITIES

*We expect Moscow to sustain military modernization and enhance its armed forces, enabling it to defend Russia's national security while projecting influence globally and challenging the interests of the United States and its allies.* Despite slow growth in defense spending, Russia will emphasize the development and acquisition of new weapons that present increased threats to the United States and regional actors while continuing its foreign military engagements, conducting training exercises, and incorporating lessons from its involvement in conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

- Moscow has the wherewithal to deploy forces in strategically important regions, but the farther it deploys from Russia, the less able it probably will be to sustain intensive combat operations.
- Wagner group and other private security companies managed by Russian oligarchs close to the Kremlin extend Moscow's military reach at low cost in areas ranging from Syria to the Central African Republic and Mali, allowing Russia to disavow its involvement and distance itself from battlefield casualties.

#### WMD

*We assess that Russia will remain the largest and most capable WMD rival to the United States for the foreseeable future as it expands and modernizes its nuclear weapons capabilities and increases the capabilities of its strategic and nonstrategic weapons. Russia also remains a nuclear-material security concern, despite improvements to material protection, control, and accounting at Russia's nuclear sites since the 1990s.*

- Moscow views its nuclear capabilities as necessary for maintaining deterrence and achieving its goals in a potential conflict against the United States and NATO, and it sees a credible nuclear weapons deterrent as the ultimate guarantor of the Russian Federation.
- Moscow continues to develop long-range nuclear-capable missile and underwater delivery systems meant to penetrate or bypass U.S. missile defenses.

- Russia is expanding and modernizing its large, diverse, and modern set of nonstrategic systems, which are capable of delivering nuclear or conventional warheads, because Moscow believes such systems offer options to deter adversaries, control the escalation of potential hostilities, and counter U.S. and allied troops near its border.

#### CYBER

*We assess that Russia will remain a top cyber threat as it refines and employs its espionage, influence, and attack capabilities. We assess that Russia views cyber disruptions as a foreign policy lever to shape other countries' decisions, as well as a deterrence and military tool.*

- Russia is particularly focused on improving its ability to target critical infrastructure, including underwater cables and industrial control systems, in the United States as well as in allied and partner countries, because compromising such infrastructure improves and demonstrates its ability to damage infrastructure during a crisis.
- Russia is also using cyber operations to attack entities it sees as working to undermine its interests or threaten the stability of the Russian Government. Russia attempts to hack journalists and organizations worldwide that investigate Russian Government activity and in several instances, has leaked their information.

#### MALIGN INFLUENCE

*Russia presents one of the most serious foreign influence threats to the United States, using its intelligence services, proxies, and wide-ranging influence tools to try to divide Western alliances, and increase its sway around the world, while attempting to undermine U.S. global standing, amplify discord inside the United States, and influence U.S. voters and decisionmaking. We assess that Moscow probably will build on these approaches to try to undermine the United States as opportunities arise—Russia and its influence actors are adept at capitalizing on current events in the United States to push Moscow-friendly positions to Western audiences.*

- Moscow almost certainly views U.S. elections as opportunities for malign influence as part of its larger foreign policy strategy. Moscow has conducted influence operations against U.S. elections for decades, including as recently as the 2020 presidential election. We assess that it probably will try to strengthen ties to U.S. persons in the media and politics in hopes of developing vectors for future influence operations. Moscow almost certainly will continue these online influence operations in the United States and in countries such as Belarus, Ukraine, and other countries of key Russian interest. Moscow will also continue and seek out new methods of circumventing technology companies' anti-disinformation activities to further expand its narratives globally.

#### SPACE

*Russia will remain a key space competitor, maintaining a large network of reconnaissance, communications, and navigation satellites. Moscow will focus on integrating space services—such as communications; positioning, navigation, and timing; geolocation; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance—into its weapons and command-and-control systems, allowing Moscow to more quickly identify, track, and target U.S. satellites during a conflict.*

In recent years, Russia has focused its efforts on developing its civil and commercial space capabilities. Moscow is capable of employing its civil and commercial remote sensing satellites to supplement military-dedicated capabilities that reduce U.S. ability to perform sensitive military activities undetected. In addition to improving its launch capability, it is working to support human spaceflight for future deep space missions.

*Russia continues to train its military space elements and field new antisatellite weapons to disrupt and degrade U.S. and allied space capabilities, and it is developing, testing, and fielding an array of nondestructive and destructive counterspace weapons—including jamming and cyberspace capabilities, directed energy weapons, on-orbit capabilities, and ground-based ASAT capabilities—to target U.S. and allied satellites.*

- Russia is investing in electronic warfare and directed energy weapons to counter western on-orbit assets. These systems work by disrupting or disabling adversary C4ISR capabilities and by disrupting GPS, tactical and satellite communications, and radars.
- Russia continues to develop ground-based direct ascent ASAT weapons capable of destroying space targets in low Earth orbit.

## IRAN

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### REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

*Iran will continue to threaten U.S. interests as it tries to erode U.S. influence in the Middle East, entrench its influence and project power in neighboring states, and minimize threats to regime stability.* Tehran will try to leverage its expanding nuclear program, proxy and partner forces, diplomacy, and military sales and acquisitions to advance its goals. The Iranian regime sees itself as locked in an existential struggle with the United States and its regional allies, while it pursues its longstanding ambitions for regional leadership.

*The election of President Ebrahim Raisi in 2021 has invigorated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to try to make progress toward his long-term vision of molding Iran into a pan-Islamic power capable of defending global Muslim causes while tightening its theocratic rule at home.*

- The regime is reluctant to directly engage diplomatically with the United States on a renewal of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), even though it still aspires to secure sanctions relief. Iran's hardline officials deeply distrust Washington and do not believe the United States can deliver or sustain any benefits a renewed JCPOA might offer.

*We assess that Iran will threaten U.S. persons directly and via proxy attacks, particularly in the Middle East. Iran also remains committed to developing networks inside the United States—an objective it has pursued for more than a decade.* Iranian-supported proxies will launch attacks against U.S. forces and persons in Iraq and Syria, and perhaps on other countries and regions. Iran has threatened to retaliate against former and current U.S. officials for the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) Commander Qasem Soleimani in January 2020, and has previously attempted to conduct lethal operations in the United States.

- *Iran remains a threat to Israel, both directly through its missile forces and indirectly through its support of Lebanese Hizballah and other terrorist groups.*
- *Iran will remain a problematic actor across the region with its backing of Iraqi Shia militias, which is the primary threat to U.S. personnel in Iraq. Iran's economically and militarily propping up of a rogue Syrian regime, and spreading instability across Yemen through its support to the Houthis—including a range of advanced military systems—also pose a threat to U.S. partners and interests, including Saudi Arabia.*

### MILITARY CAPABILITIES

*Iran's hybrid approach to warfare—using both conventional and unconventional capabilities—will pose a threat to U.S. interests in the region for the foreseeable future.* The IRGC-QF and its proxies will remain central to Iran's military power.

- Despite Iran's economic challenges, Tehran will seek to improve and acquire new conventional weaponry.
- Iran's unconventional warfare operations and network of militant partners and proxies enable Tehran to advance its interests in the region and maintain strategic depth.

Iran's ballistic missile programs, which include the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the region, continue to pose a threat to countries across the Middle East. Iran's work on a space launch vehicle (SLV)—including its Simorgh—shortens the timeline to an ICBM because SLVs and ICBMs use similar technologies, if it decided to develop one.

#### NUCLEAR ISSUES

*We continue to assess that Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that we judge would be necessary to produce a nuclear device. In July 2019, following the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, Iran began resuming some activities that exceed JCPOA limits. If Tehran does not receive sanctions relief, Iranian officials probably will consider further enriching uranium up to 90 percent.*

- Iran has consistently cast its resumption of nuclear activities as a reversible response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and messaged that it would return to full compliance if the United States lifted sanctions and also fulfilled its JCPOA commitments.
- Iran continues to increase the size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile beyond JCPOA limits. Iran continues to ignore restrictions on advanced centrifuge research and development and continues uranium enrichment operations at the deeply buried Fordow facility. Iran has been enriching uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) up to 60 percent U-235 since April 2021, and continues to accumulate UF<sub>6</sub> enriched up to 20 percent. The IAEA has verified that Iran is conducting uranium metal research and development, including producing laboratory-scale quantities of uranium metal enriched up to 20 percent U-235.

#### CYBER AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

*Iran's growing expertise and willingness to conduct aggressive cyber operations make it a major threat to the security of U.S. and allied networks and data.* Iran's opportunistic approach to cyber attacks makes critical infrastructure owners in the United States susceptible to being targeted by Tehran, especially when Tehran believes it must demonstrate that it can push back against the United States in other domains. Recent attacks on Israeli and U.S. targets show that Iran is more willing than before to target countries with stronger capabilities.

- Iran was responsible for multiple cyber attacks between April and July 2020 against Israeli water facilities. Iran's successful disruption of critical infrastructure in Israel—also a superior cyber power compared with Iran—reflects its growing willingness to take risks when it believes retaliation is justified.

## NORTH KOREA

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### REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

*North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will continue efforts to steadily expand and enhance Pyongyang's nuclear and conventional capabilities targeting the United States and its allies, periodically using aggressive and potentially destabilizing actions to reshape the regional security environment in his favor. These actions will include developing and demonstrating capabilities up to and possibly including the resumption of nuclear weapons and ICBM testing.*

- We assess that Kim views nuclear weapons and ICBMs as the ultimate guarantor of his totalitarian and autocratic rule of North Korea and believes that over time he will gain international acceptance as a nuclear power. He probably does not view the current level of pressure on his regime, the economic hardships resulting from sanctions and his domestic COVID-19 countermeasures as enough to require a fundamental change in approach.
- Kim also aims to achieve prestige as a nuclear power as well as strategic dominance over South Korea. Kim probably will continue to try to undermine the U.S.–South Korea alliance by vacillating between periods of escalatory behavior and symbolic gestures toward the South to exploit differences between Washington's and Seoul's approach to solving the Korea problem.
- We assess that North Korea continues to engage in illicit activities, including cyber theft and the export of UN-proscribed commodities to fund regime priorities, including Kim's WMD program.

### MILITARY CAPABILITIES

*North Korea will pose a serious threat to the United States and its allies by continuing to invest in niche capabilities that will provide Kim with a range of options to deter outside intervention, offset enduring deficiencies in the country's conventional forces, and coercively advance his political objectives.*

- In early 2021, in a public report to the Eighth Party Congress, Kim identified priorities for developing new weapon systems, such as a nuclear-powered submarine, hypersonic glide vehicles, long-range solid-propellant missiles, and multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV). Although some of these capabilities are longer-term projects, we assess that they represent Kim's commitment to expanding and diversifying his arsenal over time.

Kim is continuing to prioritize efforts to build an increasingly capable missile force designed to evade U.S. and regional missile defenses. Kim probably will continue to order missile tests—including of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), cruise missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and HGVs—to validate technical objectives, reinforce deterrence, and normalize Pyongyang's missile testing.

- In September 2021, North Korea claimed for the first time to have tested an HGV that probably would be capable of reaching regional targets. North Korea followed with two more claimed hypersonic missile flight tests in January 2022, demonstrating its commitment to continued development of hypersonic weapons.

**WMD**

*Kim remains strongly committed to expanding the country's nuclear weapons arsenal and continuing ballistic missile research and development. North Korea's continued development of ICBMs, IRBMs, and SLBMs demonstrates its intention to bolster its nuclear delivery capability.*

- Fissile material production continues in North Korea, which maintains its plutonium program and probably is expanding its uranium enrichment program.

In January, North Korea began laying the groundwork for an increase in tensions that could include ICBM or possibly a nuclear test this year—actions that Pyongyang has not taken since 2017. Flight tests are part of North Korea's effort to expand the number and type of missile systems capable of delivering nuclear warheads to the entire United States.

- North Korea continues to seek a sea-based nuclear-strike capability. In October 2021, North Korea flight tested a new SLBM.

North Korea's chemical and biological weapons (CBW) capabilities remain a threat, and the IC is concerned that Pyongyang may use such weapons during a conflict or in an unconventional or clandestine attack.

**CYBER**

*North Korea's cyber program poses a sophisticated and agile espionage, cybercrime, and attack threat. Pyongyang is well positioned to conduct surprise cyber attacks given its stealth and history of bold action.*

- Pyongyang probably possesses the expertise to cause temporary, limited disruptions of some critical infrastructure networks and disrupt business networks in the United States.

Cyber actors linked to North Korea have conducted espionage efforts against a range of organizations, including media, academia, defense companies, and governments, in multiple countries.

## HEALTH SECURITY

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### INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*The COVID-19 pandemic has killed millions of people and disrupted life worldwide, with far-reaching effects extending well beyond global health to the economic, political, and societal spheres. Although the most severe health impacts of COVID-19 are lessening as global vaccination coverage increases and natural immunity builds, countries worldwide will continue to grapple with COVID-19 during the next year.* The socioeconomic and political implications of the pandemic will ripple through the world for years.

*The economic fallout from the pandemic is likely to continue to challenge governments and hold back human development and wellbeing, particularly in low-income countries.* Societal discontent resulting from these conditions could worsen instability in some countries and fuel surges in international migration, as people grow more desperate in the face of interlocking pressures that include sustained economic downturns.

- The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to increase debt burdens, constrain government spending by poor countries, and cause persistent job insecurity, in turn undermining economic and political stability, particularly in low-income countries. Although global trade shows signs of bouncing back from the COVID-19-induced slump, economists caution that any recovery this year could be disrupted by ongoing or expanding pandemic effects, keeping pressure on many governments to focus on internal economic stability.
- The economic fallout from COVID-19, combined with conflict and weather extremes, has driven hunger worldwide to its highest point in more than a decade, which increases the risk of instability. The number of people facing acute food insecurity doubled from 135 million in 2019 to more than 270 million in 2020, and is projected to continue rising.

*COVID-19 is likely to continue to strain health systems and create conditions that could facilitate the spread of other infectious diseases globally, including to the U.S. homeland.*

- The pandemic has significantly disrupted essential health services—for example, causing healthcare worker shortages, delays in non-emergency procedures, or avoidance of healthcare facilities because of fears of becoming infected with COVID-19—which are likely to worsen health outcomes and continue to hamper countries' abilities to control disease, particularly low and middle-income countries.
- Influenza and other seasonal respiratory diseases could surge to abnormally high levels in 2022 with the reduction of COVID-19 mitigation measures, which have dampened circulation of these diseases since early 2020, and in turn reduced the level of population immunity to these infections.

*Countries globally remain vulnerable to the emergence of a novel pathogen that could cause a devastating new pandemic.* Drivers for disease emergence persist and are on the rise, including deforestation and other human encroachment into unsettled land, wildlife harvesting and trade, livestock production, and climate change. These drivers are compounded by factors that facilitate global spread, such as international travel and trade, inadequate global disease surveillance and control, distrust of public health authorities, health disinformation, and health system strain brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging agricultural

diseases—even those that do not harm humans directly—threaten to cause immense economic damage and disruption to food supplies if they spread globally or into new regions.

#### COVID-19 Origins Assessment

*The IC continues to investigate how SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, first infected humans.* The IC assesses that the virus probably emerged and infected humans through an initial small-scale exposure that occurred no later than November 2019. All agencies assess that two hypotheses are plausible explanations for the origin of COVID-19: natural exposure to an infected animal and a laboratory-associated incident.

- Four IC elements and the National Intelligence Council assess with low confidence that the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection was most likely caused by natural exposure to an animal infected with it or a close progenitor virus—a virus that probably would be more than 99 percent similar to SARS-CoV-2. One IC element assesses with moderate confidence that the first human infection with SARS-CoV-2 most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident, probably involving experimentation, animal handling, or sampling by the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Analysts at three IC elements remain unable to coalesce around either explanation without additional information.
- Beijing continues to hinder the global investigation, resist sharing information, and blame other countries, including the United States.

#### BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

*Global shortcomings in preparedness for the pandemic and questions surrounding the origins of the COVID-19 virus and biosecurity may inspire some adversaries to consider options related to biological weapons developments.*

- As China, Iran, and Russia continue to publicly tout individual or collaborative efforts to improve biosecurity, they have pushed narratives that further drive threat perceptions, including linking U.S. laboratories abroad to COVID-19 origins, breaches in biosafety, untrustworthy vaccines, and biological weapons. This messaging probably will be amplified in the lead up to the once-every-five-years Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, tentatively slated to convene in mid-2022.
- Rapid advances in dual-use technology, including bioinformatics, synthetic biology, and genomic editing, could enable development of novel biological weapons that complicate detection, attribution, and treatment.

**ANOMALOUS HEALTH INCIDENTS**

*We continue to closely examine Anomalous Health Incidents (AHIs) and ensure appropriate care for those affected.* IC agencies assess with varying levels of confidence that most reported health incidents can be explained by medical conditions, or environmental or technical factors and that it is unlikely that a foreign actor—including Russia—is conducting a sustained, worldwide campaign involving hundreds of incidents without detection. This finding does not change the fact that U.S. personnel are reporting real experiences, nor does it explain every report. The IC continues to actively investigate the AHI issue, focusing particularly on a subset of priority cases for which it has not ruled out any cause, including the possibility that one or more foreign actors were involved.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

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*We assess that climate change will increasingly exacerbate risks to U.S. national security interests as the physical impacts increase and geopolitical tensions mount about how to respond to the challenge. Meanwhile, environmental degradation will increasingly intersect with and worsen climate change effects in many countries, particularly low-income countries.*

- Geopolitical tensions are likely to grow as countries increasingly argue about how to accelerate the reductions in net greenhouse gas emissions necessary to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C since pre-industrial times. The current trajectory of growing global greenhouse emissions, based on governments' current policies and pledges, would cause the global temperature rise to reach 1.5°C around 2030, and surpass 2°C by mid-century.
- Countries will debate who bears more responsibility to reduce emissions and who should pay—and countries will compete to control resources and dominate new technologies needed for the clean energy transition. Most countries will face difficult economic choices and probably will count on technological breakthroughs to rapidly reduce their net emissions later. China and India will play critical roles in determining the trajectory of temperature rise.
- The increasing physical effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate domestic and cross-border geopolitical flashpoints producing additional instability. The reduction in sea ice already is amplifying strategic competition in the Arctic over access to its natural resources and shipping routes. Elsewhere, as temperatures rise and more extreme effects manifest, there is a growing risk of conflict over water and migration, particularly after 2030, and an increasing chance that countries will unilaterally test and deploy large-scale solar geoengineering—creating a new area of disputes.
- Scientific forecasts indicate that intensifying physical effects of climate change out to 2040 and beyond will be most acutely felt in low-income countries, which we assess are also the least able to adapt to such changes. These physical effects will increase the potential for instability and possibly internal conflict in some countries, in some cases creating additional demands on U.S. diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, and military resources. Despite geographic and financial resource advantages, the United States and its partners face costly challenges that will become more difficult to manage without concerted effort to reduce emissions and cap warming.

