



NORWEGIAN  
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

# FOCUS 2022

*The Norwegian Intelligence Service's  
assessment of current security challenges*



## FOCUS FRONT PAGE COMPETITION

For this year's edition of Focus, we wanted to see how artists from outside the organisation interpret the topics presented in our annual security assessment. The winner of the competition is *Space Opera V* by Karl Bryhn. The artist describes his piece as follows:

*Over the past years, I have been working with paintings based on output from neural networks (GAN). Synthetically generated abstract shapes can appear as convincing objects, e.g. if they have sufficiently realistic material properties in addition to suggestive shapes and context. This results in a kind of pseudo-figuration that convinces and confuses at the same time, a world that at first glance seems understandable but which constantly alternates between what you think you see and what is actually on the screen. For me, the effect ends up somewhere in the borderland between interpreting vague data as something clear and defined and drawing meaning out of completely unrelated things. Interpretation of data is something we all do at every moment of our lives in order to construct and navigate the reality we relate to. But stimuli are interpreted subjectively, and we will not necessarily relate to the same interpretation even if we try to agree on a collective understanding of reality.*

The editorial staff believes that Bryhn's work reflects an increasingly complicated and volatile world marked by disinformation and rapid technological development. *Space Opera V* is an intriguing and abstract approach to highly relevant topics that will dominate the security policy agenda in 2022. We congratulate Karl Bryhn on his win.

See more of Bryhn's work here:  
[www.instagram.com/karl\\_bryhn](https://www.instagram.com/karl_bryhn)  
[www.facebook.com/BryhnArt](https://www.facebook.com/BryhnArt)

Design, layout and illustrations: *The Norwegian Intelligence Service*

Front page illustration: *Karl Bryhn*

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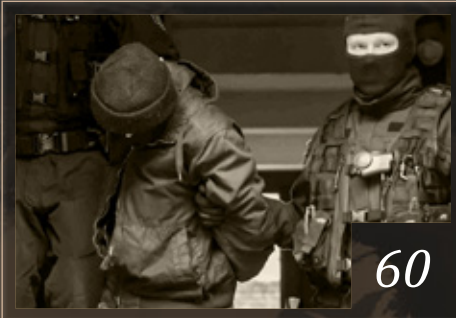
DIGITAL VERSION:  
[FORSVARET.NO/FOKUS](https://forsvaret.no/fokus)

The Norwegian Intelligence Service's annual report Focus is one of three Norwegian threat and risk assessments published during the first quarter of each year. The other two are published by the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) and the Norwegian National Security Service (NSM).

■ **THE NORWEGIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (NIS)** is Norway's foreign intelligence service. Although subordinate to the Norwegian Chief of Defence, NIS does not concern itself exclusively with military matters. The main tasks of NIS are to warn of external threats to Norway and high-priority Norwegian interests, to support the Norwegian Armed Forces and the defence alliances Norway is part of, and to assist in political decision-making processes by providing information of significance to Norwegian foreign, security and defence policy. In the annual threat assessment Focus, NIS presents its analysis of the current situation and expected developments in geographic and thematic areas considered particularly relevant to Norwegian security and national interests.

■ **THE NORWEGIAN POLICE SECURITY SERVICE (PST)** is Norway's domestic security service, subordinate to the Norwegian Minister of Justice and Public Security. PST is responsible for preventing and investigating crimes that threaten national security. It is the task of the service to identify and assess threats relating to intelligence, sabotage, the spreading of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and extremism. The assessments are meant to assist policy formulation and support political decision-making processes. PST's annual threat assessment is a part of the service's public outreach, explaining the expected development in the threat environment.

■ **THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL SECURITY AUTHORITY (NSM)** is responsible for preventative national security. NSM advises and supervises the safeguarding of information, systems, objects and infrastructure of national significance. NSM also has a national responsibility to detect, alert and coordinate responses to serious ICT attacks. In its report Risiko, NSM assesses the risk environment of national security. In the report, NSM assesses in what way vulnerabilities in Norwegian businesses and functions in society influence the risk environment, with the NIS and PST assessments of the threat environment in mind. The report also recommends measures to reduce risks connected with activity that threatens security.



