Arctic White Paper:
Key Influencer (KI) Networks Project in the Arctic

Purpose: This project will provide a baseline assessment of the Arctic information environment (IE) and identify Key Influencer (KI) networks for expert advice on targeting, product/content development, messaging, and measure the effectiveness of Arctic Information Operations (IO) / Military Information Support Operations (MISO) series.

End State: Russian and Chinese malign influence activities in the Arctic are countered.

1.0. Executive Summary

The Arctic is the "Front Line" for the Homeland Defense of North America. The Arctic is the new arena for Great Power Competition (GPC). Climate change has led to the melting of sea ice, which has opened up shipping lanes and opportunities for resource extraction. Russia views the Arctic as vital to its national security and economic prosperity. China views the Arctic as vital to its future economic prosperity with transportation routes, raw materials, and fisheries stocks. This project will provide a baseline analysis of the Arctic Information Environment (IE) as well as provide improved situational awareness as mandated in Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (September 2019); Department of Defense Arctic Strategy (June 2019), United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook (April 2019), United States Navy Strategic Outlook for the Arctic (January 2019), and UK Defence Arctic Strategy (September 2018).

2.0. Abstract

This proposed project is a scalable, multi-faceted examination of Chinese and Russian malign influence activities, Arctic security dynamics, and the role of Great Power Competition (GPC) across the Arctic through the construction and employment of Key Influencer (KI) networks in Canada, United Kingdom, Kingdom of Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Iceland, Finland, and Sweden. No systematic, sustained study has measured (both qualitatively and quantitatively) the importance of the Arctic to America's competitors. Russian and Chinese investments of resources spent on bases, equipment, exercises, and deployments to the Arctic represent one gauge of their intentions for the region. Establishing a baseline assessment of the Arctic Information Environment (IE) through KI networks will facilitate sustained assessment of Russian and Chinese increases or decreases in interest as well as the relative costs and benefits of diverting assets and funds from other regions to achieve their long-term Arctic aims.

Complementing KI network analysis, this project will conduct an in-depth analysis of Russian and Chinese policies, official and non-official statements, military bases, training, exercises and deployments, and other actions by strategic competitors and other

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influencers to measure capabilities, discern intent, and anticipate Arctic emerging threats and their potential impact on the United States, Canada, United Kingdom as well as other trusted partners in the Circumpolar North. This project will move beyond the traditional quantitative threat assessment based on competitor capabilities and platforms. It will track the confluence of multiple drivers of change by identifying key indicators that suggest shifting risk or threat levels in the Arctic defense and security domain.

Over the long-term, measuring and understanding the emerging Arctic threat environment requires an extensive and multi-layered network of experts and influencers. While expert input is needed to track high-level changes, local input is essential to monitor subtle shifts from local leaders and influencers. For instance, why are Russia and China interested in the Arctic? Who are the major players in the Arctic information environment? What are the themes and messages of Russian and Chinese Arctic messaging? How do Russia and China threaten the Homeland Defense of the United States and Canada from the Arctic? What impact are Chinese state-owned companies having in the Kingdom of Denmark (Greenland) and Iceland? Do such investments reveal economic, strategic military or security motivations? With these questions in mind, this project will build a detailed roster of Arctic influencers, from military, political, academics, and business leaders to important community members with first-hand knowledge of the specific Arctic regions and indigenous peoples.

Competitors and adversaries are competing across all dimensions of power, with increased efforts in areas short of armed conflict…violating principles of sovereignty, exploiting ambiguity, and deliberately blurring civil and military targets (National Defense Strategy, 2018). By working together with allies and partners, we can amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintain favorable balances of power that deter aggression, and support the stability that generates economic growth (National Defense Strategy 2018, p. 15). The United States' strategic network of allies and partners provides capacity, niche capabilities, intelligence, and forward access and basing that empowers the Joint Force when competing against global challenges (National Military Strategy 2018, p. 16).

Global integration is the arrangement of cohesive military actions in time, space, and purpose, executed as a whole to address transregional, all-domain, and multi-functional challenges (CJCSI 3050.01, A-1). Operations must be strategically coordinated worldwide, nested within a whole of government approach, and include our allies and coalition partners (CJCSI 3050.01, A-2). Achieving global integration requires the combination of the institutional expertise of the Services and geographic and functional Combatant Commands (CCMDs) to provide precise and timely global military solutions in support of national policy objectives (CJCSI 3050.01, A-3).