Unsustainable land use, poor water governance, and pollution will intersect with and worsen the effects of climate change, primarily but not exclusively in low-income countries in the near term. The combination of environmental degradation, rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and other climate effects is likely to lead to an array of human challenges such as food and water insecurity and threats to human health.

## ADDITIONAL TRANSNATIONAL ISSUES

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### PREFACE

The pandemic and climate change highlight the challenges that a wide range of transnational issues pose to U.S. national security; we will now address several more priority issues. Some have a direct and immediate impact on U.S. interests, such as narcotics trafficking and terrorism. Others seem to be building for the future, or pose chronic, indirect challenges, such as corruption. These issues also vary in the scope of the threats they pose, having broad, global impact or causing local, even individual harm.

Transnational threats interact in a complex system along with more traditional threats such as great power competition, often reinforcing each other and creating compounding and cascading risks to U.S. national security. Underpinning many of the threats are weak or poor governance and geopolitical competition. During the past decade, an erosion of democracy around the world, strains in U.S. alliances, and challenges to accepted, international norms have made it more difficult to tackle transnational challenges such as climate change and the pandemic while creating greater opportunities for rogue governments and groups to operate with impunity. Increasing interconnections among countries—ranging from supply chains to social media—have also created new opportunities for transnational interference and conflict.

Corruption illustrates the complexity of the transnational issues, the relationships among them, and the range of their implications for U.S. interests. Corruption is a chronic challenge but thrives particularly in poorly governed countries. It can undermine weak governments and economies, contributing to political instability, organized crime, and disputes over migration—all of which in turn can fuel greater corruption. Corruption in international transactions can directly cost U.S. exporters billions of dollars in sales, give U.S. adversaries geopolitical openings, and prop up regimes that abuse human rights. However, corruption also can be a positive—undermining the capacity and credibility of authoritarian regimes.

Several transnational challenges stand out for the clear and direct threats they will pose to U.S. interests during the coming years. Among these are the rapid development of destabilizing technologies, including some that are transforming the battlefield, the threats posed by transnational organized crime and terrorism, and the challenge of international migration.

### INNOVATIVE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

*Multiple trends are shaping the technology landscape of the next decades. The increasing convergence of seemingly unrelated fields and the rise of global competition to generate and lock in advantage are leading to a global diffusion of emerging technologies, shrinking timelines for development and maturation of technologies, and increasingly blurred lines between commercial and military endeavors, particularly in fields with broad impact across societies and economies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnologies, robotics and automation, and smart materials and manufacturing.*

- Emerging technologies are rapidly improving a broad range of human experiences and capabilities, but at least in the short term, these same technologies are disrupting longstanding systems and societal dynamics, forcing individuals, communities, and governments to adjust and find new ways of living, working, and managing. As with any disruption, some will thrive whereas others will struggle, potentially facing increasing inequalities and imbalances.

*Novel uses of both mature and new technologies are proliferating among a growing number of state and non-state actors, posing direct and growing threats to traditional pillars of U.S. military power, such as secure rear-area lines of communication and mobilization, air and space dominance, and power projection.* The threats posed by new technologies will ultimately hinge on how they are operationalized by individual actors, each driven by unique goals, perceptions, strengths, and vulnerabilities.

- One of the most significant, ongoing trends in new military technology and weaponry is the growing combination of high speed, long range, greater maneuverability, and pinpoint accuracy. These advances are improving actors' ability to strike across continents as well as regionally or locally with UAVs, guided rockets, artillery shells, and mortars. Long-range precision strike inventories are likely to include increasing numbers of hypersonic and highly maneuverable systems that present a daunting challenge to those trying to develop countermeasures to detect, track, and intercept such fast-moving and maneuverable weapons. Many technologies previously available only to the advanced, industrial nations are trickling down to smaller and less expensive systems thereby becoming more available worldwide, as seen in recent battlefield use of UAVs by Azerbaijan and Ethiopia.
- Some technologies—such as hypersonic systems and nascent efforts to operationalize military AI—probably will remain within the purview of great powers and wealthier states, but relatively low cost and more widely available systems ranging from cyber tools to unmanned aerial and naval vehicles could be exploited by lesser powers and non-state actors to achieve high impact and even strategic-level effects.
- We are in the midst of a rapid expansion of state and non-state use of unmanned vehicles in both the air and sea domains, which could disrupt the status quo in part because air and naval defense often hinge on the assumption that the primary threat stems from a relatively small number of crewed platforms or ground-based missiles.

#### TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

*Global transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) pose a direct threat to the United States through human trafficking, the production and trafficking of lethal illicit drugs, cyber crime, and financial crimes and money laundering schemes eroding the integrity of the international financial system. Cyber criminals, in addition to phishing and other online fraud schemes, are also increasing their ransomware attacks. TCO activities also indirectly threaten U.S. national security by compounding and aggravating corruption, violence, and challenges to governance that undermine the rule of law in partner nations, spurring violence, driving atrocities, and contributing to migration.*

- Human trafficking, including sex trafficking and forced labor, is not only a violation of human rights and freedoms but a threat to U.S. national security and economic development and is enabled by corrupt actors and networks that fuel the growth of transnational organized crime.

#### Foreign Illicit Drugs

*Illicit drug trafficking by TCOs, particularly synthetic drugs, endangers the health and safety of millions of U.S. citizens and imposes as much as one trillion dollars in direct and indirect economic losses. The threat from illicit drugs is at historic levels, with more than 100,000 American drug-overdose deaths for the first time annually, driven mainly by a robust supply of synthetic opioids from Mexican TCOs.*

- Mexican TCOs are the dominant producers and suppliers of illicit drugs for the U.S. market. They produce fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana in Mexico, and obtain cocaine from South America to smuggle into the United States. Mexican TCOs probably will seek to continue expanding their capacity to produce finished fentanyl.
- Since 2019, Mexican TCOs have shifted from importing finished fentanyl from China to synthesizing fentanyl from precursor chemicals, primarily also from China, partly because of China's fentanyl class controls. Mexican TCOs are able to circumvent international controls on precursor chemicals by changing analogues and methodologies for synthesizing and producing synthetics.
- Turf battles among Mexican TCOs vying for drug routes and territory have resulted in steady, high homicide rates since 2018 that are four times the rate of homicides in the United States. In parts of Mexico, TCOs use billions of dollars of drug proceeds to intimidate politicians and influence elections, as well as recruit and arm fighters capable of directly confronting government security forces.

#### **Money Laundering and Financial Crimes**

*TCOs exploit the U.S. financial, services, and manufacturing sectors by conducting complex money laundering and fraud schemes.*

- TCOs generate hundreds of billions of dollars of revenue by trafficking illicit drugs and other goods and people; conducting extortion and racketeering that targets U.S. persons; producing and selling counterfeit and stolen goods in U.S. markets; and running financial fraud schemes.

#### **Cyber Crime**

*Transnational cyber criminals are increasing the number, scale, and sophistication of ransomware attacks, fueling a virtual ecosystem that threatens to cause greater disruptions of critical services worldwide.* These criminals are driven by the promise of large profits, reliable safe havens from which to operate, and a decreasing technical barrier to entry for new actors.

- Many major transnational cybercrime groups have diversified business models that engage in direct wire-transfer fraud from victims, or use other forms of extortion alongside or in place of ransomware. In 2020, business-e-mail compromise, identity theft, spoofing, and other extortion schemes ranked among the top five most costly cybercriminal schemes.

U.S. Government entities, businesses, and other organizations face a diverse range of ransomware threats. Attackers are innovating their targeting strategies to focus on victims whose business operations lack resilience or whose consumer base cannot sustain service disruptions, driving ransomware payouts up.

#### **MIGRATION**

*In the Western Hemisphere, factors such as longstanding poor socioeconomic conditions, perceived changes in U.S. immigration policy, and employment opportunities in the United States will continue to drive migration to the Mexico-U.S. border; a growing number of people from around the world see transiting Mexico as a way to reach the United States.* High crime rates, violence, corruption, weak job markets, and poor living conditions remain

primary push factors for U.S.-bound migration from Central America and Haiti because origin countries lack the capacity to address these challenges.

- Eased COVID-19-related travel restrictions and perceptions of greater job opportunities in a recovering U.S. economy are contributing to a rise in migration. These dynamics, along with perceptions of U.S. immigration policies, will determine the flow of migrants this year.

*Economic disparities and the effects of conflict and extreme weather will encourage internal and international migration and refugee flows. Migration and displacement will heighten humanitarian needs, increase the risk of political upheaval, exacerbate the risk of other health crises, and aid recruitment and radicalization by militant groups—particularly as COVID-19 strains global humanitarian response mechanisms.*

- The number of people displaced within their own national borders continues to increase, straining governments' abilities to care for their domestic populations and mitigate public discontent. Afghanistan is likely to be a growing source of global migration in 2022, as a result of reduced international support, deteriorating economic conditions, and repressive Taliban regime governance.

*Transnational organized criminal groups exploit migrants through extortion, kidnapping, human trafficking, and forced labor.*

*Conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, aggressive Russian actions on the periphery of Europe, a possible renewal of Belarusian efforts to fuel the migrant crisis along its border with Poland and Lithuania, and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan could trigger more migration to Europe this year and a nationalist backlash.* Countries are witnessing the rise of populist politicians and parties campaigning on loss of sovereignty and identity.

- The UNHCR estimated that 500,000 Afghan refugees could attempt to cross into surrounding countries if the situation in Afghanistan did not stabilize and is working with surrounding countries to prepare for Afghan refugee arrivals.
- Conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region since November 2020 has worsened humanitarian conditions and resulted in at least 2.1 million internally displaced persons. The ongoing conflict has also led to refugees fleeing to neighboring countries, which could destabilize the region resulting in additional migrants seeking to travel to Europe.

## GLOBAL TERRORISM

*Terrorism remains a persistent threat to U.S. persons and interests at home and abroad. Individuals and small cells inspired by a variety of ideologies and personal motivations—including Sunni violent extremism, racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, and militia violent extremism—probably present the greatest terrorist threat to the United States.* ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and terrorists aligned with Iran such as Lebanese Hizballah, probably pose the greatest threat to U.S. persons and interests abroad. Consistent U.S. and allied counterterrorism pressure has degraded the external attack capabilities of ISIS and al-Qa'ida, but they still aspire to conduct attacks in the United States. Communal conflict, insurgency, and instability almost certainly will provide terrorist groups continued opportunities to recruit members, acquire funds, and establish or expand safe havens from which to plot attacks—including reviving safe havens in Afghanistan. Local insurgencies have at times bolstered their Sunni jihadist credentials to fully assimilate into ISIS and al-Qa'ida, allowing them to strengthen and resulting in increased attacks, lethality, and territorial influence and

control. Terrorists remain interested in using chemical and biological agents in attacks against U.S. interests and possibly the U.S. homeland.

#### ISIS

*ISIS leaders remain committed to their vision of building a self-styled global caliphate headquartered in Iraq and Syria and are working to rebuild capabilities and wear down opponents until conditions are ripe for seizing and holding territory.* The threat from ISIS against U.S. persons and interests probably will remain greatest in regions where the group has an operational presence; ISIS's ideology and propaganda, however, almost certainly will continue to inspire attacks in the West, including in the United States.

- In Iraq and Syria, ISIS probably will prioritize attacks on local military and civilian targets to erode its opponents' will to fight, maintain relevance among members and supporters, and stoke religious and ethnosectarian tension. ISIS has slowed its operational tempo in Iraq and Syria, probably because of logistical, financial, personnel, and leadership shortfalls. The group remains intent on freeing some of the 10,000 ISIS fighters who remain in detention in northeast Syria.
- In Afghanistan, ISIS-Khorasan is attempting to exploit an influx of funds and personnel from prison breaks to undermine the Taliban and build an external attack capability if it can withstand Taliban pressure.

#### Al-Qa'ida

*Al-Qa'ida has increasingly devolved operational responsibility to regional affiliates as it has shifted away from centrally directed plotting. Because of leadership and battlefield setbacks, al-Qa'ida is constrained in its efforts to lead a unified global movement, but it will try to maintain its presence in Afghanistan and capitalize on permissive operating environments.*

*Al-Qa'ida remains intent on striking U.S. interests; it is more capable of striking U.S. interests in the regions where its affiliates operate rather than in the Homeland. The primary threat to the United States abroad from al-Qa'ida emanates from the countries where its strongest affiliates currently operate—Yemen, Somalia, and West Africa—and will vary based on local circumstances, including affiliate leadership priorities and battlefield conditions.*

Al-Qa'ida senior leaders lack an operational presence in Afghanistan, and the group's affiliate, al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is weak. Al-Qa'ida and AQIS praised the Taliban's return to power and are likely to maintain their ties to the Taliban regime.

- Al-Qa'ida probably will gauge its ability to operate in Afghanistan under Taliban restrictions and will focus on maintaining its safe haven before seeking to conduct or support external operations from Afghanistan.

#### Hizballah

*Lebanese Hizballah will continue to work with Iran to develop terrorist capabilities as a complement to the group's growing conventional military capabilities.*

- Hizballah seeks to reduce U.S. influence in Lebanon and the broader Middle East, and maintains the capability to target U.S. persons and interests in the region, worldwide, and—to a lesser extent—in the United States.

#### **Foreign Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists**

*Foreign Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (REMVE) very likely will continue to pose a threat to the United States and its allies. These actors continue to rely on transnational ties and adapt violent extremist narratives around current events, including the U.S. and coalition departure from Afghanistan last August.*

Foreign REMVEs draw on a diverse range of ideologies, including white supremacy, neo-Nazism, exclusionary cultural-nationalist beliefs, and racial conspiracy theories. Foreign REMVEs organize primarily on a number of online platforms, especially podcasts, applications, and encrypted social media platforms.

- In mid-2021, foreign REMVEs in Europe sought to exploit popular fears of a potential Afghan refugee crisis similar to the influx of refugees from Syria in 2015 and 2016. Xenophobic sentiments have prompted an increasing number of individuals to engage with foreign REMVE groups in Europe.

## CONFLICTS AND INSTABILITY

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### SOUTH ASIA

#### Afghanistan

*The Taliban takeover is rolling back social changes of the past two decades and deepening Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis, heightening prospects for increased migration and displacement.*

- The Taliban has been organizing its new regime with a bias for longtime stakeholders. Many of the people named to senior positions served in the Taliban's last government and are under international sanction. Few ethnic minorities and no women have been selected, and the Taliban is likely to keep resisting international pressure to govern more inclusively.
- Across the country, most girls' schools are closed, and all but a few women have been told to stay home from work. In some areas, public punishments have returned, along with restrictions on beard length and media controls. However, near-term prospects for regime-threatening resistance are low because large swathes of the Afghan public are weary of war and fearful of Taliban reprisals, and armed remnants lack strong leadership and external support.
- Taliban leaders lack the resource base and technical capacity to prevent a major economic contraction. They probably will rely on humanitarian aid to sustain some basic services and would rather preside over a more rudimentary economic system and tax the drug trade than accept international conditions for additional assistance.
- A majority of Afghans are suffering food insecurity because of the effects of conflict, drought, and COVID-19 disruptions, and further deterioration almost certainly will increase internal displacement, which could lead to international migration. Refugee flows could spike if the Taliban attempted to relieve pressure by allowing larger populations to leave Afghanistan or conditions sharply deteriorated.
- Regional powers will continue to narrow their interests and seek to develop transactional arrangements with the Taliban while proceeding cautiously with formal recognition. They would have preferred a more inclusive government, but they are prioritizing stability and are unlikely to intervene in ways that would significantly change Taliban behavior.

#### India-Pakistan

*Crises between India and Pakistan are of particular concern because of the risk—however low—of an escalatory cycle between two nuclear-armed states. Pakistan has a long history of supporting anti-India militant groups; under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is more likely than in the past to respond with military force to perceived or real Pakistani provocations, and each side's perception of heightened tensions raises the risk of conflict, with violent unrest in Kashmir or a militant attack in India being potential flashpoints.*

### India-China

Relations between New Delhi and Beijing will remain strained in the wake of the lethal clash in 2020, the most serious in decades. We assess that the expanded military postures by both India and China along the disputed border elevates the risk of armed confrontation between two nuclear powers that might involve direct threats to U.S. persons and interests and calls for U.S. intervention. Previous standoffs have demonstrated that persistent low-level friction on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has the potential to escalate swiftly.

### OTHER REGIONS

*Internal and interstate conflict and instability will continue to pose direct and indirect threats to U.S. persons and interests during the next year. Several threats, which we assess to be particularly important, are discussed below.*

#### Near East

*The Middle East will remain a region characterized by persistent conflict, with active insurgencies in several countries, sparring between Iran and other countries, and terrorism and protest movements sparking occasional violence. Domestic volatility will persist as popular discontent and socioeconomic grievances continue to rise, particularly as the region contends with the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the risk of internal or international conflict that would threaten U.S. persons and national security interests.*

- Iran-backed Shia militias are likely to continue attacks against U.S. targets in Iraq, and ISIS remains a persistent threat. U.S. personnel would also face danger if popular protests against government corruption, continued dysfunction in the wake of the elections in October 2021, and poor economic conditions took a more violent turn, or if Baghdad became embroiled in a broader regional conflict.
- Conflict, economic hardship, and humanitarian crises will plague Syria during the next few years, and threats to U.S. forces will increase. President Bashar al-Asad will rely on the support of Russia and Iran and the nascent progress he has made reintegrating Syria into the region to stall meaningful peace negotiations. U.S. forces in eastern Syria will face continued threats from Iran, Iran-backed militias, and Syrian regime-aligned groups. ISIS and Hurras al-Din probably will plan and could attempt to launch attacks on the West from their safe havens in the country and increased fighting or further economic decline could spur another wave of migration.

There is some prospect to reduce conflicts that threaten U.S. persons and interests in the Middle East. Countervailing factors—heightened fear of Iran, doubts about U.S. reliability, and economic imperatives—are encouraging efforts to deescalate conflicts. Relations between Israel and select Arab states continue to warm. Qatar's isolation from its neighbors is waning, some Arab states are working to normalize relations with Damascus and encourage its return to the Arab league, and key Gulf states are talking with Iran, including its key rival, Saudi Arabia.