*International terrorism*

The terrorist threat to Europe comes mainly from individuals and loose networks of sympathisers without strong ties to international terrorist organisations.



*A complex threat environment*

Russia and China are using all the instruments of state power to promote their international position.



*Russia's overt use of force*

The modernised Russian armed forces pose the main military threat to Norway's sovereignty, population, territory, key functions in society and infrastructure.



*Xi Jinping's China*

The combination of confidence and the feeling of being opposed has given rise to a more offensive foreign policy and conflictual relationship with the US and the West.



*Regional conflicts*

Political unrest and armed conflict increase the scope for action of international terrorist organisations.

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- A complex threat environment \_ \_ \_ \_ 06
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- Regional conflicts \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 68



**F**ocus is the Norwegian Intelligence Service's annual unclassified threat assessment, in which we look at development trends we consider to be relevant to Norwegian security in the year ahead. Focus 2022 is the twelfth of its kind. I began last year's edition by describing the wide range of threats facing Norway. These threats are complex and cross-sectorial, and a combination of many different means makes the threat environment challenging. This is a trend which continued throughout last year.

At the start of 2022, the situation is undeniably grave. The tense situation over Ukraine is disconcerting, and in late autumn and winter there has been a significant Russian force build-up in and around the country. Russian statements have been correspondingly harsh. As I write this, there is diplomatic dialogue with Moscow, but the parties are far apart and the outcome uncertain. Any acts of war, even on the other side of Europe, would have an impact on Norway and our surrounding areas. As Focus 2022 goes to print, the outcome of this deep security policy crisis remains unknown.

In close collaboration with the other Norwegian secret services, the Norwegian Intelligence Service (NIS) followed the preparations for and staging of the 2021 Norwegian parliamentary elections closely. We did this because we had seen examples of significant election influencing by foreign states in other Western countries, and it was important to us to do our utmost to uncover any attempts at influencing the Norwegian elections. Fortunately, we uncovered no such attempts. This does not mean, however, that such attempts may not be made in the future, and in the coming years it will be important for our service to hone our ability to uncover any attempts to influence our democracy.

NIS's mission is to warn of external threats to Norway and Norwegian interests. Therefore, it is not within our remit to examine all the possibilities inherent in cooperation with other countries. We look at threats, that is our mandate. It is my hope that Focus 2022 will contribute to the public debate on Norwegian security policy. Happy reading!