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The outcome of this project will assist NORAD and USNORTHCOM, United States European Command (USEUCOM), United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), and the Ministry of Defence – United Kingdom (MoD-UK) to improve situational awareness of Russian and Chinese malign influence activities, emerging threats, and enhance their understanding of regional security dynamics in the Arctic region. A visualization of Arctic KI networks, quick-turn-around RFI responses, deep-dive reports, monthly key influencer reports, as well as suggestions for strategic messaging and narrative lines will be supplied to NORAD and USNORTHCOM as project deliverables.

3.0. Abstract

Project Deliverables

Specific project deliverables will include:

Measure and Track:

- Arctic Operational Environment (i.e., transportation routes, oil and gas extraction, precious mineral extraction, scientific expeditions, fishing, and tourism)
- Arctic Information Environment – emerging threats and key influencers

Russia

- Russian Arctic Interests (i.e., Russian Arctic mythology, territorial sovereignty, Russia as a Petro-state)
- Russian Arctic Militarization (i.e., bases, training, exercises, military deployments, cost)
- Russian Arctic Influence Campaigns (i.e., United States, Canada, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and other countries)
- Russian Arctic Messaging – key themes and strategic narratives
- Russian Information Warfare – tactics and techniques
- Measures of Effectiveness of Russian Influence Operations in the Arctic

China

- Chinese Arctic Interests (i.e., Polar Silk Road, Chinese investment, resource extraction, science diplomacy)
- Chinese Arctic Military Build Up (i.e., military and icebreaker deployments, exercises, cost)
- Chinese Arctic Influence Campaigns (i.e., United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Kingdom of Denmark - Greenland, Iceland, and other countries)
- Chinese Arctic Messaging – key themes and strategic narratives
- Chinese Information Warfare – tactics and techniques
- Measures of Effectiveness of Chinese Influence Operations in the Arctic
- "Dual use" and other economic investments that can have military and security applications (both offensive and defensive)

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- Expert and key stakeholder opinion on the evolving Arctic defense and security environment

Identify:

- Russian and Chinese Arctic policies, including formal and informal positions, by government and non-government influencers
- Potential political, legal, and physical challenges to established governance structures and norms in the Arctic
- Shifts in Russian and Chinese objectives in the Arctic, vis-à-vis economic development, transportation routes, resource extraction, defense spending, and governance initiatives
- Future law of the sea challenges and their implications
- Chinese and Russian state-owned-investments in different Arctic regions, with a special focus on key strategic resources

Analyze:

- The extensive security literature to track and discern trends in Arctic regional security dynamics and emerging threats
- The defense and security implications of increased shipping and foreign activity in and through Arctic waterways
- Arctic state and private sector capabilities in the region, highlighting areas of productive cooperation that might be pursued and potential areas of political friction that might be avoided
- Conventional and unconventional threats to the Homeland Defense of the United States and Canada in and through the Arctic region

4.0. Russian and Chinese Malign Influence Activities in the Arctic

Over the past decade, Arctic defense and security dynamics have changed. Climate change and the melting of sea ice have opened up the Arctic to new opportunities and challenges:

- Transportation routes for shipping of goods through the Northwest Passage (Canada and US), Northern Sea Route (Russia and China), and the Transpolar Trade Route

- Extraction of precious minerals, oil and gas resources, expanded fishing, and tourism

- Involvement of non-Arctic states in the region's affairs

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This has resulted in new and unconventional security concerns that revolve around commercial activity, freedom of navigation, sovereignty, and governance as well as new defense threats highlighted by Russia's Arctic militarization and China's preparations for an increased military presence in the Arctic.

Russia's Arctic Militarization

Russia views the Arctic as vital to both its national security and economic prosperity. To strengthen its position and increase its control in the Arctic, Russia has been dedicating significant resources to the building of military infrastructure including new airfields, deep-water ports, and a new-generation of military technology for power projection.

In 2015, Russia created the Northern Fleet to expand Arctic military presence and improve power projection capabilities which controls two-thirds of Russia's total naval power and operates approximately 80 ships. Since 2015, Russia has added 12 new airfields, 16 deep-water ports, increased tactical air capabilities, and added electronic warfare units. In 2017, Russia's Defense Ministry announced it plans to construct 425 Arctic military facilities in a 700,000 square kilometer area.