#### East Asia

*In addition to Beijing's provocative behavior in numerous parts of Asia, domestic developments in some East Asian countries risk exacerbating underlying tensions with the potential to produce unrest and violence.*

- Burma's security and economic conditions probably will continue to deteriorate because both the regime and the opposition are relying on the use of force in an attempt to break the ongoing political stalemate and advance their respective positions. Both sides remain entrenched in their positions and neither are able to decisively prevail. Economic deterioration and ongoing violence in addition to the ongoing COVID-19-pandemic will amplify the country's deteriorating humanitarian conditions, such as population displacement, food insecurity, and a poorly functioning health care system.

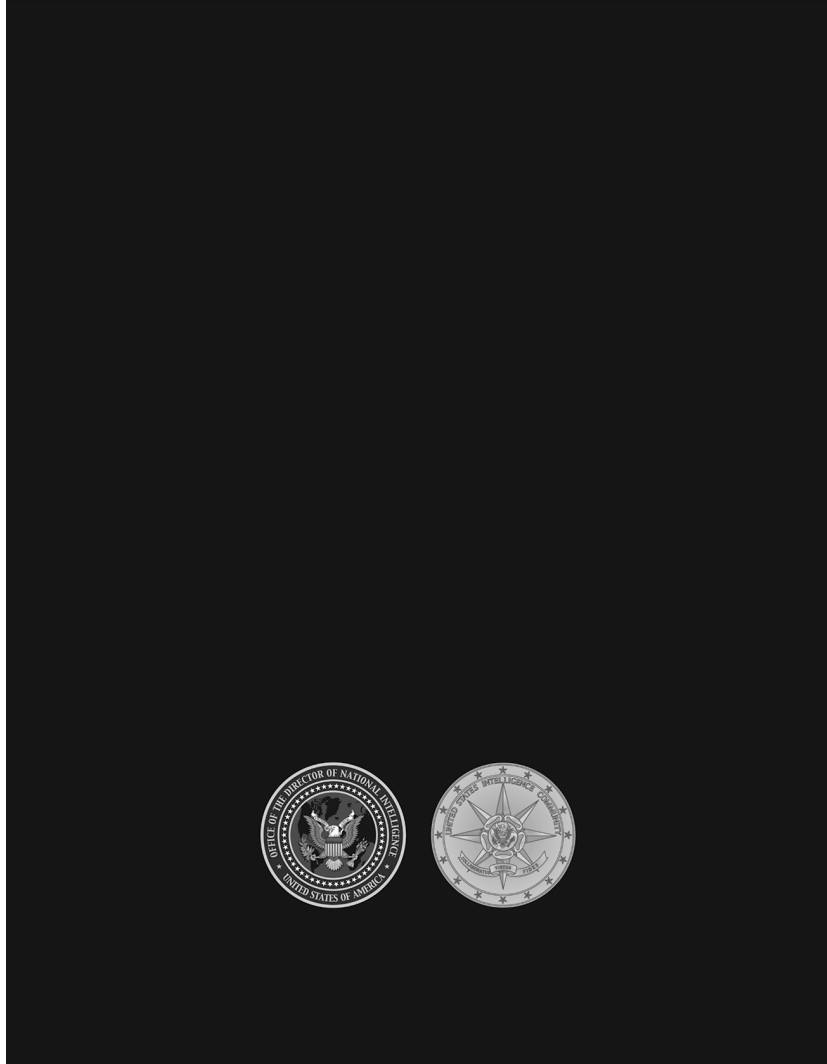
#### **Western Hemisphere**

Latin America and the Caribbean almost certainly will see hotspots of volatility in the coming year, undermining or distracting reliable U.S. partners from improving living conditions, tackling illicit flows, addressing climate change, and warding off foreign influence. In many cases, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified high levels of public discontent with worsening longstanding poor socioeconomic conditions and public services that manifested in large anti-government protests. Elevated levels of U.S.-bound migration from Latin America and the Caribbean region will persist into at least mid-2022 because the underlying economic and insecurity drivers will remain unchanged, and migrants view the U.S. labor market and immigration policies and enforcement as favorable.

#### **Africa**

Sub-Saharan African governments will exhibit clear agency in their foreign affairs as the international community recognizes the importance of the region to its economic and security interests. Large numbers of U.S. citizens will be at risk from conflict in several countries. As the region seeks to reinvigorate its upward trajectory following the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will continue to face unstable commodities prices, poor service delivery and endemic corruption, stresses of extreme weather events, and insecurity because of terrorism, insurgency, sectarian violence, and political instability.

- East Africa probably will see new bouts of conflict in the coming year as the region becomes increasingly strained by the civil war in Ethiopia, power struggles within the transitional government in Sudan, continued instability in Somalia, and a potentially contentious election in Kenya. In Ethiopia, the prospects for a long-term ceasefire remain slim because the belligerents probably do not believe the other side will negotiate in good faith or have a right to be at the table, increasing the prospects for continued conflict, atrocities, and food insecurity. Sudan is almost certainly starting on a protracted and fragile path towards civilian governance that will depend on reconciliation between three opposing elements: the guarded security leadership, the fragmented political coalition, and the mercurial street. In Somalia, leaders' myopic focus on politicking has led to government paralysis, widening the opening for al-Shabaab and raising the risk of recurring outbreaks of violence in Mogadishu.
- In West Africa, a volatile mixture of democratic backsliding, intercommunal violence, and terrorism will threaten the region's stability. Recent undemocratic transfers of power in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea and Mali highlight the region's fragility and in some cases the belief among publics that their government are not able to effectively deliver services or managing expanding insecurity. Some of the leaders who remain in power are turning to autocratic, state-centric, and religious governance practices, with some prioritizing security in key urban centers while ceding rural territory to jihadists.



APPENDIX B

[The prepared statement of Lieutenant General Scott Berrier follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
WORLDWIDE THREAT ASSESSMENT  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES SENATE



Scott Berrier, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
2022

Information available as of 26 April 2022 was used in the preparation of this assessment.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to provide the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) assessment of the global security environment and to address the threats confronting the Nation.

Strategic competition is intensifying because China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have become more confident in the force modernization they have undertaken for years and perceive more opportunity to advance their ambitions. Both China and Russia perceive that the United States is a nation in decline and use that view as a pretext for advancing their authoritarian models and executing their global ambitions.

The United States faces challenges from competitors who have and are developing new capabilities intended to challenge, limit, or exceed U.S. military advantage. These state and nonstate actors are selectively putting those capabilities into play globally and regionally. The threats those capabilities pose span all warfighting domains—maritime, land, air/air defense, electronic warfare (EW), cyberspace, information, and space/counterspace. They include more lethal ballistic and cruise missiles, growing nuclear stockpiles, modernized conventional forces, and a range of gray zone measures such as ambiguous unconventional forces, foreign proxies, information manipulation, cyberattacks, and economic coercion. Such gray zone measures are below traditional combat thresholds and often afford plausible deniability, but they enable actors to wage campaigns of aggression.

Today, strategic competitors and other challengers are advancing beyond gray zone measures and exerting increasing military pressure on neighboring states. Russia has invaded Ukraine, China is threatening Taiwan, and Iran—through its partners and proxies—threatens neighbors in the Middle East and U.S. forces, while enriching uranium to new levels. North Korea continues to threaten South Korea, Japan, and the United States with nuclear-capable ballistic missiles of increased range and lethality.

Violent extremist organizations (VEOs) have experienced significant losses, however, the terrorist threat persists.

The security landscape in Afghanistan has changed. The United States faces a variety of security challenges in South Asia following the Taliban takeover of Kabul as regional dynamics shift. Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, countries like China, Russia, and Iran are working to damage U.S. credibility internationally and engage with the Taliban to pursue or develop outcomes favorable to their interests and ambitions.

Rapidly evolving technology, advances in special materials, high-performance computing, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), and biotechnology will augment our adversaries' military capabilities, and pose additional challenges. China and Russia, in particular, are pressing ahead with advances in space and counterspace capabilities and using cyberspace to increase their operational reach into U.S. infrastructure. They continue to exploit the COVID-19 environment and conduct information warfare to undermine Western governments and compel economic and political outcomes in their favor.

Globally, COVID-19 will continue to threaten health and stability, and climate change will increasingly alter our operating environment. We must remain vigilant to protect our interests and those of our allies.

DIA officers fulfill the critical mission of providing strategic, operational, and tactical Defense Intelligence to our warfighters, defense planners, policymakers, and the acquisition community. The foundational intelligence that DIA, our colleagues across the Defense Intelligence Enterprise, and our allies and foreign partners provide on foreign military capabilities helps to translate national policy into executable military action and to inform the joint force.

I am privileged to lead DIA. My hope in this hearing is to help Congress and the Nation better understand the challenges we face and to support this committee in identifying opportunities to respond to these challenges. Thank you for your continued confidence. Your support is vital to DIA.

#### CHINA

China remains our pacing security challenge and has long viewed the United States as a strategic competitor. China is capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. In a 2017 speech to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress, President Xi Jinping laid out two People's Liberation Army (PLA) modernization goals: to complete PLA modernization by 2035 and to transform the PLA into a military on par with the United States military by 2049. The PLA has already fielded sophisticated weapons and platforms in every warfare domain, instituted major organizational reforms to enhance joint operations, and improved its combat readiness. As a result, it is nearing the status of a global competitor to the United States and is a credible peer competitor in the region. These developments, along with future capabilities, are designed to provide options for China to dissuade, deter, or, if ordered, defeat U.S. and allied intervention during a large-scale, theater campaign such as a war over Taiwan. The PLA can conduct long-range precision strikes across domains, is demonstrating more sophisticated counterspace and cyber capabilities, and is accelerating the large-scale expansion of the PLA's nuclear forces. The accrual of China's national power, including military power, sets the conditions for Beijing to fully assert its preferences on a global scale. Its national strategy to achieve a broad range of developmental goals to establish China as a great power by 2049 is closely integrated with its ambition to make the PLA a military at least as strong as that of the United States.

In 2020, the CCP added a new milestone of 2027 for PLA modernization. This milestone is broadly understood as strengthening joint capabilities; modernizing PLA command, control, computer,

intelligence, and information systems; and expanding the PLA use of AI and other advanced technologies. These advances would give the PLA an improved ability to execute a number of military operations, including the invasion of Taiwan.

In 2022, President Xi Jinping will have an opportunity to demonstrate his consolidation of power in the CCP and set the conditions for his legacy among the CCP's most revered leaders. In late 2022, the CCP will hold its Party Congress where he will almost certainly be reappointed as General Secretary of the CCP and Chairman of the Central Military Commission for his third 5-year term. He will also almost certainly gain a third term as president of China at the spring 2023 National People's Congress because that body removed presidential term limits in 2018.

#### **China's Military Capabilities**

With a force that totals approximately 2 million personnel, the PLA is modernizing its capabilities and improving its proficiencies across all warfare domains so it can conduct a range of land, air, maritime, space, counterspace, electronic warfare, and cyber operations as a joint force. The PLA's evolving capabilities and concepts continue to strengthen its ability to fight and win regional wars against the United States, its allies, and partners, coerce Taiwan and rival claimants in territorial disputes, counter an intervention by a third party in a conflict along China's periphery, and project power globally.

The PLA Army has approximately 975,000 active-duty personnel in combat units. Last year, the Army accelerated its training and fielding of equipment from the already fast pace of recent years. The Army also strove to increase the realism of its training.

The PLA Navy is the largest navy in the world, with an overall battle force of approximately 355 ships and submarines, including more than 145 major surface combatants. The Navy largely comprises modern multirole platforms. In the near term, the Navy will have the capability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets from its submarine and surface combatants with land-attack cruise

missiles, notably enhancing China's global power-projection capabilities. China is also enhancing its antisubmarine warfare inventory and training to protect the Navy's aircraft carriers and ballistic missile submarines.

The PLA Air Force and Navy constitute the largest aviation force in the region and the third largest in the world, with over 2,800 total aircraft (not including trainer variants or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)) of which approximately 2,250 are combat aircraft (including fighters, strategic bombers, tactical bombers, and multimission tactical and attack aircraft). In October 2019, China signaled the return of the airborne leg of its nuclear triad after the Air Force publicly revealed the H-6N as its first nuclear-capable bomber with air-to-air refueling capabilities.

The PLA Rocket Force organizes, staffs, trains, equips, and operates China's strategic land-based nuclear and conventional missile forces, and its associated support forces and missile bases. The PLA is developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that will significantly improve its nuclear-capable missile forces and will require increased nuclear warhead production for multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle capabilities and general force growth. China is constructing at least three solid-propellant ICBM fields, which will cumulatively contain hundreds of new ICBM silos. The Rocket Force also continues to grow its inventory of road-mobile DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), which are able to conduct both conventional and nuclear precision strikes against ground targets as well as conventional strikes against naval targets. For regional strikes, the Rocket Force began to field its first operational hypersonic weapons system, the DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV)-capable medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM).

#### **China's Nuclear Modernization Efforts**

During the next decade, China plans to modernize, diversify, and expand its nuclear forces. China is expanding the number of its land-, sea-, and air-based nuclear delivery platforms and constructing the

infrastructure necessary to support this major expansion of its nuclear forces. They are supporting this expansion by increasing their capacity to produce and separate plutonium and constructing fast breeder reactors and reprocessing facilities. China likely intends to have about 1,000 deliverable warheads by the end of the decade and has probably already established a nascent nuclear triad with the development of a nuclear-capable air-launched ballistic missile and improve ground- and sea-based nuclear capabilities. The PLA intends to increase the peacetime readiness of its nuclear forces by moving to a launch-on-warning posture with an expanded silo-based force.

#### **Other WMD**

China probably has the technical expertise to weaponize chemical and biological agents and numerous conventional weapon systems that could be adapted to deliver these agents. China has consistently claimed that it has never researched, produced, or had biological weapons. However, China has engaged in potential dual-use biological activities—some of which raise concerns regarding its compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)—and maintains sufficient biotechnology infrastructure to produce certain biological agents or toxins on a large scale. China has declared that it once operated a small offensive chemical weapons program. Although China maintains the program was dismantled, its chemical infrastructure is sufficient to research, develop, and procure some chemical agents on a large scale.

#### **China's Approach to Taiwan**

Although China publicly advocates for peaceful unification with Taiwan, it has never renounced the use of military force. China has a range of military options to coerce Taiwan, including increasing military presence operations, an air and maritime blockade, seizure of Taiwan's smaller outlying islands, and a full-scale amphibious invasion of Taiwan itself. Beijing appears willing to defer the use of military force as long as it considers that unification with Taiwan can be negotiated and that the costs of conflict

outweigh the benefits. Beijing argues that its credible threat of force is essential to maintaining the conditions for political progress on its terms and preventing Taiwan from moving toward independence. While Beijing has not announced a timetable for unification with Taiwan, it has increased both rhetoric and military activity around Taiwan over the past three years. In January 2019, President Xi Jinping publicly reiterated China's longstanding refusal to renounce the use of force to resolve the Taiwan issue and staked China's position for peaceful unification under the model of "one country, two systems." In January 2022, the Vice President of Beijing's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits stated the CCP would provide guidance on Taiwan policy for the next five years at this fall's Party Congress.

Since late 2020, the PLA has increased military pressure on Taiwan with frequent military flights into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ). The largest set of flights to date occurred on 4 October 2021; the Taiwan Defense Ministry claimed that a record 56 Chinese military aircraft, including fighter jets, antisubmarine warfare planes, and bombers crossed Taiwan's ADIZ in a single day. This year, China continues regularly crossing Taiwan's ADIZ and flew as many as 39 aircraft into Taiwan's ADIZ on 24 January 2022. Chinese officials justify these shows of force as reactions to a perceived deepening of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation.

#### **China's Global Military Activities**

Beijing wants its armed forces to take a more active role in advancing its foreign policy, highlighting the increasingly global character that Beijing ascribes to its military power. Chinese leaders have tasked the PLA to develop the capability to project power outside its borders and immediate periphery to secure China's growing overseas interests and advance its foreign policy goals. China is seeking to establish a more robust overseas logistics and basing infrastructure to allow the PLA to project and sustain military power at greater distances. Beyond its base in Djibouti, the PLA is pursuing additional military facilities to support naval, air, ground, cyber, and space power projection, including on Africa's Atlantic Ocean,

Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Mediterranean Sea coasts and other locations in the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific. In March, China and the Solomon Islands agreed to a draft security agreement that may allow deployment of Chinese police and military units to assist with internal stability. The draft also allows for replenishment of Chinese naval ships, but there is no indication that a larger military basing arrangement is part of the agreement.

China is the world's fifth-largest arms supplier and has sold UAVs to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and co-produced fighter aircraft and submarines with Pakistan. The growth of China's global economic footprint, through programs like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), makes its interests increasingly vulnerable to domestic political transitions in countries participating in BRI, regional instability, transnational threats, natural disaster, and disease and climate threats. Some BRI projects create potential military advantages to protect China's growing interests, such as the PLA gaining access to selected foreign ports to pre-position the necessary logistics support needed to sustain naval deployments in waters as distant as the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Atlantic Ocean to protect its growing interests. BRI lending has slowed down significantly since its estimated peak from 2016 to 2017, in part because China has gradually shifted away from hard-infrastructure loans toward technology-focused investments.

China has increased activities and engagement in the Arctic region since gaining observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013. In January 2018, China published its first Arctic strategy that promoted a "Polar Silk Road" and declared China to be a "near-Arctic state." Later that year, China launched its second icebreaking research vessel, the *Xue Long 2*, which has since conducted both Arctic and Antarctic expeditions in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

**Chinese-Russian Defense Relationship**

China and Russia's strategic alignment continues to grow, as demonstrated by the Xi-Putin meeting ahead of the Winter Olympics. During the visit, the leaders signed a package of 15 bilateral agreements and issued a joint statement opposing a range of Western international security initiatives, including the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Australia-U.S.-United Kingdom trilateral partnership. It further condemned NATO's "cold war mentality," and called for "non-interference in the internal affairs of other states."

This alignment has continued despite Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine. China is closely managing its messaging on the conflict, generally backing Russia's characterization as a conflict ultimately caused by U.S.-driven NATO expansion and disregard for Russia's security interests. China abstained from the United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning the renewed invasion of Ukraine, and was one of 24 countries to vote against Russia's expulsion from the United Nations Human Rights Council. However, Beijing has been reluctant to fully back Russia, likely in order to preserve its own economic relations with Europe and the U.S. No doubt, China is also keenly observing how the Russian campaign is conducted and how combat against determined resistance unfolds.