**Vice Admiral Nils Andreas Stensønes**  
**Director Norwegian Intelligence Service**

Editing concluded on 27 January 2022

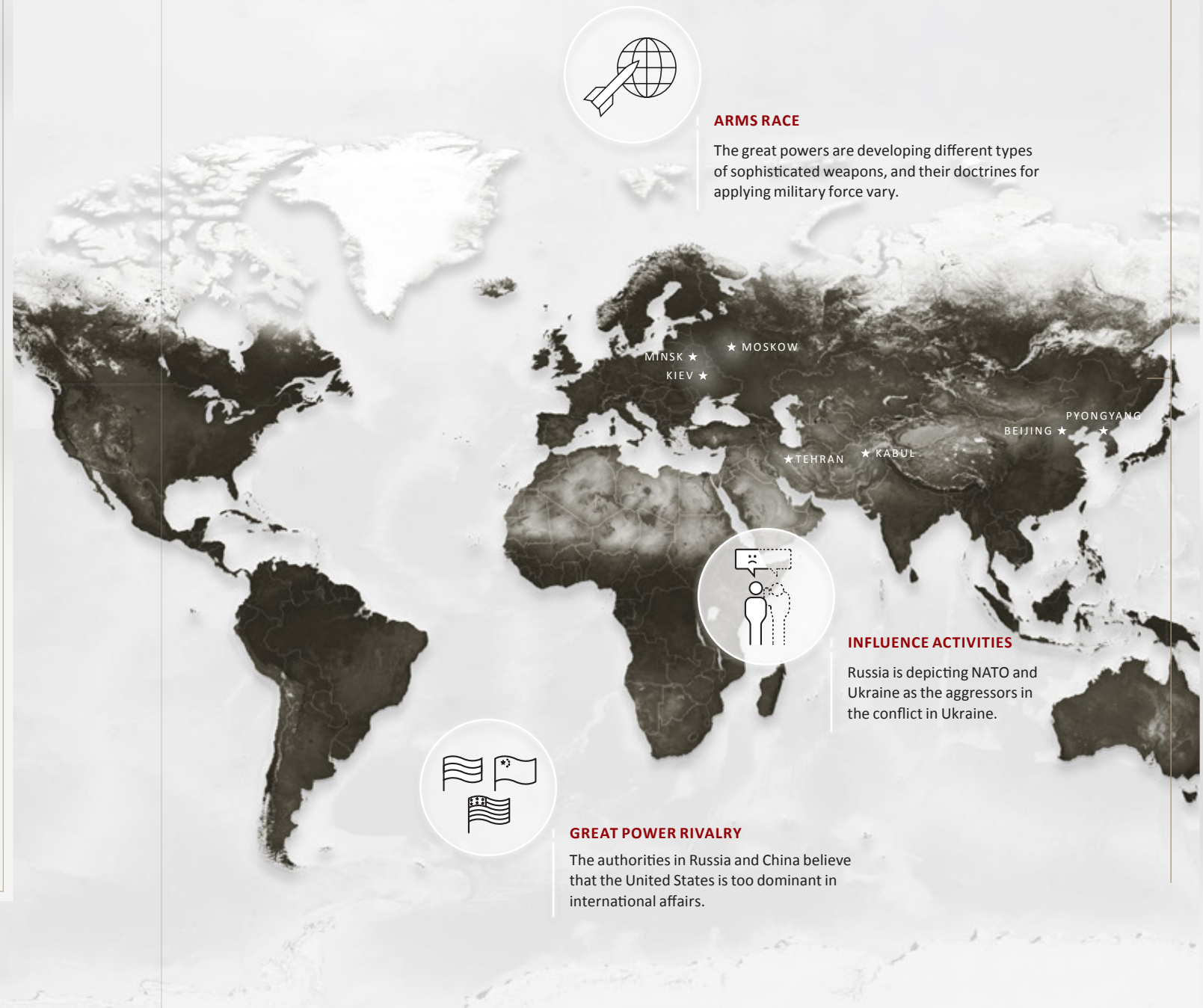


# A COMPLEX THREAT ENVIRONMENT

Current security policy developments are characterised by great power rivalry. Russia and China are moving further in the direction of centralised power whilst their social systems are becoming increasingly different from Western liberal democracies.

Both countries are using all instruments of state power to promote their international position. Threats to Norway and Norwegian interests are becoming increasingly complex, and Russia and China are the most prominent threat actors.

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A COMPLEX THREAT ENVIRONMENT  
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### ARMS RACE

The great powers are developing different types of sophisticated weapons, and their doctrines for applying military force vary.



### INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

Russia is depicting NATO and Ukraine as the aggressors in the conflict in Ukraine.



### GREAT POWER RIVALRY

The authorities in Russia and China believe that the United States is too dominant in international affairs.

**R**ivalry between the United States and China in particular dominates developments. The authorities in Russia and China share the opinion that the United States plays a too dominant role in international affairs, and that their own global ambitions and internal affairs are under pressure from the US and the West. The relationship between the West and Russia has deteriorated since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The ongoing force build-up around Ukraine and Russia's involvement in Syria, Libya and Mali demonstrate that Russia continues to make active use of its armed forces. China's behaviour towards Taiwan demonstrates increased willingness on Beijing's part to support its foreign policy with military means.