Under Project 22220, Russia is developing a new-generation of nuclear-powered icebreakers (Arktika, Sibir and Ural) for deployment by 2021. Russia possesses 12 SSBNs and 26 SSGNs capable of conducting maritime espionage and attacking land-based targets in North America. In 2020, Russia announced that it is developing the Rezonans-N Anti-missile radar system capable of spotting approaching hypersonic missiles and protect the military installations of the Northern Fleet.

Russia views the Arctic as vital to both its national security and economic prosperity. It has dedicated significant resources to heavily militarize the Arctic and increase its economic advantage. Russia is using its increased military presence in the Arctic to support its claim to an extended continental shelf stretching to the North Pole. It is also engaged in a long-term strategy of area access and denial, largely as a means to engage in strategic power projection by its Northern Fleet. Finally, Russia is conducting influence operations in the Arctic to gain the comparative advantage and increase the perception of Arctic leadership legitimacy.

A central priority in Russia's Arctic strategy is to exclude the United States forces from its Arctic waters by controlling the Northern Sea Route. The US government has challenged Russian claims to sovereign jurisdiction over this entire route since the 1950s, and the U.S. Navy is considering the possibility of freedom of navigation voyages to assert its legal position.

China's Preparations for an Increased Military Presence in the Arctic

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The post-Cold War Arctic has experienced significant increases in the extraction of oil, gas, and rare earth minerals, expanded fishing, and tourism. While most of this activity is local, foreign interests are increasingly present. The high cost of development has made Chinese investment attractive to some Arctic nations and Chinese state-owned mining companies have invested billions in projects from Alaska to Greenland – including some of the world's largest rare-earth mineral deposits.

In 2013, China's first Ukrainian-built icebreaker, the Xue Long (Snow Dragon) completed a circum-Arctic navigation. Since 2014, the Chinese government branches overseeing military and maritime policy have been accumulating knowledge and capacities for navigating and monitoring the Arctic. In 2015, China's National Security Law explicitly references exploration of the Arctic. Article 32 of the law presents arguments on China's right to exploration and use of the Arctic.

Since 2016, China has focused on increasing Arctic expeditions, creating Arctic nautical maps, taking part in international meteorological efforts to map Arctic ice levels, and monitoring the region from space. In 2017, the Chinese icebreaker, Xue Long, conducted its first marine research voyage through the Northwest Passage providing China with valuable information on the viability of future trade through the region.

In 2018, China launched its first home-built icebreaker Xue Long 2 with dual-directional icebreaking capabilities, scientific facilities, two helicopters hangars, and 180 crew and staff accommodations. In 2019, China's General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) invited bids for the design and construction of a nuclear-power icebreaker which could serve as a test bed to develop nuclear-power propulsion for Chinese Navy aircraft carriers.

According to the Office of the United States Secretary of Defense (2019) Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, "Civilian research could support a strengthened Chinese military presence in the Arctic Ocean, which could include deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks."

In contrast, the U.S. Coast Guard has two icebreakers (one in need of repairs) and the first replacement icebreaker is not due until 2024. This is a window of several years where China's icebreaker capability will exceed that of the United States.

Northwest Passage: An Opportunity for Exploitation

The United States and Canada disagree on the status of the Northwest Passage. As the U.S. and Canada continue to disagree on shipping rights through the North American Arctic, the future positions taken by Russia and China could create divisiveness and disrupt relations in the Canada – United States (CANUS) defense relationship.

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Given the potential strategic and commercial importance of the Northwest Passage to the United States, the status of these waters will remain a principal area of concern. Secretary of State Pompeo has actively asserted the United States has freedom of navigation rights in the Arctic. Canadian political sensitivities on this matter can be exploited by Russia and China to damage the CANUS defense and security relationship and impact future U.S. security interests in the Arctic region.

5.0. Project Objectives

Specific Project Objectives include:

- Understanding the human terrain and the diverse actors influencing the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in the Arctic Information Environment (IE). The information gathered will be used to support NORAD and USNORTHCOM planning efforts, operations, and strategic messaging about the Arctic region

- Timely tracking of Russian and Chinese influence activities in the Arctic Information Environment (IE) including key themes and messages, tactics and techniques, and measures of effectiveness of IO operations

- Ability to conduct deep dive research on issues of critical importance to NORAD and USNORTHCOM, USEUCOM, INDOPACOM, MOD-UK, and CJOC

- Superior access to Senior Leaders and Key Influencers (KI) in the Arctic Information Environment

6.0. PROJECT/TASK OBJECTIVES & REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Arctic Key Influencer Visualization (Deliverable 1)