In step with the larger partnership, Beijing's defense relationship with Moscow has also strengthened. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, China and Russia maintained frequent high-level communication and stressed close strategic cooperation on global security and health issues. For 3 of the past 4 years, the PLA has participated in Russia's strategic command and staff exercise. Although China did not participate in Russia's 2021 strategic exercise, which was focused in western Russia, Beijing, for the first time, invited the Russian military to participate in a strategic campaign exercise in northwest China. China and Russia likely perceive further cooperation between the two militaries, including joint defense technology development, exercises, and other military modernization initiatives as advantageous to

their respective interests. Despite continued military cooperation, China and Russia have denied any intent to enter into a formal alliance, apparently viewing the strategic effects of their current cooperation as sufficient to accomplish their goals.

#### **China's Regional Relations**

Tensions with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) continued in 2021, although no new significant confrontations took place. In February 2021, China asserted through its state-owned outlets that 4 PLA soldiers died during the June 2020 skirmish with India that also resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers. Despite agreements to disengage in spring 2021, both sides maintain troops along the LAC as corps commander-level negotiations have progressed slowly.

In 2021, Chinese and North Korean political and military diplomacy continued to be hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. North Korea's forced isolation ceased almost all trade and people-to-people exchanges across the border, and the North Korean regime's paranoia about the risks of COVID-19 has prevented Chinese-North Korean diplomatic exchanges. China's objectives for the Korean Peninsula include stability, denuclearization, and the absence of U.S. forces near China's border. China's focus on maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula involves preventing North Korea's collapse and military conflict on the peninsula.

Concerns about instability in Afghanistan probably are leading China to expand diplomatic engagement with the Taliban. On 25 October 2021, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with senior Taliban officials in Doha, Qatar, marking the first high-level meeting between the two since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Beijing cautiously proceeded with high-level meetings with the Taliban, probably to avoid the appearance of granting the Taliban de facto recognition.

China continues to pursue its maritime claims in the East and South China Seas, and in 2021, Beijing enacted a Coast Guard Law that included expansive language on jurisdiction and use-of-force

authorities. The dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku Islands and overlapping exclusive economic zone and continental shelf claims persists with no progress toward resolution. Japan remains concerned about the persistent presence of Chinese Coast Guard ships and fishing vessels in disputed East China Sea waters and rejects China's claim of sovereignty.

In the South China Sea, China claims sovereignty over the Spratly and Parcel Islands and other land features within its ambiguous self-proclaimed "dashed line." Its claims are disputed in whole or part by Brunei, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Beijing continues to employ the Navy, Coast Guard, and its maritime militia to patrol the region and harass the oil and gas exploration operations of rival claimants. In response to China's continued assertive actions against foreign fishing ships, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam publicly reject Beijing's claims and invoke international law in support of their maritime sovereign rights.

#### **China's Defense Economics**

In 2022, China announced a 7-percent increase from its 2021 annual defense budget, continuing more than 20 years of annual defense spending increases and sustaining its position as the second-largest military spender in the world. China's published military budget omits several major categories of expenditures and its actual military-related spending is higher than what it states in its official budget.

China's economic development supports its military modernization through the resources of its growing national industrial and technological base, the availability of funding for larger defense budgets, and deliberate party-led initiatives such as Made in China 2025 and China Standards 2035. In documents detailing the 14th 5-Year Plan (2021 to 2025), Chinese planners announced a shift to a new development concept they call "dual circulation." Dual circulation is focused on accelerating domestic consumption as a driver of economic growth, shifting consumption to higher-end manufacturing, and creating breakthroughs in key technologies along critical high-end global supply chains. It also places

emphasis on mutually reinforcing foreign investment in key technologies to provide the capital and technology necessary to advance domestic technological innovation in support of China's security and development objectives.

China pursues its military-civil fusion (MCF) development strategy to blend its economic, social, and security development strategies to build an integrated national strategic system and capabilities to support its national rejuvenation goals. The MCF strategy includes objectives to develop and acquire advanced dual-use technology for military purposes, deepen reform of the national defense science and technology industries, and serve a broader purpose by strengthening all of China's instruments of national power.

This year, Chinese leaders will be focused on the upcoming Party Congress and almost certain continuation of Xi Jinping's leadership for a third term. In the wake of last year's 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party and this year's Olympics, Beijing probably will attempt to portray China as an increasingly powerful, stable, and prosperous state, while trying to manage an increasingly complex regional and global security environment and avoid any blame for COVID-19. While holding the CCP up to the Chinese populace as the primary driver for China's success, Chinese leaders probably will continue to address a number of security priorities including the growing competition with the United States, fallout from Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine, pressuring Taiwan to unify with the mainland, solidifying its position in disputed regions, and increasing its ability to protect Chinese interests abroad.

#### RUSSIA

Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine clearly signals the re-emergence of a more hostile and militaristic Russia that seeks to overturn the U.S.-led rules based post-Cold War international order, expand its control over the former Soviet empire, and reclaim what it regards as its rightful position on the world

stage. Russia's military capabilities have been used to violate not only the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, they pose an existential threat to U.S. national security and that of our allies. Russia's military strength allows Moscow to challenge U.S. global standing and undermine our democracy as it seeks to shape a new world order that is more favorable to its interests and consistent with its authoritarian model.

#### **Leadership Views and Goals**

Russia views the United States and NATO as the primary threats to its national security and geopolitical ambitions, and Moscow has sought to develop a modern, capable military designed to counter perceived threats and achieve its objectives in this new era of great-power competition. Russia views a powerful, survivable nuclear force as the foundation of its national security, and its modernized general purpose forces as critical to meet any conventional military threat and project Russian power abroad. Russia's initial losses in Ukraine probably undermine the goals for its general purpose forces as originally envisioned by Russian leadership.

At the same time, Russia continues to develop a diverse toolkit of indirect actions such as information confrontation, private military companies, and other covert actions that are designed to weaken the United States and its allies, coerce and threaten its neighbors, and influence or subvert political and diplomatic decisionmaking processes. These tactics are tailored to take advantage of Russian strengths and exploit U.S. vulnerabilities and have allowed Russia to compete effectively in international politics well above its relative power. Russia has taken on an increasingly alarmist view of NATO's presence along its borders, claiming the alliance uses operations and deployments near Russia to stage long-range strike platforms to test its defenses, and threaten a decapitating first strike. In the past year, Russia has publicly expanded its claim that NATO is encroaching on its borders, messaging that it needs security guarantees and regards any NATO presence in countries Moscow considers within its sphere of

influence, such as Ukraine, to be unacceptable. Russia is now engaged in direct military action against Ukraine, employing the majority of its conventional ground forces, ground- and air-launched missile attacks, and some of its naval forces to prevent what it undoubtedly sees as a major political-military catastrophe, a Ukraine more deeply aligned with NATO.

#### **Russia's Military Capabilities**

Russia is modernizing its military forces across all services. President Vladimir Putin continues to tout the development of fifth-generation fighters, state-of-the-art air and coastal defense missile systems, new surface vessels and submarines, advanced tanks, modernized artillery, and improved military command and control (C2) and logistics. Russia's modernization is intended to ensure Russia can field a military capable of engaging in the full spectrum of warfare to deter or defeat a wide scope of threats. Initial setbacks in Ukraine challenge some of Putin's narrative, notably regarding the effectiveness of Russian ground-based systems and C2 in a contested environment.

Russia continues to improve capabilities for its Ground Forces, Airborne Forces, and coastal troops. It is upgrading main battle tanks (MBTs) and introducing new MBTs, artillery, and multiple rocket launchers to its arsenal. Russia has also steadily increased its number of battalion tactical groups (BTGs)—the Ground Force's primary maneuver element. In 2021, Russia's Defense Minister claimed its force structure could generate 168 BTGs, which is a 75-percent increase from the 96 BTGs it claimed it could generate in 2016. Setbacks from the initial phase of Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine may require several years for Russia to replace equipment and personnel to return to this force generation level.

Russia is also in the process of restructuring its Ground Forces located near its borders with NATO countries, and it added upwards of 20 new units or divisions in the Western Military District by the end of 2021. However, reports of undermanned Russian formations in the initial days of the invasion suggest

that many of these units have yet to achieve full combat capability, and given losses in Ukraine, will probably face significant problems doing so.

Russia's Aerospace Forces (VKS) have steadily modernized, adding more fourth-generation aircraft, modern strategic and tactical surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), new radars and UAVs, and increased training and pilot proficiency. Russia's VKS modernization combined with combat operations in Syria have improved its capability to conduct close air support, sustainment, C4ISR, precision strike and interdiction in limited operations, but deficiencies in Russia's air operations in Ukraine suggest improved capabilities and training may not yet have been promulgated across the force. New and upgraded SAMs and radars have increased Russia's over-the-horizon target fidelity and its capability to identify and respond to activity approaching Russia's borders.

For Russia's general purpose forces navy, Moscow has fielded the ultra-quiet, cruise-missile carrying Severodvinsk II class SSGN *Kazan*—accepted into service in 2020—and SSGN *Novosibirsk*, which Russia's Pacific Fleet service will likely accept within the coming months to provide a new platform capable of threatening North America from the Pacific Ocean. Russia is also making significant progress fielding hypersonic weapons and announced in November, after successfully completing testing, that the Tsirkon hypersonic antiship missile would enter into service in 2022.

#### **Russia's Nuclear Modernization Efforts**

As of November 2021, Russia claims to have upgraded 86-percent of its nuclear triad and is developing several novel nuclear-capable systems designed to overcome ballistic missile defense systems and ensure that Russia can credibly inflict unacceptable damage on the West. Russia is developing new ballistic missile submarines, arming its heavy bombers with high-precision cruise missiles, and developing more capable ICBMs. Russia has also already fielded some of the novel weapons systems announced by President Putin in 2018, including an ICBM-launched hypersonic glide vehicle and an air-

launched ballistic missile. A new, recently tested, heavy ICBM, a transoceanic torpedo, and an intercontinental cruise missile—all nuclear armed—may be fielded later this decade. Russian Long-Range Aviation has remained active and is on track to receive new Tu-160 Blackjack bombers and upgrade existing platforms to deliver advanced hypersonic and precision-strike weapons at intercontinental ranges.

Russia is also making progress in modernizing its conventional and nuclear C2 capabilities. In November 2020, President Putin highlighted the impending completion of a new and highly survivable command center that can withstand attacks by nuclear forces. During Russia's 2020 and 2021 annual capstone military exercises, Moscow demonstrated an improved ability to pair reconnaissance and conventional strike systems to increase lethality. However, Russia's performance in Ukraine demonstrates that it has struggled to apply these concepts and systems—at scale—in real-world, conventional force operations.

#### **Nuclear Policy and Arms Control**

Russia views nuclear weapons as primarily for deterrence but maintains the right to use such weapons in response to what it views as an existential threat. Russian military and deterrence doctrine consistently outlines the conditions under which Moscow would consider using nuclear weapons, which include existential threats of hypersonic missiles, weapons of mass destruction, or massed conventional strikes to the Russian homeland or its allies. In late February, following a large Russian strategic forces exercise and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, President Putin ordered his military leadership to put the deterrence forces of the Russian army on "special combat duty," a term appearing to refer to heightened preparations designed to ensure a quick transition to higher alert status should the situation call for it. Putin stated this was in response to "leading NATO nations" making aggressive statements about Russia. This order and other recent comments by Russian leaders highlighting Russia's nuclear arsenal are likely intended to intimidate. They also reflect Moscow's openly espoused doctrinal views on the use of

tactical, non-strategic nuclear weapons to compel an adversary into pursuing an off-ramp or negotiations that may result in termination of the conflict on terms favorable to Russia, or deter the entry of other participants when the offensive progress of Russia's conventional forces looks like it might be reversed or the conflict becomes protracted. Recurring public statements reiterating Russia's nuclear capabilities and use doctrine—in defense of the Russian homeland and its allies—probably signal Moscow's perception that the West is escalating its involvement in Ukraine and attempt to influence countries to limit or refrain from direct support to Ukraine.

Russia has a mixed record on arms control compliance, violating treaties it sees as overly constraining and adhering to those aligned with its strategic interests. In January 2021, Russia and the United States agreed to extend the New START Treaty. Russia adheres to New START's central limits and verification regimes because the treaty allows Moscow to maintain relative strategic nuclear parity with the United States, constrain U.S. nuclear force growth, and avoid a more costly arms race. By contrast, Russia continues to support the SSC-8 ground-launched, theater range, nuclear-capable cruise missile program that prompted the U.S. Government to conclude Moscow was in violation of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Russia also formally withdrew from the Open Skies Treaty in December 2021. In future negotiations, Russia may attempt to use the development of systems such as the Kinzhal hypersonic, maneuvering, dual-capable, air-launched ballistic missile; the Burevestnik nuclear powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile; or counterspace weapons as leverage to gain concessions from the United States and NATO.

Russia almost certainly maintains biological and chemical weapon programs. Since 1992, Russia's BWC Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) submissions have remained incomplete and misleading. It only partially acknowledges the former Soviet Union program, maintains its secrecy efforts, and has not provided sufficient evidence that key biological and chemical weapon program activities have been dismantled. The United States is unable to certify that Russia has met its obligations for providing

complete declarations of its chemical weapons production and development facilities, and its stockpile. Furthermore, the United States Government asserts that Russia is not in compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in part because of its use of a nerve agent—referred to as Novichok—in the attempted assassination of former Russian Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) intelligence officer Sergey Skripal and his daughter in March 2018. In August 2020, Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officers also used a Novichok nerve agent to poison Russian opposition leader, Aleksey Navalnyy.

#### **Threats to Ukraine and the other Soviet Union Successor States**

Russia is determined to restore a sphere of influence over Ukraine and the other states of the former Soviet Union which is a key driver for Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. Intent on bringing Kyiv back into its orbit, Russia launched a multi-axis, combined arms invasion of Ukraine, dedicating the vast majority of its conventional forces for seizing large swaths of Ukrainian territory and replacing the government in Kyiv. Having met greater than anticipated resistance from Ukraine and relatively high losses in the initial phases of the conflict, Moscow has shifted focus to eastern Ukraine, where it appears to be prioritizing defeating Ukrainian forces in the Donbas. It is not clear if Russia has given up on its goal of forcing Kyiv to submit to its influence for the long term. Stiff Ukrainian resistance is leading Russia to resort to more indiscriminate and brutal methods that are destroying cities, infrastructure, and increasing civilian deaths.

Russia's success in Ukraine, or lack thereof, probably will impact its ability to wield stronger influence over other Soviet successor states. The Kremlin likely calculates that a victory over Ukraine will compel most of the Soviet successor states to align themselves more closely with Moscow, but a military setback for Russia or a lengthy drawn-out campaign in Ukraine probably will have the opposite effect.

Regardless of the outcome in Ukraine, the Kremlin remains sensitive to what it perceives as Western regime change efforts in Belarus and continues to press Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko to integrate more deeply with Russia. Lukashenko's approval for Russia to use Belarus as a staging ground for Russian troops to invade Ukraine signals his willingness to concede to Russia's demands. In Central Asia, Moscow is also trying to exploit the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and Central Asian concerns about a potential spillover of Afghan-based instability into the region to convince these states to expand their political-military cooperation with Russia. In January, Moscow demonstrated such cooperation and its role in the region by sending Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member troops into Kazakhstan on the request of Kazakh leadership to quell domestic protests.

#### **Russia-China Ties**

Russia continues to deepen its ties to China in an effort to curtail U.S. power and influence. Relations between Moscow and Beijing are probably their deepest since any time before the Sino-Soviet split. Both countries coordinate on high-priority geopolitical issues to maximize their power and influence while bilateral military cooperation continues to evolve—punctuated by a growing number of combined military exercises. In 2018, Moscow included the Chinese military in its largest annual exercise, VOSTOK-2018, for the first time. Since then, China has participated in two other Russian capstone exercises, conducted three combined bomber patrols over the Sea of Japan, and circumnavigated Japan together in October 2021, marking their first combined maritime patrol. China and Russia designated 2021 as a year of scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries, including areas such as: nuclear, energy, biotechnology, and robotics. However, there are indications Ukraine-related sanctions are affecting research programs between the two.

The January Xi-Putin meeting, which resulted in 15 bilateral agreements and a joint statement opposing Western international security initiatives, probably reflects Putin's intent to blunt the force of Western

sanctions and strengthen the voice both countries use to espouse anti-western narratives. Moscow probably views Beijing as its most capable geopolitical partner, an alternative financial clearinghouse, and a key ally at the United Nations to undercut Western messaging and offset the harshest impact of sanctions. The extent to which China will help Russia mitigate the effects of sanctions as Russia's economy declines further is not clear. However, Putin probably views his relationship with Xi as critical to alleviating the departure of credit card companies, creating a viable alternative to SWIFT, signing further energy deals, and leveraging Chinese technology. China also abstained from the United Nations General Assembly resolution in March that condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

#### **An Increasingly Assertive Actor Abroad**

Russia continues to pursue its national security interests and geopolitical ambitions aggressively across the globe, acting from a position of increased confidence and emboldened by its perception that the United States is in a period of decline. Russia is steadily expanding its international profile, increasing its engagement with select countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America and is working to diminish U.S. influence around the globe. The Kremlin is seeking to establish military bases and air and naval access agreements with states in these regions to enhance its power projection capabilities and increase its regional influence. In April, 24 countries—including China—voted against Russia's expulsion from the United Nations Human Rights Council when signs of likely Russian atrocities emerged from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Another 58 countries abstained from the vote, indicating the continued effects of Russia's influence efforts.

The Kremlin's engagement with Pyongyang centers on the preservation of regional stability and promotion of Russia's status on the peninsula. Russia has advocated for a comprehensive and negotiated settlement and opposes the use of force. Moscow agreed to UN sanctions against Pyongyang in 2017; however, Moscow sometimes skirts compliance issues because of business interests and a fear

of destabilizing the North Korean regime. In addition, Russia coordinates its North Korea-related diplomacy with China, including a bilateral “Road Map” for peace, an initiative since 2017 that has aimed to reduce tensions on the Peninsula through a dual-track approach to advance denuclearization and establish a peace mechanism.

In the Middle East, Moscow continues to provide Syria with military, diplomatic, and economic support, while seeking to broker an end to the Assad regime’s international isolation and lobbying for economic aid to assist in Syria’s reconstruction. The Kremlin likely calculates this support along with its military presence in Syria will ensure its sway over the Assad regime, cement Moscow’s status as Syria’s preeminent foreign partner, and bolster Russian regional influence and power projection capability. Russia and Turkey continue to downplay their disagreements and compartmentalize their divergent foreign policy objectives in Syria and elsewhere in the region.