” **When Western cohesion shows signs of weakness, Russia is emboldened to make more overt use of military force and China steps up its rhetoric and influence activity.**

Both the Russian and Chinese authorities are using all instruments of state power to support their goals. This includes everything from military pressure and economic measures to intelligence operations, trade agreements, technology development and influence operations; we refer to this as *a comprehensive use of means*. This type of approach makes it difficult to distinguish illegal and unwanted activity from legitimate activity. The impact of other means used is reinforced by the threat of military force. Although this more offensive approach heightens the level of conflict in these countries' interaction with other states, Moscow and Beijing have become increasingly willing to weather such conflicts. Their approach is intended

to challenge the West's community of values and alliance policies. When Western cohesion shows signs of weakness, Russia is emboldened to make more overt use of military force and China steps up its rhetoric and influence activity.

Mounting great power rivalry fuels polarisation, and smaller states such as Norway are constantly required to pick a side in international conflicts. This could put pressure on both national authorities and private companies.

### The Arctic's increasing importance

The Arctic is of strategic importance to the great powers, and melting ice improves access to resources and new shipping routes. Moscow views Western military activity in the region as a threat to Russian interests, and believes that other states are using measures to combat climate change as a pretext for preventing Russian activity. Norway is accused of facilitating increased 'militarisation' of the High North. Meanwhile, Russia continues to expand its military bases and support hubs along its entire Arctic coastline. However, Russian behaviour thus far shows that it is interested in a stable, low-tension Arctic. Russia holds the chairmanship of the Arctic Council this year, and will use this role to present itself as a responsible, cooperative actor in the region, whilst simultaneously promoting itself as the Arctic's key player.

China's aims in the Arctic are linked to its great power ambitions, resource access, shipping routes and climate change. Although Beijing is seeking closer cooperation with Russia on the Arctic, the Chinese authorities are mindful of the region's importance to Russia, and therefore exercising restraint. China has yet to operate militarily in the Arctic, but is working →



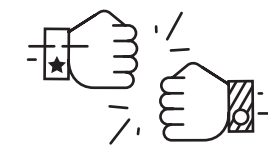
China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin during the BRICS summit in Brazil, 14 November 2019.



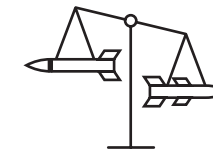
” With its expanded military presence, Russia has increased its military freedom of action considerably.

*Image: Russian military materiel lined up in Voronezh, 190 km from the Ukrainian border. Since autumn 2021, Russia has been massing troops on its border with Ukraine.*





Moscow and Beijing are more willing to weather conflicts with the West



The great powers are developing new weapons systems that are not covered by existing treaties



Russia claims Norway is facilitating increased 'militarisation' of the High North

to improve the conditions for both a military and civilian presence. China's capability and freedom of action will increase, albeit slowly and gradually.

### Arms race and the absence of arms control

The accelerating arms race is a clear result of great power rivalry. The great powers are developing different types of sophisticated weapons, and their doctrines for applying military force vary. It will be challenging to establish an arms control architecture which incorporates all the various weapons systems and all relevant actors. Neither non-strategic nuclear weapons nor new nuclear weapons are covered by the current arms control treaties; the same applies to weapons in outer space. Both Russia and China continue to assert that conventional US capabilities are undermining their nuclear retaliatory capability.

Russia has over a thousand non-strategic nuclear warheads, and continues to develop new non-strategic nuclear weapons. These are central to Russia's deterrent capability, and a treaty that imposes limitations on these is unlikely without any corresponding

regulation of the West's missile defences. In 2019, Russia deployed a new type of advanced warhead, so-called hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV), on two intercontinental missiles for the first time. Russia is also continuing its development of air-launched ballistic missiles as well as underwater drones and nuclear-powered cruise missiles.