The vendor will compile a visualization of Key Influencers (KIs) in the Arctic Information Environment that will be divided up into four regions: U.S. Arctic, Canadian Arctic, European Arctic, and Russian Arctic. The visualization will include a ranking of KIs of import to the project. Each profile will include the name, position, a picture (if possible) and other relevant information. The vendor will rate each key influencer in the following two categories from 1 to 5, where 1 represents a low influence and 5 a high one:

Influence, correlated to formal or informal relationship to Arctic decisionmakers, for each of the four Arctic regions:

1: Not part of his or her nation's senior Arctic decision making; does not steer policy. Holds influence within civil, legal or business sectors

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2: Not part of his or her nation's senior Arctic decision making; holds influence within civil, legal, business sectors.

3: May wield tangential influence on his or her nation's senior Arctic decision making

4: Highly influential within his or her nation's senior Arctic decision making; may have direct influence on policy-making

5: Highly influential within his or her nation's senior Arctic decision making and directs his or her nation's national policy and objectives

Access, correlated to Primary Node's existing relationships with influencers

1: Primary Node has no direct established relationship with influencer. Pulsing of influencer will require development of additional trusted interlocutors

2: Primary Node has limited capability to pulse influencer for RFIs via trusted interlocutors. Topics limited

3: Primary Node can pulse influencer for RFIs via existing trusted interlocutors. Topics may be limited

4: Primary Node has existing relationship with influencer. Primary Node can pulse influencer directly for RFIs with some limits on topic

5: Primary Node has well-established relationship with influencer. Strong capability for direct pulsing for RFIs over a broad spectrum of topics

6.2 Quick-Turn RFIs (Deliverable 2)

The vendor will provide up to four (4) RFIs per month from its key influencer networks from across the four Arctic regions. RFIs will be questions asked by NORAD and USNORTHCOM that the vendor will answer after pulsing its KI network within 96 hours whenever possible. RFI responses will be 1-4 pages in length that clearly and concisely answer the questions posed.

6.3 Monthly Summary Reports from Four Arctic Regions (Deliverable 3)

The vendor shall produce 10-15 page reports monthly, including a one-page executive summary that details Russian and Chinese malign influence activities across the four Arctic regions based on the list of project deliverables.

6.4 Quarterly Deep-Dive Reports (Deliverable 4)

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The vendor shall produce 20-25 page reports quarterly, including a one-page executive summary that offers a focused analysis of an issue of critical importance to NORAD and USNORTHCOM in the Arctic Information Environment. Subjects for these quarterly reports will be suggested by NORAD and USNORTHCOM with input from the vendor or contractor.

6.5 Strategic Messaging and Narrative Lines (Deliverable 5)

When requested, the vendor will provide advice to NORAD and USNORTHCOM on potential strategic messaging and narrative lines with culturally-appropriate wording or protocols for use with general or specific audiences to counter Russian and Chinese messaging activities. Examples of intended audiences might include key Arctic stakeholders and distribution methods (i.e., social media, traditional media).

6.6 Sentiment Analysis (Deliverable 6)

As a means of quantifying and confirming expert analysis tracking Russian and Chinese messaging in the Arctic information environment, sophisticated artificial intelligence and machine learning tools will be applied to analyze and interpret messaging through state-owned media channels and social media in order to track the evolution of competitors' propaganda and the uptake of that messaging in the West.

7.0. CONCLUSION

This project supports Global Integration (CJCSI 3050.01, 31 Dec 18) by providing NORAD and USNORTHCOM, USEUCOM, USINDOPACOM, MOD-UK, and CJOC the ability to proactively respond to Russian and Chinese malign influence activities in the Arctic Information Environment (IE). In recognition of the increasing Great Power Competition (GPC) facing the United States and its allies in the Arctic, the Department of Defense's 2019 Arctic Strategy called for a renewed emphasis on situational awareness. Russian and Chinese malign influence activities in the Arctic challenge United States, Canada, and European interests in the region which require an understanding of competitors' motivations, interests, and tactics. This project will provide NORAD and USNORTHCOM, USEUCOM, USINDOPACOM, MOD-UK, and CJOC with an in-depth analytical perspective from regional experts to place Arctic developments and activities into perspective. Tracking of Russian and Chinese influence activities in the region will quantify their interest and substantiate – or invalidate – security messaging from those governments. Likewise, tracking their key themes and messages as well as strategic narratives will provide the United States and its Allies with a more comprehensive understanding of competitor intent and insure that the United States and its Allies are well-positioned to respond to Russia and China in the future.

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