Russia also continues to expand its involvement in Africa, highlighted by the activities of Russian oligarch Yevgeniy Prigozhin and his private military company Wagner. Wagner has conducted combat operations in the Central African Republic since 2017, Libya since 2019, and deployed to Mali in December 2021. More broadly, Russia uses arms sales, training, and bilateral defense agreements to establish lasting relationships on the continent. To enhance its power-projection capabilities and increase its regional advantage, Moscow continues to pursue military bases and air and naval access agreements in Africa, such as the planned naval logistics facility in Sudan.

In Latin America, Moscow is focused largely on strengthening military ties with its traditional partners Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, offering training, arms sales, and weapons maintenance support. Russia has also threatened to increase its military presence in the region in response to U.S. support for Ukraine. Moscow continues to support disputed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro with military and economic assistance, largely to protect its economic investments and thwart perceived efforts to

remove President Maduro from power. Russia's engagement with other Latin American governments remains minimal, but the Kremlin is open to opportunities for more extensive engagement.

Russia views the Arctic as a security and economic priority, seeking to exploit Arctic natural resources and develop the Northern Sea Route as a major international shipping lane. Russia is refurbishing Soviet-era airfields and radar installations, constructing new ports and search and rescue centers, and building up its fleet of conventionally- and nuclear-powered icebreakers. Russia is also expanding its network of air and coastal defense missile systems to strengthen its antiaccess/area-denial capabilities in the region. In May 2021, Russia assumed the two-year rotating Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, an association of the eight Arctic nations intended to preserve the Arctic as a zone of peace and constructive cooperation. Russia intends to use the platform to attract investment in its Arctic projects and defend its national interests.

Looking ahead, Russia will continue to pose a multifaceted threat to U.S. national security and its ability to lead and shape international developments while Russia's invasion of Ukraine will have immediate and long-term consequences for European security and stability.

Protracted occupation of parts of Ukrainian territory threatens to sap Russian military manpower and reduce its modernized weapons arsenal, while economic sanctions will probably throw Russia into prolonged economic depression and diplomatic isolation that will threaten its ability to produce modern precision-guided munitions. As this war and its consequences slowly weaken Russian conventional strength, Russia likely will increasingly rely on its nuclear deterrent to signal the West and project strength to its internal and external audiences.

Russia's brutal aggression in Ukraine is reviving fears of a more imperial and militaristic Russia, prompting requests from NATO allies for assurances that U.S. security guarantees will be honored. U.S. partners in the former Soviet Union will also look to the United States for signs that they are not being

abandoned while adjusting their policies to coexist with a stronger and more emboldened Russia. Russian military modernization efforts will progress even as initial timelines for some programs may have to adjust to likely new economic realities, and Moscow will continue to blend traditional displays of military might with other coercive political, economic, cyber, and information confrontation measures to achieve its geopolitical interests, delineate its redlines, and compel the United States to take its concerns more seriously. Moreover, U.S. efforts to undermine Russia's goals in Ukraine, combined with its perception that the United States is a nation in decline, could prompt Russia to engage in more aggressive actions not only in Ukraine itself, but also more broadly in its perceived confrontation with the West.

#### **IRAN**

Iran is the primary state challenger to U.S. interests in the Middle East because of its increasingly sophisticated military capabilities, broad proxy and partner networks, and demonstrated willingness to use force against U.S. and partner forces. Iran's national security strategy aims to ensure the continuity of clerical rule, maintain internal stability, secure its position as a dominant regional power, and achieve economic prosperity. Tehran employs a complex set of diplomatic, military, and security capabilities, including unconventional forces that recruit and train partners and proxies to achieve its objectives and conventional forces that can impose high costs on adversaries. Tehran probably calibrates its attacks to pressure adversaries and proportionally retaliate for real or perceived transgressions against Iran, while attempting to prevent escalation to full-scale conflict. Iranian officials continue to perceive that they have not sufficiently retaliated for the 8 January 2020 death of former Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) Commander Qasem Soleimani, and probably are planning covert actions against U.S. officials to retaliate for his death while attempting to maintain plausible deniability and minimize escalation. Iran probably will continue to focus on unconventional attacks or minimally

deniable actions, such as cyberoperations, rather than overt conventional retaliation to counter Western pressure.

#### **Iranian Military Capabilities**

Iran's conventional military strategy is based on deterrence and retaliation. If deterrence fails, Iran probably would seek to demonstrate strength by striking its adversaries. Iran fields the region's largest arsenal of UAVs and missiles and has increasingly relied on UAVs, likely because they are inexpensive, versatile, and Iran probably believes they sometimes allow for plausible deniability. Iran has emphasized improving UAV accuracy, lethality, and over-the-horizon capabilities. Iran also proliferates UAV equipment and training to proxy and partner networks, which provides Tehran a deniable means of attacking U.S. and partner interests throughout the Middle East.

Iran routinely uses its naval forces to monitor U.S. and allied naval operations off its coast—including near the Strait of Hormuz—and occasionally engages in dangerous and unprofessional interactions. Since 2019, Iran's naval forces have become more brazen and have seized, sabotaged, and attacked merchant ships in the region—in some cases retaliating for Israeli and allied activities.

Some Iranian missiles are able to strike targets 2,000 kilometers from Iran's borders, and it has demonstrated the willingness to use them. Iran continues to increase the accuracy and lethality of its ballistic missile force, including short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) with increasing range and antiship capability and MRBMs with accuracy and warhead improvements. Since at least 2016, Iran has unveiled antiship cruise missiles launched from aircraft and submarines, mobile air defense systems, and several land-attack cruise missiles that fly at low altitudes and can attack a target from multiple directions, complicating missile defense. Iran continues to develop space launch vehicles with boosters that could be capable of ICBM ranges if configured for that purpose. Tehran also aspires to build, launch, and

operate satellites and has attempted to place several experimental satellites into orbit—including the successful April 2020 and March 2022 launches of Iran's first military reconnaissance satellites.

Iran is a party to the CWC and BWC. However, since 2018, the United States Government has found Iran to be noncompliant with its CWC obligations due to its failure to declare its chemical weapons transfers and complete list of riot control agents (RCAs), and failure to submit a complete list of chemical weapons production facilities. The United States Government is also concerned that Iran is pursuing pharmaceutical-based agents for offensive purposes.

In 2021, Iran conducted arms sales negotiations with Russia, China, and North Korea. These negotiations probably reflect Iran's military modernization priorities—missile, naval, UAV, and air defense forces—but Tehran also may pursue more robust air power and EW capabilities based on lessons learned from recent conflicts.

#### **Iran's Regional Military Activities**

Regionally, Tehran continues to provide advisory, financial, and materiel support to partner and proxy networks in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen to build strategic depth, facilitate attacks against United States' and its regional partners' interests, and guarantee Iran's long-term regional influence. Tehran has leveraged its relationships to attack the continued U.S. presence in the region and is attempting to force a U.S. military drawdown. Esmail Ghani, the IRGC-QF commander, has advanced the regional lines of effort he inherited in January 2020 from his predecessor, Qasem Soleimani.

In 2021, Iran began using more aggressive measures and novel tactics—including targeting Israeli-associated commercial shipping—as part of a new strategy to counter Israel. Tehran has increasingly relied on UAVs to fulfill this strategy and has conducted or enabled at least six UAV attacks against Israeli interests in the past year. Iran also seeks to prevent Israel from normalizing its relations with Arab states, combining threats from its proxies and partners with diplomatic outreach.

In Iraq, Iran seeks to ensure that Iranian-aligned Shia militia groups maintain military and political influence. Iran has improved militia capabilities and increased their operational independence. In 2021, Iraqi militias used Iranian-provided one-way UAVs to attack U.S. targets for the first time and have modulated subsequent attacks based on political circumstances. Iran has directed temporary pauses in militia attacks to manage escalation and improve the militias' political prospects in response to Iraq's October 2021 elections. Militias conducted multiple UAV and indirect fire attacks on U.S. forces in January to increase pressure on the United States to withdraw.

In Lebanon, Tehran works with Lebanese Hezbollah—its most important and capable substate partner—to project power and bolster regional Shia militants' capabilities. Iran acts as Hezbollah's primary patron, and their strategic interests rarely diverge.

In Syria, Iran seeks to secure a lasting economic and military presence while deterring continued Israeli strikes on Iranian interests. During the past year, Tehran has demonstrated its willingness to target U.S. forces in Syria. Since 2019, Iranian-backed forces have conducted several rocket attacks against U.S. and coalition partners in Syria. In October 2021, Iranian forces in Syria struck U.S. forces with multiple UAVs in the most sophisticated attack against a U.S. military base in the country to date, reportedly in retaliation for an Israeli airstrike that used airspace near the At Tanf area.

In Yemen, Iran continues to support the Huthis with advisers and weapons to facilitate complex and long-range attacks against Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) in order to pressure the Saudi-led coalition. In the past year, Iran supplied the Huthis with one of its most advanced one-way-attack UAVs, the Shahed-136, which provides Iran and the Huthis long-range strike capabilities. Following three UAV and missile attacks against the UAE in January, the Huthis have refocused their cross-border UAV and missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and maritime targets in the Red Sea. However as of 1 April, the United Nations brokered an informal truce for the Huthis and Saudi-led Coalition to cease all military

operations in Yemen for two months. The truce promised the temporary reopening of Al-Hudaydah port and Sanaa Airport, and the possibility of extending the truce into a more permanent ceasefire. The Huthis have not formally or publicly agreed to the truce, but as of 15 April both parties were still adhering to it despite accusations of violations. Separately on 7 April, following a Gulf Cooperation Council-hosted dialogue in Riyadh between Yemeni factions, Yemeni President Abd Rabuh Mansour Hadi announced the transfer of his authorities to a new Presidential Leadership Council (PLC). The PLC consists of eight leaders from different anti-Huthi Yemeni factions. Although the truce and creation of PLC demonstrates some progress towards a more permanent ceasefire, the Huthis probably still seek to improve their negotiating position through military operations and external attacks.

Iran has continued its regional activities despite the 2018 reimposition of sanctions pursuant to the U.S. exit from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which has impeded Tehran's access to traditional government funding streams, including oil exports. Iran has worked to circumvent sanctions, but currency depreciation, high inflation, and unemployment continue to plague its economy. Iran's 2022 defense budget is substantially larger than its previous five defense budgets, but fiscal constraints very likely will prevent it from fully funding its planned expenditures.

#### **Tehran Nuclear Development Efforts**

Tehran also has continued to reduce its adherence to the JCPOA to gain leverage in talks and revive the deal on terms favorable to Iran, including continued demands for sanctions relief. Tehran has halted some transparency measures for its nuclear program and enriched uranium up to 20- and 60-percent, beyond the JCPOA limit of 3.67-percent. Iran also has conducted research and development with advanced centrifuges beyond agreed limits and has produced small quantities of enriched uranium metal for the first time.

During the next year, Tehran probably will respond to U.S. and partner operations in a manner it determines is similar or proportional to avoid risking unmanageable escalation. Tehran's response probably would seek to demonstrate strength, reduce Western regional influence, and reestablish deterrence following repeated attacks on Iranian interests in Iran and Syria. Such responses probably will include deniable attacks, cyberoperations, or nuclear-related actions. Iran probably will seek to avoid escalation it expects would undermine JCPOA negotiations or impede its goal of compelling a U.S. withdrawal from the region.

#### NORTH KOREA

North Korea remains a serious challenge for the United States and its allies. North Korea has the capability of holding U.S. and allied forces at risk with missiles capable of carrying nuclear, chemical and biological payloads and its large conventional military. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is committed to preserving his regime and the further development of military capabilities with destructive power and expanded reach. To this end, North Korea is modernizing and expanding its missile force to more accurately target U.S. and allied interests in the Asia-Pacific region and across the continental United States. Since early 2021, North Korea has tested several new systems, including a railborne missile launch capability, missiles it claims have an HGV payload, an SRBM, a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), a long-range cruise missile, and an ICBM. Since January 2022, North Korea tested eight missile systems including an IRBM, ICBMs, purported HGVs, cruise missiles, and multiple types of solid-propellant SRBMs, to showcase its commitment to advancing and diversifying its missile program. Pyongyang also continues to shift to solid-propellant missiles, allowing for more rapid employment than existing liquid-propellant missiles. In January 2021, Kim Jong Un announced plans to modernize North Korea's military over the next 5 years. Specific goals included developing multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles, an HGV, solid-propellant ICBMs, reconnaissance satellites, a nuclear-powered submarine, nuclear weapons with higher yields, and smaller and lighter nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang also remains committed to its nuclear-weapons program. North Korean leadership likely views expanding its strategic nuclear and missile deterrents as essential to ensuring regime security and enabling coercive military threats and actions.

Since ascending to power in 2011, Kim Jong Un has solidified his rule by raising the public prominence of his regime, installing a cadre of loyal military and political advisers, and bolstering control over the North Korean population—steps that Kim probably expects will enhance his legitimacy at home and abroad and ensure long-term regime security. Kim has reinforced the approach of his father and grandfather that focuses on maintaining repressive domestic controls to shield his regime from internal threats—including crackdowns on access to outside information, intensive ideological indoctrination, and enforcement through a pervasive security apparatus to counter external influences. Personnel shuffles, purges to enact sweeping policy changes, and public speeches justifying his policies have also allowed Kim to ensure elite support and reinforce fealty to him throughout his tenure. In January 2021, the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) elected to change Kim Jong Un's title from Chairman of the KWP to General Secretary of the party, a title also held by Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.

#### **North Korea's Military Capabilities**

North Korea's military force has long been plagued by resource constraints and aging equipment and probably reduced training during the past year to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Despite these limitations, North Korea maintains a capable military of ground, air, navy, special operations, and missile forces. These forces are almost certainly postured to maintain a credible defense of its territory and execute lethal, limited objective attacks, but they are not able to support a sustained conflict or reunify the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean People's Army (KPA) Ground Forces remain the core of North Korea's military power and the primary means by which Pyongyang threatens Seoul. The KPA ground units comprise approximately

1,000,000 active-duty personnel and have thousands of long-range artillery and rocket systems arrayed along the demilitarized zone to be able to strike South Korea without warning. It is also developing more accurate multiple rocket launchers with ranges extending to South Korean and U.S. bases farther south on the peninsula.

North Korea's Air and Air Defense Forces consist of more than 900 combat aircraft and can fly strike missions against targets in South Korea with fighters, bombers, and possibly UAVs. It is developing or procuring a variety of UAVs, some of which have been used for reconnaissance missions over South Korea and could be equipped with rudimentary armaments. Its air defense forces maintain a dense network of integrated systems, providing overlapping, redundant territorial coverage.

The North Korean Navy is primarily a coastal defense force and is capable of conducting limited short-term offensive and defensive operations. It maintains one of the world's largest submarine forces. While most of its submarines are of older design, it launched a new ballistic missile submarine with a single launch tube in 2015, and tested a new SLBM in 2016 and another model in 2021, in an effort to build its naval deterrent.

North Korea's Strategic Force controls a wide selection of SRBMs, MRBMs, IRBMs, and ICBMs and has stated each represents a nuclear-capable class. North Korea's Strategic Force is one of the most rapidly modernizing elements of its national military, and if training and development are sustained and pursued consistently forcewide, it could become one of North Korea's most capable military arms. North Korea maintains robust chemical warfare (CW) and biological warfare (BW) capabilities. North Korea, which is not a member of the CWC, probably has a CW program with up to several thousand metric tons of CW agents and the capability to produce nerve, blister, blood, and choking agents. North Korea probably could employ CW agents by modifying a variety of conventional munitions, including artillery, rockets, and ballistic missiles as well as unconventional, targeted methods such as the use of a chemical

agent in the 2017 assassination of Kim's half-brother Kim Jong Nam. North Korea has a dedicated, national-level effort to develop BW capabilities and has developed, produced, and possibly weaponized BW agents. North Korea probably has the capability to produce sufficient quantities of biological agents for military purposes upon leadership demand. Though a signatory to the BWC, North Korea has failed to provide a BWC confidence building measure report since 1990.

North Korea's economy and logistics infrastructure support national defense considerations, but the systems are poorly constructed and deteriorating. While it has made recent progress on hydroelectric power and improving power generation, North Korea continues to experience chronic electricity shortages. As a country, it possesses extensive indigenous capability for defense industrial output but uses illicit foreign procurement for some components and technology. North Korea also continues to expand the world's largest and most fortified underground facility (UGF) program, estimated to consist of thousands of UGFs and bunkers that are designed to conceal and protect leadership, C2 assets, WMDs, ballistic missiles, military forces and assets, and defense industries.

North Korea continues to violate international sanctions by procuring dual-use goods for its WMD and missile programs, illicitly importing refined petroleum and exporting proscribed commodities—such as coal and military equipment—despite its extreme border restrictions. Since 2018, North Korea has acquired refined petroleum in excess of the amount allowed under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions through vessels using illicit ship-to-ship transfers and direct deliveries of petroleum using third-country tankers. Prior to the pandemic, evasion of sanctions stabilized North Korea's fuel supplies and prices; however, widespread shortages caused by the pandemic-driven border closures continue to affect price volatility and depletion of its stockpiles. Evading sanctions has also allowed a continued revenue flow that has historically funded its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Pyongyang remains a willing supplier of conventional arms, military equipment, and missile technology, flouting UNSC sanctions to generate revenue from arms exports. North Korea uses intermediaries and front

companies to mask exports to the few arms buyers undeterred by international interdiction efforts, including Iran, Syria, and Uganda. We assess North Korea seeks to sell arms to Burma, considering North Korea's need for cash and Burma's limited arms trade options after the February coup.

#### **North Korean Cyber Capabilities**

North Korea possesses a sophisticated hacking program that supports the regime's goals of generating revenue and advancing its defense capabilities through cyberespionage while sidestepping sanctions. North Korea's cyberactors generate currency through criminal enterprises such as cryptocurrency theft, ransomware, and hacking-for-hire. Revenue from these operations probably supports weapons development and production and overall regime survivability. North Korea conducts cyberespionage globally against foreign officials, academics, and defense and aerospace industries, probably to gain insight into adversary capabilities and acquire information to aid Pyongyang's own weapons development. In addition, its cyberactors continue to collaborate with foreign cybercriminals, demonstrating an ability to use third-party accesses and resources to further North Korean cyber missions. North Korea maintains the ability to conduct disruptive and destructive cyberattacks.