China has not participated in arms control talks thus far. Its nuclear weapons doctrine is based on minimal deterrence, yet Beijing could change it on short notice. The country has around 300 nuclear warheads, a significantly smaller arsenal than the United States and Russia. New strategic assets, such as ground-based and submarine-launched intercontinental missiles, are in development, and the silo-based force of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) will increase. This could lead to more than a doubling of the number of Chinese nuclear warheads in the period to 2030. China is also in possession of a large arsenal of advanced medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Some of these are fitted with nuclear warheads intended for regional deterrence. One example is the intermediate-range precision weapon *DF-26*. More such missiles are expected to be incorporated into the rocket forces in the next few years. China is unlikely to be willing to enter into



North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un in conversation in front of the new *Hwasong-17* missile at a North Korean military fair in October 2021.

nuclear arms treaties that limit its regional military capability. The country has an extensive HGV development programme, and is also developing air-launched ballistic missiles intended for heavy bombers.

Since 2019, Iran has gradually stepped up its nuclear programme and is now capable of enriching sufficient weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear warhead within a few months. However, developing and manufacturing the warhead, and integrating it with a ballistic missile, will take longer. Iran's missile programme is not covered by the nuclear deal, and the country has several missiles suited to delivering nuclear warheads.

North Korea has active nuclear and missile programmes, and in 2021 there were signs of production of both uranium and plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. Pyongyang has refrained from testing long-range missiles and nuclear weapons since 2017, in order to keep the door open to talks on sanctions relief, yet the country has major ambitions for its missile programme.

### The struggle for technology, knowledge and ownership

Increasingly, technological innovation in the civilian commercial sector is being exploited for military ends. Businesses in Russia and China are being tethered more closely to state and social security, and investment in skills-based companies, contracts to build critical infrastructure and access to supply chains are all methods used to achieve security policy goals. Investment in and development of digital infrastructure can provide access to communication and control systems that can be used for intelligence and influence purposes. Mapping of vulnerabilities can facilitate destructive network operations in critical situations.

Manipulating supply chains or restraining access to important goods can be used to influence and exert pressure.

China, Russia and Iran all seek to improve their own production capacity in order to become less dependent on Western suppliers of advanced industrial and technological products. This means they require knowledge and production skills. All three countries are using collaboration with businesses and academia to acquire technology and skills with military applications. The difference in China and Russia's purchasing power is stark; China's economic power has enabled the country to pursue a high investment rate overseas. On several occasions, government-affiliated companies have used funds and third parties in other jurisdictions to conceal their ownership. Russia focuses on areas in which they have strategic requirements; for Norway, this means that advanced technology in the maritime sector is particularly vulnerable.

” **China, Russia and Iran all seek to improve their own production capacity in order to become less dependent on Western suppliers of advanced industrial and technological products.**

The actors involved use complex methods to conceal the identity of the end user, and are showing adaptability in their circumvention of export controls and ownership checks; close links between state and private actors make this possible. As Western countries introduce stricter control measures, threat actors will use increasingly complex acquisition methods and company structures. China's new security laws strengthen the security and intelligence services' remit, making it easier to use Chinese companies, →



” **Current security policy developments are characterised by great power rivalry.**

*Image: The Russian and US heads of state depicted on matryoshka dolls in a souvenir shop in Moscow, 6 December 2021.*



Sidebar #01  
» Definition

Image: Jonas Parello-Plesner, who has worked at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the press that Chinese agents tried to recruit him in 2011 by contacting him on LinkedIn.

### ■ Definition: Intelligence

In the Norwegian Intelligence Service's threat assessments, 'intelligence' refers to both the activity and the product of state-sanctioned collection, analysis and assessment of data and information, either openly or covertly, with the aim of gaining advantages in decision-making processes.

academic institutions and other actors for intelligence activities overseas. There is a persistently high frequency of attempts to acquire technology from Norwegian businesses. Maritime technology is in particularly high demand; for instance, the Russian company Transmashholding attempted to acquire Bergen Engines in 2021. This sale could have resulted in improved propulsion of Russian naval vessels in just a few years' time.

### Extensive, ongoing intelligence activity

Russian and Chinese intelligence and security services are seeing their expertise and freedom of action expanding, and they are putting it to active use. This is particularly evident in cyberspace. A number of state-owned and private businesses have been subject to network operations in the past year. For Norwegian actors in cyberspace, the threat environment is dominated by intelligence activity in the form of mapping and intelligence collection.