North Korea's external engagements probably will remain stagnant in early 2022, and its relationships do not appear to contribute significantly to its defense establishment or to boost military readiness. International sanctions against North Korea probably dampened potential partner interest in expanding ties. Pyongyang's internal efforts, such as border tightening to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and crackdowns to increase population control, probably also hindered foreign engagement in 2021. North Korea has signaled it may loosen some border restrictions in 2022 to address ongoing food insecurity and depressed economic conditions. Its only formal defense agreement is with China: the 1961 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. In October 2021, Kim Jong Un appeared to reinforce the importance of this agreement in a letter to his Chinese counterpart in which

he pledged support for China's fight against confrontational moves by hostile forces (presumably the United States). Russia, which provided substantial military assistance and equipment to North Korea during the Soviet Era, has largely curtailed its defense relationship with Pyongyang. North Korea probably sees Russia as less important than China as a regional partner.

We expect North Korea to continue its nuclear, missile, and military modernization efforts in 2022 as it emphasizes bolstering its strategic deterrence and countering the military capabilities of the U.S.–South Korean alliance. Kim Jong Un will likely use these developments to try to increase his leverage in any potential negotiations with the United States. North Korea will probably continue to justify its actions by using U.S. policy, South Korea's military modernization, and combined U.S.–South Korean military exercises as pretext to normalize North Korea's military advancements. To demonstrate North Korean strength and resolve, leadership could consider further missile testing of various ballistic and cruise missiles, conduct a cyberattack, or test another nuclear device. Such actions would probably also depend on North Korean leadership's calculation between developing military capabilities and seeking to apply pressure on the United States and South Korea to advance its political objectives. In addition, Kim Jong Un's calculation may also involve an expectation for significant diplomatic or economic backlash, particularly with ICBM or nuclear testing.

#### **TERRORISM**

##### **Status of the Salafi Jihadist Movement**

Twenty years after 9/11, the Salafi jihadist movement's unifying leaders are mostly dead, the threat to the United States homeland is much diminished and the movement's priorities are mainly local, probably preventing a return to its 2015 peak within the next 2 years. ISIS and al-Qa'ida, however, are able to inspire or enable opportunistic attacks against the United States and U.S. interests. Lone-actor attacks by Salafi jihadists, with little or no warning, are more likely to occur than directed attacks. Salafi jihadist group leaders who give high priority to directing attacks in the West, such as al-Qaida, probably

will need at least 1 to 2 years to conceptualize, develop, and execute complex plots. ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) could develop a capability to attack the United States within the next year, if the group prioritizes such an attack. Salafi jihadist groups probably can accelerate the timeline of directed attacks in the West to as little as 4 to 6 months by pursuing plots that are simple to execute. Leadership intent probably is a more critical driver for initiating directed plots against the West than a terrorist group's control of territory or freedom of movement.

**Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham**

In 2021, ISIS maintained 17 publicly recognized branches worldwide and claimed responsibility for attacks in dozens of countries. Earlier this year, ISIS emir Hajji Abdallah died during a U.S. military operation in Syria. ISIS retains a C2 structure that allows the group to withstand his death and preserve its ability to oversee local operations and its expanding global presence. In Iraq and Syria, the ISIS insurgency experienced setbacks during the past 2 years, in part because of its senior leadership losses; however, the group remains a substantial threat to security in these countries. ISIS is also seeing opportunities in Afghanistan, where the group has gained considerable personnel and resources since the Taliban takeover and been emboldened since its 26 August attack on Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. Some prisoners freed from Afghan prisons last year have reintegrated into ISIS-K and serve in various leadership positions. If ISIS-K leaders give priority to external attacks, the group probably can use this influx of resources and personnel to develop the capability to attack the U.S. homeland within the next year, despite Taliban efforts to counter the group. The ISIS narrative continues to emphasize the group's attacks and regional expansion—especially in Africa—where ISIS branches have conducted attacks against Western targets and have partial territorial control. The group's continued growth in Africa will spread instability and increase the threat to U.S. interests on the continent.

**Al-Qa'ida**

Al-Qa'ida's capabilities have been significantly weakened; further, the group probably is on a declining global trajectory after years of organizational resilience and lacks leaders who have global jihadist appeal. The deaths of senior leaders, unfavorable operating environments, and sustained counterterrorism pressure have hurt the group during the past 2 years. Al-Qa'ida's Iran-based senior leaders oversee its global network and issue guidance to al-Qa'ida affiliates on media releases and strategy. In the newly Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, al-Qa'ida's capabilities are weak, and the group probably is focused on recovery while considering its strategy for the future. Al-Qa'ida leaders have called for obedience to the Taliban, which has publicly declared that Afghanistan will not be used for transnational attacks. If al-Qa'ida decides to reverse course, the group likely will require at least 1–2 years to rebuild its external operations capabilities in Afghanistan to mount an attack against the West, should it choose to prioritize external operations. Al-Qa'ida's regional affiliate in Afghanistan—al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)—struggles to conduct local attacks and is experiencing leadership losses. The group's future trajectory probably depends on the Taliban's restrictions. In 2021, al-Qa'ida made gains in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it now controls large swaths of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Somalia and is attempting to gain footing in littoral West Africa. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula has lost personnel and territory during the past 2 years to counterterrorism pressure and internal actions aimed at ferreting out suspected spies. In 2022, the group's global enterprise probably will continue to focus more on regional priorities in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia than on attacks in the West.

**Lebanese Hizballah**

Lebanese Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO)—the group's primary overseas attack unit—remains an integral element of Iran's threat network. Hizballah probably will direct an IJO attack in the homeland or against U.S. interests abroad only if Hizballah or Iran perceives a threat to the group's existence. Hizballah almost certainly will maintain the IJO to deter foreign aggression, particularly from

Israel and the United States. In 2022, the IJO will probably continue its focus on recruiting and training new members, refining its capabilities, and improving its operational security in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

#### **Racially/Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (RMVEs)**

In the last decade, other violent extremist ideologies reemerged in the West, with sociopolitical factors and perceived grievances fueling transnational RMVE movements and probably driving RMVE attack strategies that threaten Western governments and civilians. Disrupted plots within the past 2 years include those against U.S. military personnel. RMVEs exploit the information environment by spreading extremist propaganda and proliferating conspiracy theories online to attract new members and strengthen the extremist identity of others with similar beliefs across the globe. RMVE movements have been seeking to recruit current and former military members with varying levels of success.

#### **DISEASE AND CLIMATE THREATS**

##### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

Since its onset, COVID-19 has killed over 6.2 million people across the globe. In the past year, there have been multiple COVID-19 waves, with the most recent—driven by the Omicron variant—just beginning to subside. During the next 6 months, countries or regions without sufficient non-pharmaceutical intervention practices—such as social distancing and mask wearing—or vaccine supplies probably will see the most dramatic waves.

Limited and fragmentary data has led the Intelligence Community (IC) to maintain multiple theories on the origin of COVID-19. Four elements and the National Intelligence Council assess with low confidence that the virus likely emerged from a natural interaction between an animal infected with the virus and a human; one IC element assesses with moderate confidence a laboratory origin is more likely and three

other IC elements are unable to arrive at either conclusion without additional information. All agencies agree the virus was not developed as a biological weapon and most agree that it was not genetically engineered. China continues to obscure all investigations into the origins of COVID-19 that would assist in making a definitive assessment, preventing the release of information such as data on early cases, access to potential host species, or documents from internal investigations—behavior indicative of a desire to keep COVID origins secret.

As of February, there were at least 337 candidate COVID-19 vaccines in clinical development worldwide, with at least 142 in human clinical trials. Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine has still not received World Health Organization prequalification; the review previously stalled because of missing data. Despite this, Russia has marketed Sputnik Light as a single-dose vaccine and more recently as a booster for other COVID-19 vaccines. Chinese vaccine manufacturers of Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines have demonstrated 50-to 79-percent effectiveness in protecting individuals against severe COVID-19 symptoms but—compared to greater than 90-percent efficacy of mRNA vaccines—there have been cases of resurgence in some countries that have heavily relied on China's vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic—especially new variant case surges, such as Omicron—has strained medical capabilities worldwide, prompting many nations to seek foreign medical assistance and deploy military medical assets to augment domestic responses. Medical personnel shortages have been a primary factor hindering worldwide COVID-19 responses, especially as the pandemic has caused widespread health care worker infections and deaths, burnout, and resignations. The emergence of novel respiratory viruses capable of causing sustained human-to-human transmission on multiple continents, like COVID-19 and its variants, continues to pose the greatest enduring infectious disease risk to U.S. personnel.

**Climate Change**

Climate change is an important factor in the current and future operating environment for the Joint Force, affecting foreign nations' internal stability and military capabilities. We assess that climate change will increasingly exacerbate risks to U.S. national security interests as physical impacts increase and geopolitical tensions mount about how to respond. The physical effects of climate change are likely to intensify cross-border geopolitical flashpoints, including a growing risk of conflict over cross-border migration and water, food, and mineral resources. We also assess the potential for instability and possibly internal conflict in developing countries will increase, in some cases creating additional demands on U.S. military resources—particularly for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Moreover, as climate change effects destabilize underdeveloped regions, Sunni terrorist groups probably will have more opportunities to advance their presence, recruitment, and operations. The most vulnerable countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East that are dealing with the physical effects of climate change will continue to request military and nonmilitary assistance from the United States to help manage and mitigate those issues.

**REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES****MIDDLE EAST**

China and Russia will continue to challenge the United States for influence in the Middle East as the perception of waning U.S. engagement leads regional allies to seek alternatives to U.S. support to counter threats, particularly from Iran. Roughly half of Chinese oil and gas imports come through the Persian Gulf, and China also relies on sea lines of communication through the Suez Canal and Red Sea to maintain access to European markets. Beijing is particularly focused on building economic and diplomatic ties with key states, including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt. Russia has sought to build upon its success in Syria to expand its regional influence and serve as a geopolitical counterweight to the

United States in the Middle East, advertising itself as a reliable arms supplier, security partner, and mediator.

Iran and its regional allies, likewise perceiving a reduced U.S. commitment to the region, are emboldened to use military force to increase their influence and diminish U.S. influence. Traditional drivers of unrest—authoritarian leaders, insufficient economic opportunity, and corruption—remain and are compounded by terrorism, hybrid military threats, Iranian activity, and the persistent pandemic.

#### **Syria**

After more than a decade of civil war, Syria is beginning to reemerge from its international isolation as some Middle East, European, and Asian countries work toward closer diplomatic and economic ties with Damascus. This year's high-level engagements between Syria and China indicate an interest by both sides to enhance cooperation, particularly on counterterrorism efforts and Syria's reconstruction—despite uncertainty surrounding possible returns on Chinese economic investment. Economic and security cooperation between Damascus and Beijing is unlikely to supplant the Asad regime's reliance on Iran and Russia during the next 2–3 years.

Syria and its allies probably are best positioned to shape the conflict's trajectory in their favor during the next 12 months. Following the March 2020 cease-fire agreement, cease-fires around the country largely have held and military operations have waned, despite many areas of the country remaining outside the Asad regime's control. The frontlines are likely to remain mostly static for at least the next 6 months. Syria probably will not resume a major offensive without explicit political and military support from Russia, judging from Syria's previous reluctance to engage directly with the Turkish military in sustained combat. Damascus is building relationships with local tribes in the east to foment unrest against the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF), undermine Kurdish-led governance, weaken the U.S. relationship with tribes, and conduct deniable attacks on the SDF and coalition forces. Syria's economic crisis has

degraded living conditions and fueled a low-level insurgency in regime-controlled southwest Syria, but sustained Iranian and Russian support probably will prevent the insurgency from posing an existential threat to Damascus.

The SDF relies on Russia and the United States to forestall additional Turkish operations and buy time to negotiate reconciliation terms with Damascus. Russia continues to exploit SDF vulnerabilities to gradually expand the Asad regime's presence in the northeast and strengthen Asad's leverage in future reconciliation negotiations.

The Syrian opposition almost certainly is incapable of threatening regime stability and instead seeks to defend its remaining territory in the north and support Turkey's objectives in Syria to maintain Ankara's support. Turkey's direct military support to the opposition during the past several years has solidified Ankara's control over the opposition.

Turkey's activities in northeastern Syria include restoring infrastructure, conducting patrols and road checks, clearing mines and IEDs, and conducting counterterrorism raids. Turkey blames the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG) for conducting attacks in northeastern Syria targeting the Turkish-supported opposition and resulting in civilian casualties. Turkey views the YPG as the Syrian affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and an existential threat to Turkish internal and border security.

Russia almost certainly will maintain a long-term military and economic presence in Syria, affording it access to natural resources and continued use and expansion of its military presence, which enables its regional power projection capabilities. Moscow seeks to normalize relations between the international community and Damascus with the goal of encouraging outside investment and reconstruction efforts while mitigating the impact of U.S. sanctions on the Asad regime.

Iran remains committed to securing its strategic interests in Syria, including ensuring the stability of the Asad regime and preserving access to Levant-based partners and proxies, particularly Hizballah.

Hizballah's primary objectives in Syria are to maintain security along the Lebanon-Syria border, stage for a potential conflict with Israel, and preserve resupply nodes from Iran. Iranian-backed forces remain critical-force multipliers for proregime operations across Syria and for holding territory in the east. Iranian officials also intend to wield influence in postconflict Syria, particularly through reconstruction contracts and a permanent Iranian military presence.

#### **Iraq**

Iraq held early national elections in October 2021 and is currently going through the government formation process, which may take months. The Sadrists, led by Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, are the largest political bloc—winning roughly 70 of the 329 seats in the Council of Representatives—and have sought to lead the government's formation process. However, as of early April, Sadr announced he was stepping back from government formation negotiations until after Ramadan. The Sadrist platform emphasizes Iraqi sovereignty and is focused heavily on removing foreign actors, reducing other Shia militias' domestic influence, diversifying foreign partnerships, and normalizing relations with the Arab world. Iran-backed Shia political parties performed poorly in the October 2021 elections and are seeking to retain their influence in Iraq's government by negotiating a power-sharing agreement with Sadr, who has stated his intention to form a majoritarian government that probably would exclude at least some Iran-backed parties. Since the election results were ratified in December, the Iran-backed political parties have sought to delay progress on government formation to provide additional time for negotiations. Iran-backed parties led protests against the election results from October to December 2021, which sparked a deadly clash with Iraqi security forces and led to an Iranian-backed militia using quadcopters to attack the prime minister's residence in the International Zone in early November 2021. The threat to U.S. and coalition forces from Iran-backed Shia militias remains high as militias continue to demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. In 2021, Shia militias began using one-way-attack UAVs

and armed quadcopters to target U.S., U.S. partner nation, and Iraqi government interests, demonstrating their capability and intent to employ advanced Iran-provided weapons. Shia militants considered 31 December 2021 to be a deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and conducted seven UAV and indirect fire attacks in early January before pausing operations to focus on government formation. Iraqi militia leaders have publicly pointed to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as evidence that regular attacks against U.S. forces will catalyze a U.S. departure.

Iraqi security forces (ISF) probably will maintain counter-ISIS operations absent coalition support for at least 1 year, although coordination among the various ISF elements will be inconsistent, judging by the operations undertaken during this year. Throughout 2021, the ISF has demonstrated its ability to conduct effective counter-ISIS operations independently, but it still seeks support from coalition forces when its own capabilities are insufficient. In late 2021, the Kurdish Ministry of Peshmerga and the Iraqi Army continued plans to form and deploy two joint Iraqi-Peshmerga brigades to eliminate ISIS from the disputed areas near the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR).

Finally, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) almost certainly will continue to experience several systemic weaknesses, including Kurdish dynastic rule, challenges paying government salaries, and a bifurcated and partisan system of military C2. The KRG faces external security threats from Iran-backed militias and from ISIS as well as ongoing Turkish and Iranian strikes targeting opposition groups in the IKR. Since early 2021, the Kurdistan Democratic Party has accused Iran-backed Shia militias of carrying out several UAV and rocket attacks in the IKR, primarily near Erbil International Airport. Separately, last year, the second largest Kurdish party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, went through a leadership struggle that risked armed conflicts between factions.

**ISIS in Iraq and Syria**

In Iraq, ISIS maintained a steady pace of attacks during 2021, although at a slightly lower level than the year before. Coalition and Iraqi counterterrorism operations inflicted losses on several of the group's key leaders in Iraq, but its basic C2 structure remains intact. ISIS probably benefited from Shia militia attacks during the past year that forced the coalition to prioritize force protection, intermittently disrupting counter-ISIS operations. As in years past, ISIS has operated most freely in north-central Iraq where the mountainous terrain impedes effective counterterrorism operations by the ISF. Over the past year, ISIS has shown limited ability to conduct occasional high-profile attacks in Baghdad and been challenged to sustain such attacks. ISIS also has made targeted efforts to foment sectarian tension in Sunni-Shia communities, which the group believes will increase its popular support among Sunnis. Still, the group enjoys little overt popular support and relies mainly on coercion to obtain money, supplies, and access to populated areas.

In Syria, ISIS continues to operate as a clandestine insurgency with most of the group's activities and attacks occurring in the largely rural areas of central Syria, consisting of rudimentary hit-and-run style attacks on static checkpoints and frequently traversed highways. It remains capable of conducting sporadic, high-casualty attacks despite reduced attack levels this year, probably resulting from consistent counterterrorism operations from the U.S.-backed SDF, pro-regime forces, and rival extremist groups. To increase its ranks, ISIS has focused its efforts on smuggling ISIS-affiliated families from displaced person camps in northern Syria and freeing ISIS prisoners from SDF-run detention facilities. On 20 January, ISIS attacked Al-Hasakah detention facility and freed an undetermined number of its members, underscoring the importance the organization places on rebuilding its capabilities.

**Yemen**

In Yemen, the Huthis suffered military setbacks following UAE-backed Giants Brigades offensives in January that pushed Huthi frontlines back in Shabwah and southern Marib governorates. These operations prompted the Huthis to respond with a series of high-profile missile and UAV strikes on the UAE, the first since 2018. On 2 April, the Republic of Yemen Government and the Huthis agreed to a U.N. brokered truce, however as of late April, both sides were engaged in low-level operations in Marib governorate, highlighting the fragility of the truce and uncertainty in a more permanent ceasefire. Separately, the creation of the PLC on 7 April has sought to improve coordination and consolidate authority among the different factions in the anti-Huthi coalition. However, internal divisions, competing interests, and persistent humanitarian and economic issues will continue to weaken Saudi-led coalition cohesion.

**Lebanon**

Lebanon's economic and internal security crises very likely will worsen during the next year. Beirut has been unable to manage its sharply declining economy, sustain critical services, or address its underlying governance problems, which is eroding government legitimacy and driving increased crime and violence. Lebanese Armed Forces and other security forces have experienced a 90-percent reduction in the U.S. dollar value of their budgets, which has limited their ability to respond to security incidents, including increased sectarian violence. Hizballah has publicly blamed the economic crisis in Lebanon on U.S. sanctions, which it described as a "siege" against the country. It is watching for threats from domestic rivals, Israel, or the United States and is preparing to respond if its core interests are threatened. Ahead of elections, scheduled for 15 May, Hizballah is trying to maintain the political supremacy of its coalition in parliament while avoiding being drawn into sectarian violence with political rivals. Politicians probably

will spend months negotiating to form the new cabinet after elections, judging from past elections, which will limit the government's ability to enact the reforms needed to unlock international aid.

#### **Egypt**

Egypt remains focused on Ethiopia's progress toward the development and filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which Cairo views as an existential threat, as it depends on the Nile for approximately 97-percent of its water resources. Egypt will closely monitor the GERD's construction and continue to call upon the international community to intervene and secure a legally binding agreement for filling and operating the dam ahead of the next round of filling in summer 2022. Egypt has maintained its position for the use of diplomacy to settle the GERD dispute and will refrain from addressing the conflict in Ethiopia to preserve Cairo's good neighbor policy. In 2021, foreign terrorist organizations continued to conduct attacks in Egypt, and they almost certainly will remain active in 2022. Although attacks have decreased from the past 2 years, in 2022 terrorist attacks in Egypt have been concentrated in North Sinai, where the Egyptian Armed Forces are engaged in counterterrorism operations against ISIS-Sinai.

#### **SOUTH ASIA**

The U.S. retrograde from Afghanistan will have security reverberations globally, particularly in South Asia, as states seek to recalibrate relations, violent extremist organizations capitalize on reduced U.S. counterterrorism pressure, and the Taliban attracts U.S. adversaries as diplomatic partners. Meanwhile, the Taliban will struggle to avert a humanitarian catastrophe brought on by multiple simultaneous crises, including ongoing economic collapse, mass-scale displacement, severe drought, and a food crisis that puts 23 million Afghans at risk of extreme hunger or famine, according to the United Nations.

**Afghanistan**

Since capturing Kabul on 15 August, the Taliban has announced the formation of ministries and appointments to senior leadership positions. The Taliban's so-called caretaker cabinet comprises over 50 exclusively male and mostly-Taliban military officials, a small number of religious scholars, and non-Taliban members who were not part of the previous Afghan government. The Taliban is seeking the return of skilled Afghans to help with technical aspects of running the government. Despite public claims of amnesty for all Afghans, the Taliban has committed small-scale reprisal killings, violence, and intimidation against former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) members and former Afghan government employees; however, we assess the reprisals are limited to the local level and not directed by Taliban senior leadership. Limited infighting at senior levels has emerged over power-sharing arrangements, but the Taliban likely will not fracture in the coming year.

The Taliban claims to be exercising oversight over foreign fighters and some VEO members in Afghanistan, primarily through its intelligence apparatus and activity restrictions that include living in areas approved by the Taliban and seeking permission to travel. The Taliban is opposed to ISIS-K and has targeted and arrested ISIS-K members believed responsible for attacks—although the Taliban has not been able to stop ISIS-K operational planning to prevent attacks. The Taliban seeks to portray that it is capable of delivering on counterterrorism assurances and providing nationwide security and likely will downplay the threat of ISIS-K in Afghanistan. During the next year, ISIS-K will focus attacks on sectarian, the Taliban, and infrastructure targets to destabilize the Taliban and expand its operations throughout Afghanistan.

The Taliban is pursuing closer relationships with regional states, including Russia, China, Uzbekistan, and Iran, but it probably will continue to prioritize independence over obtaining international recognition and aid. In October, Acting Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Berader met with Chinese

Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss humanitarian aid, sanctions relief, and China's security concerns. As of November, the Taliban had secured its removal from Russia's list of terrorist organizations and reached agreements with Iran and Pakistan to expand their economic and political relationships. In response to recently perceived threats from Tajikistan's support for the anti-Taliban resistance and other perceived interference the Taliban deployed forces to Afghanistan's northern border.

Our adversaries are seeking to capitalize on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan through actions that attempt to erode U.S. credibility in the world. For example, immediately following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Moscow amplified its messaging that the retrograde was a failure and that the United States is an unreliable partner and a declining power. Russia has used this moment to improve its regional position by claiming to enhance the capabilities of its bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, holding regional exercises, and increasing its engagements with longstanding partners such as India. Similarly, Chinese officials and state media outlets used the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as an opportunity to portray the United States as an unreliable partner and declining power since August. Tehran views the U.S. withdrawal as an opportunity to expand its influence in Afghanistan, but is also wary that instability could cause additional refugee flows into Iran and increase risks to Afghan minority communities it supports. Tehran is engaging with the Taliban to secure Iran's interests, which include expanding trade, securing the Iran-Afghan border, managing refugees, and countering ISIS-K.

#### **Regional Security Impacts**

As of late October, the Taliban was sending fighters, including specialized units, to secure Afghanistan's borders, and had met with Turkmenistan over increasing their respective border security efforts. As of December, Iran had hosted an additional 300,000 Afghan refugees since the Taliban takeover; combined, Pakistan and Iran host approximately 2.3 million Afghan refugees, most of whom arrived before 2021. In mid-November, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan, and Russia met to discuss growing concerns about Afghanistan, border security and a possible refugee crisis. In October and November, Russia led CSTO exercises in Tajikistan along Dushanbe's border with Afghanistan, and in November, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan participated in joint military exercises along Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan.

#### **Taliban Forces**

As of November, Taliban fighters were using weapons, vehicles, and equipment left by former ANDSF units, including UH-60 and Mi-17 helicopters, and have demonstrated the capability to conduct ground operations and move troops with their very nascent air force capabilities. The Taliban has begun to professionalize its fighting forces, but there is almost no chance it will achieve a professional force within its 2-year goal.

In 2022, the Taliban likely will maintain control of Afghanistan through the use of force. The Taliban is likely to be focused on suppressing any internal unrest to secure its survival.

#### **Pakistan**

On 11 April, Shehbaz Sharif was elected as Pakistan's new prime minister after a no-confidence vote removed Prime Minister Imran Khan. In his first speech as prime minister, Sharif called for rebuilding the U.S.-Pakistan relationship and denounced Khan's conspiracy theory asserting that the U.S. orchestrated his removal. Sharif probably will give priority to addressing Pakistan's economy while deferring to the Army on security issues for at least the first 6 months of his term. Khan's removal almost certainly portends a period of political instability as the Sharif government transitions and as Pakistan prepares for elections due no later than August 2023. Pakistan currently views instability in Afghanistan as its most pressing concern and will likely prioritize preventing spillover into Pakistan in the next year and beyond. Although Pakistan has not formally recognized the Taliban, Islamabad seeks to maintain positive relations with them, and it is providing humanitarian assistance, international outreach, and

technical support to achieve this. Pakistan views the Taliban as a strategic asset, useful for securing its interests in Afghanistan. However, Islamabad's ability to shape Taliban behavior will probably diminish because the group no longer relies on its safehavens in Pakistan.

Pakistan remains vulnerable to attacks by a variety of anti-Pakistan militant groups, including Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS-K, and Baloch separatists. Pakistan's military continues to execute operations against these militant groups and remains concerned about their ability to conduct small-scale attacks and occasional high-profile attacks inside the country. Since 2020, TTP has consolidated factions and increased its attack tempo. In November 2021, TTP agreed to a 1 month cease-fire with Pakistan, but announced it would not extend it further due to perceived Pakistani violations of the terms of the agreement. Fighting resumed in early December 2021, with dozens of deadly attacks, and probably will persist.

Islamabad's tense relationship with India will continue to drive Pakistan's defense policy. Pakistan's relations with India remain strained since a high-profile anti-India militant attack in the Union Territory of Kashmir in February 2019. New Delhi's August 2019 revocation of Kashmir's semiautonomous status added to these tensions. However, cross-border violence has decreased since February 2021, when both countries recommitted to a cease-fire. India and Pakistan have not made meaningful progress toward a long-lasting diplomatic solution since then.

Pakistan perceives nuclear weapons as key to its national survival, given India's nuclear arsenal and conventional force superiority. Pakistan very likely will continue to modernize and expand its nuclear capabilities by conducting training with its deployed weapons and developing new delivery systems in 2022.

China is Pakistan's primary source of military, economic, and diplomatic support. Islamabad has publicly supported China on its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, treatment of Uyghur Muslims, and other

regional security issues. China is Pakistan's most important defense partner and largest supplier of military equipment. China has also invested an estimated \$46 billion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—a series of infrastructure projects constituting the flagship of China's BRI.

During the next year, Pakistan is very likely to continue its focus on securing its interests in Afghanistan, while also seeking to expand its relationship with Beijing. Tensions with India probably will remain elevated.

#### **India**

Throughout 2021, New Delhi continued to implement foreign policy aimed at demonstrating India's role as a leading power and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region. India seeks to promote prosperity and ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region by seeking strategic partnerships to build influence through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. New Delhi seeks to deepen intelligence and operational cooperation on cybersecurity, protect critical information infrastructure, prevent adversary manipulation of public opinion, and to create standards and norms that protect and secure data governance. Following the collapse of the Afghan government, New Delhi is increasingly concerned about potential attacks against India—empowered by a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan—by terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The evacuation of Indian personnel from Afghanistan degraded its resources to monitor potential threats and cultivate influence over regional stability.

Despite recommitting to the 2003 cease-fire, India remains postured to respond to perceived militant threats, and it has continued counterterrorism operations inside Indian-administered Kashmir. Occasional skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops will continue, and a high-profile attack in India by Pakistan-based terrorists risks an Indian military response.

Chinese-Indian relations remain strained following the fatal clashes in summer 2020 between their respective forces along the Western sector of the disputed LAC. During 2021, both sides held multiple rounds of high-level diplomatic and military talks that resulted in a mutual pullback of forces from several standoff points. However, both sides maintain close to 50,000 troops along with artillery, tanks, and multiple rocket launchers, and both are building infrastructure along the LAC.

New Delhi is pursuing an extensive military modernization effort encompassing air, ground, naval, and strategic nuclear forces with an emphasis on domestic defense production. India is taking steps to establish Integrated Theater Commands that will improve its joint capability among its three military services. Since 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given priority to strengthening the country's economy by expanding its domestic defense industry, including establishing a negative import list to curtail defense purchases from foreign suppliers. India's longstanding defense relationship with Russia remains strong, holding their first "2+2" format talks in December—a joint foreign and defense ministerial that India previously only held with the United States, Japan, and Australia. India has maintained a neutral stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continues to call for peace.

As of October 2021, India's military was seeking to procure advanced surveillance systems to better safeguard India's land and sea borders and boost its offensive and defensive cyber capabilities. In December, India received its initial delivery of the Russian S-400 air defense system, and it intends to operate the system to defend against Pakistani and Chinese threats by June 2022. India continued to develop its own hypersonic, ballistic, cruise, and air defense missile capabilities, conducting multiple tests in 2021. India has a growing number of satellites in orbit, and it is expanding its use of space assets, likely pursuing offensive space capabilities.

**Burma**

Since the February 2021 military coup, Burma remained in a state of emergency and growing civil unrest, which we expect to continue this year. The military junta arrested senior National League for Democracy leaders President Win Myint and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, who currently face convictions on charges of alleged corruption, bribery, and election fraud to bar them from future political office. Since spring 2021, civil disobedience protests have evolved into an increasingly aggressive, multifront, armed resistance of rural and urban militias who seek the end of military rule. These groups, in varying levels of collaboration with the popular shadow government, join numerous ethnic armed groups operating within Burma, adding complexity to decades of internal conflicts. Beijing has visibly embraced the regime, offering some support in international organizations and resuming infrastructure projects it had previously pursued with the civilian-led government.

The military regime almost certainly will manipulate conditions to ensure it remains in power to prevent a return to civilian-led, democratically elected government in prospective August 2023 elections. In the next year, Burma's internal conflicts between the regime, resistance factions, and ethnic armed groups likely will continue as the regime and the armed civilian resistance remain entrenched and are unwilling to negotiate.

**AFRICA**

Many African nations continue to struggle with internal and external pressures driven by political instability, food instability, economic downturns, and expanding domestic insecurity. Internal and regional conflicts expanded in several African regions and countries in 2021—most notably in East Africa. Terrorism remains an active destabilizing influence with al-Qa'ida-affiliated terrorist groups and ISIS gaining influence and in many cases territorial control in the Sahel, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, and elsewhere on the continent.

African states have engaged with a variety of foreign actors, including China and Russia, largely out of a pragmatic desire to maximize assistance and diversify foreign support. African leaders' security challenges provide China and Russia opportunities to expand their influence across the continent. China is the largest trading partner of all African states combined, and economic downturns throughout the continent in 2021 drove increased African receptivity to Chinese political, security, and economic engagement to offset budget shortfalls and deliver tangible infrastructure and economic results. Growing security cooperation between China and African states is rooted in requirements for security assistance to counter various threats such as extremists, pirates, illicit traffickers, and state and nonstate adversaries. Many African nations are also receptive to Russia's outreach as a security partner and tend to purchase Russian arms because they are relatively inexpensive, arrive quickly, and are not subject to extensive vetting and end-use monitoring. Since 2014, Russia has signed at least 19 military cooperation deals in Sub-Saharan Africa for training and cooperation in counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and counterpiracy operations. In addition, some African governments turn to Russian private military companies to receive training for their forces, to augment security operations, or to enhance their security. African responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine vary on a country-by-country basis, but countries such as the Central African Republic and Mali remain willing to work with Russia and Russian private military companies.

#### **North Africa**

Libya's rival factions have remained deadlocked in central Libya since June 2020, when the eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA) retreated from its military campaign to capture Tripoli. A cease-fire between the LNA and Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), codified in October 2020, remains in place. The LNA and GNU have made progress toward easing tensions through the Joint Military Commission, which includes five military representatives from each side, but they have not made significant progress toward achieving military unification or removing foreign military forces in the

country. The presidential election scheduled for 24 December 2021 and parliamentary elections planned for February 2022 were postponed indefinitely, primarily because the presidential candidates included controversial Libyans in leadership roles or with ties to the former Qadhafi regime. In February and March, the eastern Libya-based parliament purported to elect the leadership of a new government that aims to replace the GNU.

Turkey has advocated for free, fair, and credible elections in Libya. Ankara maintains Turkish forces and Syrian proxies in Libya and says it is in favor of a measured withdrawal of its proxies but is seeking Russian private military company Wagner to withdraw first. Ankara has also resisted calls for Turkish forces to withdraw alongside other foreign forces because it maintains the Turkish presence falls under bilateral agreements with the legitimate government of Libya. Moscow seeks to secure arms sales, oil agreements, and military access by building a defense relationship with Libya. Since 2019, Wagner has supported the LNA, with aircraft and air defense equipment provided by the Russian Defense Ministry. Moscow is balancing its military support to the LNA with diplomatic outreach to the GNU, probably to secure Russian interests regardless of the future structure of the Libyan state.

Since November 2020, Morocco's military has been engaged in low-intensity fighting in Western Sahara against Algeria-backed Polisario insurgents, who demand a referendum on the territory's status overseen by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. Algeria cut diplomatic relations with Morocco in August 2021 and tensions have since increased. In early November a Moroccan UAV strike killed three Algerians, and shortly thereafter, Morocco signed a security cooperation agreement with Israel.

In July 2021, Tunisian President Kais Saied invoked an emergency constitutional measure to suspend parliament and dismiss the prime minister. Saied defended this measure as necessary to end the political standoff and address socioeconomic concerns. He appointed a prime minister in October,

dissolved parliament in March, and plans to hold a referendum on a new constitution in July and parliamentary elections in December 2022.

#### **West Africa and the Sahel**

Terrorist threats in West Africa continue to expand throughout the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin as security forces struggle to make counterterrorism gains while addressing competing sources of internal political and social instability. The January 2022 coup d'état in Burkina Faso is the latest in a series of destabilizing events in the region and underscores the tumultuous and fragile state of some West Africa governments, which are already struggling to adapt to increasing threats. The al-Qa'ida-affiliated group Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin continues to increase attacks in Sahelian states, especially Burkina Faso and Mali, and to threaten littoral countries, while ISIS-Sahel is focused on rebuilding itself in Niger after leadership losses and setbacks in 2020 and 2021. ISIS-West Africa mostly defeated Boko Haram in 2021, incorporating many former Boko Haram fighters in the process and allowing the group to expand its area of influence and continue attacks on regional security forces in the Lake Chad Basin.

In February 2022, France announced its intent to withdraw its forces from Mali and reposition its Sahel counterterrorism mission to Niger. During the past year, regional security efforts, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, have made little progress curbing terrorist activity and expansion because of resource constraints and operational shortcomings. These shortcomings and the longstanding instability in the region present opportunities for China and Russia to increase influence through expanded foreign military sales, counterterrorism training, and other security assistance initiatives. In December 2021, Vagner personnel deployed to Mali—ostensibly at the behest of Mali's transitional government to conduct security operations. This presence has the potential to disrupt ongoing counterterrorism and stabilization efforts in the region.

**East Africa**

During the past year, East Africa has experienced heightened instability because of the conflict in Ethiopia, a military takeover in Sudan, political tensions in Somalia, and a sustained terrorist threat from al-Shabaab and ISIS groups. Conflict in Ethiopia continues. In late 2021, Tigrayan forces advanced toward Addis Ababa, threatening the federal government, worsening a humanitarian crisis, and elevating the risk of wider ethnic violence, but have since retreated. The crisis threatens to spill over into neighboring countries as Ethiopia's longstanding tensions with Egypt and Sudan over the GERD, Eritrea's military involvement in the Tigray conflict, and an unresolved border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan present potential flashpoints. In Sudan, a military takeover of the government in October 2021 disrupted political progress the country had made following the establishment of a civilian-led transitional government and rescission by the United States of its designation as a State Sponsor of Terror. Postponed presidential elections in Somalia have raised political tensions in the country, which at times has led to fighting between armed groups in Mogadishu and distracted from the counterterrorism fight against al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab remains the primary terrorist threat in the region, and the group continues to exploit the security vacuum caused by undergovernance, internal political tensions, and the slow progress of establishing Somali security forces. Al-Shabaab operates as a shadow government in the areas it controls, while continuing to attack security forces and civilians, and deliberately targeting U.S. and Western personnel and interests in the region. The much smaller ISIS-Somalia primarily operates from the Golis Mountains area of Puntland, using IEDs and assassinations to target Somali and Puntland government and security forces and civilian targets.

**Central and Southern Africa**

The Central Africa region faced heightened violence and an expanding regional terrorist threat during the past year, which jeopardizes fragile humanitarian, economic, and political situations. In the Central

African Republic, government forces and Russian private military contractors regularly commit human rights violations and abuses while fighting antigovernment armed groups. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), ISIS-DRC's increasing violence against government and UN security forces and civilians is driving a humanitarian crisis and risks spreading primarily into Uganda, which experienced five ISIS-DRC attacks between October and November 2021.

In 2021, most countries in southern Africa experienced economic turmoil because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated instability and constrained counterterrorism capacity. In Mozambique, ISIS-Mozambique expanded operations, conducting deadly attacks and temporarily taking terrain that threatened Western economic interests in the oil-rich province of Cabo Delgado. Maputo requested Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community deploy security forces in July and the European Union sent a training mission in November. In South Africa, ISIS elements have used the country as a conduit for illicit financial transactions. In July, South Africa deployed 25,000 troops—the most deployed domestically since 1994—in response to unrest because of inequality and the jailing of former President Jacob Zuma on corruption charges. In Zimbabwe, the political system and economy grew more fragile, as President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa failed to implement promised reforms.

#### LATIN AMERICA

Latin American countries continue to face a number of stressors that stretch their security forces' capabilities. These stressors include COVID-19 issues, contracting economies, expanding transnational organized criminal networks, rising violent crime rates, and food insecurity, all of which contribute to increased levels of migration and instability. Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua maintain autocratic structures and reject calls for democratic participation in governance. The resulting instability has enabled China and Russia to make inroads into the region through offers of medical, economic, and military assistance. Beijing and Moscow probably will seek to expand this influence by continuing offers

of aid and support to address the region's myriad issues while taking advantage of corruption and nepotism to expand their influence in governing structures.

#### **Venezuela**

Disputed President Nicolas Maduro's regime continues its firm grip on all domestic institutions—including the military—despite a 15-percent approval rating and an economy that has shrunk 75-percent during his tenure. The opposition has been unable to organize a large-scale antiregime protest since 2019. Opposition political parties are considering new leadership after failing to unseat the regime in 3 years. Venezuelan military leaders remain steadfast in their support for Maduro with active duty or retired officers holding a third of his cabinet positions. Security forces, however, almost certainly will struggle to confront various internal threats such as urban gangs and foreign illegal armed groups, including elements of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia dissidents. Venezuela's worsening humanitarian conditions likely will spur continued migration from the country. Since 2014, more than 5 million people have left Venezuela and the UN projects an additional 3 million will leave in the next year.

#### **Cuba**

The Cuban regime uses its security forces and cyber capabilities to quell dissent, while relying on foreign partnerships—including those with China and Russia—for military and economic support. Havana is very likely receptive to increased political, economic, and military cooperation with Moscow and Beijing because of concerns about perceived threats to the Miguel Diaz-Canel administration. Russia is Cuba's military partner of choice and Havana has accepted loans from Moscow to maintain Soviet-era military equipment. Havana's relations with Beijing are mostly economic, with some bilateral professional exchanges and military training support.

#### **Transnational Crime**

Criminal networks will continue to challenge Latin American governance. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated security challenges as criminal actors exploited overburdened security forces and soaring

unemployment. Despite short-term operational disruptions caused by the pandemic, criminal groups have adjusted and been able to resume near pre-pandemic operational levels. Chinese, Russian, and Iranian actors, some of whom are government-sponsored, routinely conduct illicit financial activities in the region. Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) produce and traffic illicit drugs that dominate the U.S. market. From October 2019 through September 2021, fentanyl seizures by volume at the U.S. Southwest Border increased more than 130-percent, surpassing heroin for the first time. In 2021, nearly 20 million counterfeit pills were seized in the United States, an increase of over 800-percent since 2019. Colombian-origin cocaine supplies most of the U.S. market, primarily trafficked by Mexican TCOs. Bogota is almost certainly going to try to build on its October 2021 capture of Gulf Clan leader Dario Antonio Usuga, the country's most wanted drug trafficker, as a means to reduce drug flows. Violence from longstanding disputes between rival organizations over drug trafficking routes and other illicit revenue sources will continue to challenge Colombian security forces.

#### **Refugees and Immigration**

Fragile economic, security, political, and environmental conditions will remain the enduring factors driving regional migration. A mix of military, paramilitary and police forces—especially those in Mexico and northern Central America—have added personnel to their ranks during the past year to address associated security needs. Since January, other factors, such as increasing xenophobia throughout the region against migrants, loosened COVID-19-related border and movement restrictions, perceptions of a more permissive U.S. immigration policy, and better job opportunities have contributed to above-average migration levels. From October 2020 to October 2021, there were more than 1.73 million migrants encountered at the southwest U.S. Border, a 278-percent increase from 2020 and a 77-percent increase from 2019. Citizens from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras experience severe poverty, insecurity, worsening food security, and some of the highest violent crime rates in the world. Since January 2020, migration from countries other than Mexico and northern Central America—largely from

Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—has contributed to higher migrant encounter levels, a trend that probably will continue through 2022.

#### **Chinese and Russian Presence**

During the past year, China modestly increased its security presence and influence in the region. Chinese technology firms dominate the Safe City market in Latin America, and China also enhanced its ties with countries in the region by sending COVID-19 vaccines and medical supplies. Many regional militaries still view the United States as the security partner of choice, but they are receptive to increasing Chinese engagement—especially those receiving donated Chinese equipment and free military education. Russia values its security engagement and influence in Latin America with its historical partners—Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—while maintaining broad regional outreach through bilateral relationships and international fora. Russia has delivered humanitarian aid to Cuba and supports Cuban maintenance of its Soviet-era military equipment. Russian President Vladimir Putin has overseen the deepening of security ties with Managua, and several Nicaraguan laws passed prior to the November elections appear to be modeled after Russian statutes that have been used to suppress dissent. In January, Russia's deputy foreign minister suggested that Russia was open to deploying military infrastructure to Venezuela or Cuba amid tensions with Ukraine. Other Russian officials claimed that Venezuela was prepared to provide Moscow unspecified military-technical assistance in the event Russian-U.S. relations were to deteriorate.

### **TRANSNATIONAL THREATS**

#### **CYBERSPACE**

Cyberspace has emerged as an inseparable and indispensable element of modern great-power competition. What nations once achieved through traditional tools of national power, such as diplomacy, informational means, military force, and economic pressure, can now be gained through malicious software programs and hacking tools. Adversaries are probing and exploiting our military and

intelligence networks, conducting sustained targeting of social media to manipulate personnel and monitor movement of U.S. forces, and attempting to compromise the U.S. defense-industrial networks to steal weapon systems technology, while criminals are conducting cyberattacks against U.S. critical infrastructure. Russia will probably use artificial intelligence to develop autonomous cyber capabilities to optimize offensive cyberoperations and automate social media operations designed to exacerbate social divides. The 2021 ransomware attacks by Russian cybercriminals, including several that targeted the U.S. oil and food industry, exemplifies the potential danger to U.S. critical infrastructure. Our adversaries undoubtedly noted the impact on U.S. oil production and distribution and the ensuing psychological effects they had on the U.S. public. Additionally, our adversaries have taken note of Russian government and non-state cyberactors conducting destructive and disruptive cyberattacks against Ukrainian critical infrastructure and communications with some—albeit limited—success during the invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainian and non-state cyberactors have also conducted cyberattacks and information operations against Russia, revealing how nations with powerful militaries can remain vulnerable to cyberattacks from smaller adversaries. China has developed a cyber capability against U.S. critical oil and natural energy infrastructure, and is concentrating on improving its information systems and cyberwarfare capabilities by leveraging emerging technologies such as big data, AI, and 5G telecommunications. Effective integration of data obtained through intrusions of U.S. information systems and networks and those of its allies and partners could provide China with timely insights that yield intelligence and military advantage. The PLA's emphasis on an integrated approach to using advanced technologies in the cyber domain could improve its ability to conduct cyberspace operations in the near term. The PLA believes modern warfare—as a confrontation between complex systems—demands the ability to implement joint operations across all warfare domains, including cyberspace. China and Russia also have agreements to increase cyber capabilities of other countries creating the potential for new threat platforms in the future.

**SPACE AND COUNTERSPACE**

China and Russia are intent on undercutting U.S. global space leadership, and Iran and North Korea will continue using EW to deny or degrade U.S. space-based communications and navigation.

China's rapidly growing space program is second only to the United States in numbers of operational satellites, both civilian and military. Beijing is strengthening its science and technology sector and international relationships, and it is modernizing its military through advances in space systems and space-related R&D. China seeks space superiority through its steadily advancing space and counterspace programs to support its military objectives and overall national security goals. China publicly advocates for the peaceful use of space and for agreements at the United Nations on the nonweaponization of space while it continues to improve its counterspace weapons. In addition to improvements in counterspace technology, Beijing has enacted military reforms to integrate cyberspace, space, and EW into joint military operations. China's 2007 antisatellite (ASAT) missile test destroyed a defunct weather satellite, indicating the PLA's ability to target low Earth orbit (LEO) and potentially even geosynchronous Earth orbit satellites. China is developing other sophisticated space-based capabilities like the Shijian-17—a satellite with robotic arm technology that is potentially capable of grappling other satellites—and multiple ground-based laser systems that are capable of blinding or damaging satellites. China very likely is also developing a variety of satellite jammers to disrupt targeted satellites. Since at least 2006, China's government-affiliated academic community began investigating aspects associated with space-based kinetic weapons—a class of weapon used to attack ground, sea, or air targets from orbit.

Russia derives a considerable amount of national pride as a longstanding space power and considers itself deserving of international leadership on any space issue. Moscow considers U.S. dependency on space to enable power projection as a vulnerability it can exploit during a conflict, and it has concluded that gaining and maintaining supremacy in space has a decisive impact on the outcome of future conflicts. Russia also is developing and has fielded counterspace weapon systems—including several

ground-based lasers—that can deny, damage, and defeat U.S. space-based systems to reduce U.S. military effectiveness and control conflict escalation if deterrence fails. In November, Russia successfully launched a Nudol ASAT missile and destroyed a Soviet-era satellite—creating nearly 1,700 pieces of trackable debris and tens of thousands of pieces of lethal but nontrackable debris. This debris will endanger the spacecraft of all nations in LEO for years to come and may endanger the lives of astronauts and cosmonauts on the International Space Station and China's Tiangong space station.

North Korea and Iran have nascent space programs supporting civilian and military goals, with both nations experiencing limited success in placing earth-observation satellites into LEO using largely unreliable space launch vehicles. The development of space launch vehicles probably has a secondary purpose of testing ballistic missile technology under the guise of peaceful use of space as such testing produces data applicable to the development of long-range and multistage ballistic missiles, including ICBMs. In January 2021, North Korean state-owned media announced Pyongyang is conducting full-scale aerospace work, with Kim Jong Un claiming North Korea had designed a military reconnaissance satellite to launch in the near future. Iran has successfully launched two military satellites. In addition, Iran's Project 505 space program probably is an attempt to remedy prior launch failures by buying an imagery satellite system from Russia; however, this system is not yet in orbit.

North Korea and Iran recognize the value of military space, and they will attempt to deny adversary use of space during a conflict. Pyongyang has conducted GPS and communications jamming, and Tehran publicly acknowledges its capabilities to do the same—with Iran possibly contributing to the proliferation of jamming equipment. North Korean cyberactors have conducted numerous cyberoperations against foreign partner and U.S. Government networks, including against aerospace industry and space enterprises, which could enable North Korean weapon and space system development and procurement programs through technology theft.

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

The number of states with nuclear weapons has grown since the end of the Cold War, and countries with mature nuclear weapons programs are increasing the stockpile and/or the capabilities of weapons in their programs. All of these countries are modernizing their legacy stockpiles by incorporating advanced technologies to penetrate or avoid missile defense systems. Countries are also developing nuclear weapons with smaller yields, improved precision, and increased range for military or coercive use on the battlefield.

Russia and China probably will significantly expand their nuclear warhead stockpiles during the next decade. The anticipated expansion in Russia's stockpile is primarily driven by nonstrategic nuclear weapons growth. Russia probably has up to 2,000 nonstrategic nuclear warheads, in addition to approximately 1,450 deployed warheads on strategic systems covered by New START. Beijing accelerated its nuclear expansion. China will likely have about 1,000 deliverable nuclear warheads by 2030. Other nations such as Pakistan, North Korea, and India continue to advance their nuclear programs, although the programs are not as complex as in Russia and China.

Iran does not have a nuclear weapons program, but it is advancing its uranium enrichment program beyond prescribed JCPOA limits, shortening the time that Tehran would require to produce sufficient weapons-grade uranium for a single nuclear device—should Tehran decide to do so.

The proliferation of dual-use, WMD-applicable goods, knowledge, and technology will continue to present a direct threat to U.S. and allied interests by complicating U.S. force projection capabilities, countering Western missile defense systems, and improving adversarial targeting capabilities. Specialized procurement networks acquire dual-use goods, materials, technologies, and expertise for WMD programs and delivery systems for countries of concern, such as China, Iran, North Korea,

Pakistan, and Russia. These networks remain resilient and adaptable in the face of a vast international framework of sanctions, export controls, and other prohibitions limiting the purchase or transfer of certain WMD-applicable goods to specific countries or entities. Such efforts directly support the advancement, development, expansion, and survivability of WMD capabilities around the world.

#### FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE

DoD faces an extremely sophisticated global foreign intelligence threat environment from an increasing number of state and nonstate actors that are becoming more complex and diverse and substantially threaten DoD personnel, information, operations, supply chains, technologies, and critical infrastructure. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea compose the majority of these global threats, but the rapid development of globally available and affordable advanced technologies is accelerating the capabilities and numbers of state and nonstate actors posing intelligence threats to DoD interests. DoD and U.S. Government officials also continue to face reports of anomalous health incidents (AHIs)—often referred to in the press as Havana Syndrome—that are affecting the personal safety of officers and their families and U.S. Government missions. The IC has assessed that U.S. adversaries are not engaged in a sustained global campaign involving hundreds of incidents to harm or collect intelligence on U.S. personnel. We continue to investigate possible attribution for a subset of cases and analyze potential causal mechanisms. U.S. adversaries extensively use human intelligence and a wide variety of technical means to surveil DoD personnel and operations around the world. Their proliferation of some technologies—such as Safe City surveillance systems and facial recognition capabilities—can enable them to track and observe DoD personnel and activities, including in locations where U.S. adversaries do not maintain a physical presence.

U.S. adversaries have become adept at using multiple vectors to gain access to or manipulate the DoD supply chain to enable exploitation, sabotage, or subversion. These vectors include using foreign and U.S. laws and regulations to access proprietary or commercial data stored within national borders;

evading U.S. Government scrutiny by concealing companies' ties to foreign governments or intelligence services. U.S. adversaries also leverage third-party relationships among companies to conceal foreign entities' involvement in the supply chain and create opportunities for foreign intelligence entities to access or manipulate the DoD supply chain; and they exploit companies tied to foreign governments that pursue monopoly power in their industries to gain access to the DoD supply chain.

Russia, China, and Iran also use multiple avenues to collect on U.S. R&D of emerging and disruptive technologies, primarily to support their own domestic military R&D efforts, threatening to undermine the DoD's future advantages on global battlefields. In addition, U.S. adversaries use multiple methods to collect information on DoD critical infrastructure, which they almost certainly would target during a conflict to degrade DoD's ability to execute and sustain operations.

U.S. adversaries will use emerging technologies—such as AI, big data analytics, cloud computing, advanced unmanned and autonomous systems, Safe City surveillance systems, and wearable electronics—in ways that intend to substantially diminish U.S. advantage in multiple domains. The global proliferation of surveillance technologies, coupled with AI, will offer governments the ability to automate monitoring capabilities to surveil more people, more often. Deployment of 5G networking and Internet of Things advancements will further enable broad-based surveillance technologies, giving them the bandwidth and on-board analytic capabilities to quickly push greater amounts of higher quality sensor data.

#### **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY**

Rapid technological advancement combined with a global society increasingly eager and willing to integrate new technologies into everyday life likely will drive the incorporation of technology into novel military capabilities faster than any other time in the modern era. With the exception of the United States, only China and Russia have the resources and strategic ambition to incorporate advanced

technologies throughout all domains and their forces intended for global deployment. Beijing and Moscow view the development of these technologies as a race in which leaders in a technical field could develop military capabilities faster than their adversaries do to gain the advantage.

China's science and technology (S&T) ecosystem is a multipronged, whole-of-government system that incorporates S&T development from both the commercial and military sectors. China's military-civil fusion strategy, which emphasizes the open sharing of S&T resources and transfer of technology between civilian and defense industries, blurs the distinction between these supply chains. The emergence of the civilian sector as a dominant player developing next generation technology very likely will continue, notably in fields where China has already reached peer or near-peer levels, such as AI, high-performance computing, quantum information sciences, and biotechnology. China aspires to be the world leader in emerging and disruptive technologies by 2035 to sustain its economic growth and develop military capabilities that outmatch those of the United States. Beijing's long-term strategy of rapid, indigenous S&T development of cutting-edge technology, combined with licit and illicit foreign technology acquisition, very likely has positioned China at the forefront of numerous scientific fields.

China's Brain Project is a state-sponsored initiative that seeks to enhance human-machine decisionmaking systems by combining computer-based AI and brain science. The PLA is pursuing related brain science research to enable warfighter enhancement through brain-computer interfaces, devices that directly connect the human brain to computers, and cognition enhancement research. PLA researchers pursue cognitive enhancement through use of pharmaceutical and brain stimulation technologies.

By contrast, Russia more narrowly focuses its research efforts on technologies to match, counter, or offset perceived advantages of the United States and other potential adversaries. Despite the Russian defense industry's massive size and Moscow's efforts to increase development of indigenous

capabilities, Russia is challenged both organizationally and technically to produce the high-tech subcomponents required for advanced weapons. These limitations likely stem from severe funding, resource, talent, and infrastructure constraints on the country's S&T sector, which will be further exacerbated by sanctions and export controls implemented following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**CONCLUSION**

The military environment is defined by rapid technological change, challenges from adversaries in every operating domain, and the impact on current readiness from the longest continuous stretch of armed conflict in our Nation's history. Defense Intelligence must focus on the entire spectrum of conflict and across all warfighting domains to detect and correctly characterize key foreign developments and inform our Defense decisionmakers with timely, relevant insight.