The health sector is vulnerable to the collection of large amounts of data. The covid-19 pandemic is high-level politics and the competition for vaccine development is not yet over. The authorities in several countries have reported attempted theft of vaccination information.

Gaining access to digital control systems is extremely valuable. It offers the opportunity to exert pressure in the event of a tense situation and could ultimately be used to incapacitate critical national functions. Despite the fact that the authorities in Norway and other countries have publicly attributed network operations, the perpetrators have continued conducting visible and noisy operations that are easy to detect. These types of operations are carried out

using relatively simple means, and are a cost-efficient way for intelligence and security services to acquire information. However, state actors are also highly capable; they conduct technically advanced and well-concealed operations when they consider it advantageous to do so. In other cases, they use contractors, partly to conceal links to the state.

Norway is an attractive target to Russian and Chinese intelligence, in part because we are a NATO country with extensive cooperation with the United States and in part because Norwegian research, technology development and businesses are leading in areas Russia and China are seeking to develop further. Norway's Arctic policy and positions on the UN Security Council also make us an attractive intelligence target.

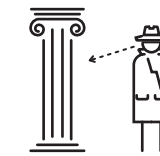
” **The sum of incidents over the past year illustrates how other states seek to gain insight into Norwegian actors' sentiments, statements and potential political and strategic decisions.**

The sum of incidents over the past year illustrates how other states seek to gain insight into Norwegian actors' sentiments, statements and potential political and strategic decisions. Such information can also be used to influence political processes, organisations, commercial entities and individuals, through information operations, coercion or unofficial sanctions.

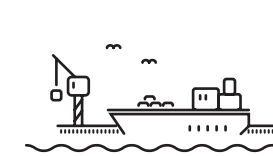
In autumn 2020, the Norwegian Parliament's IT systems were compromised as part of a global campaign. The activity consisted of logging on to the organisations' email systems through extensive password guessing. In October 2020, the Norwegian authorities publicly attributed the compromise to ↘



Handover of Chinese covid-19 vaccines at the airport in Addis Ababa, 24 October 2021. Thus far, China has donated 7 million doses to Ethiopia. The Chinese authorities have attempted to sow doubt about the origins of the coronavirus while seeking recognition for their handling of the pandemic.



China has intensified its intelligence activities against Western political targets



Norwegian maritime technology is in high demand



Access to control systems can be used to shut down critical functions

Russia. Over the course of three weeks in February–March 2021, the Norwegian Parliament was once again targeted by two network operations. In the first operation, which appears to have been targeted, information from the email account of one specific member of parliament was extracted. The operation demonstrated willingness to use significant resources on obtaining information on a single politician, in this instance by exploiting *zero-day vulnerabilities*. The combination of resource use and targeting indicates that Norwegian politicians could be prioritised targets of intelligence operations. In the second operation, the threat actor exploited zero-day vulnerabilities to gain access to the Norwegian Parliament’s email server. The Norwegian authorities publicly attributed this operation to China.

China has accelerated its intelligence collection efforts against political Western targets. Government agencies and other organisations involved in matters that affect Chinese interests are prioritised intelligence targets. Over the past year, we have seen China display a stronger interest in gaining insight into Norwegian political decision-making processes, and the country has proved itself capable of carrying out sophisticated, targeted operations in order to obtain such information.

### Influencing political decisions and the public debate

Foreign states carry out influence activities in order to manipulate public debates, attitudes, decisions or outcomes in other states or in multilateral organisations. Influence activities supplement legitimate diplomatic activities and discussions, and may occur openly as well as covertly.

” Over time, Russia and China have demonstrated willingness and ability to interfere in political processes in Western countries.

Over time, Russia and China have demonstrated willingness and ability to interfere in political processes in Western countries. Russian media have amplified existing conspiracy theories about biological warfare and covid-19 vaccines. Over the past months, Russia has sought to influence public opinion in the West by depicting NATO and Ukraine as the aggressors in the conflict in Ukraine. The Chinese authorities have attempted to sow doubt about the



Sidebar #02  
» Background

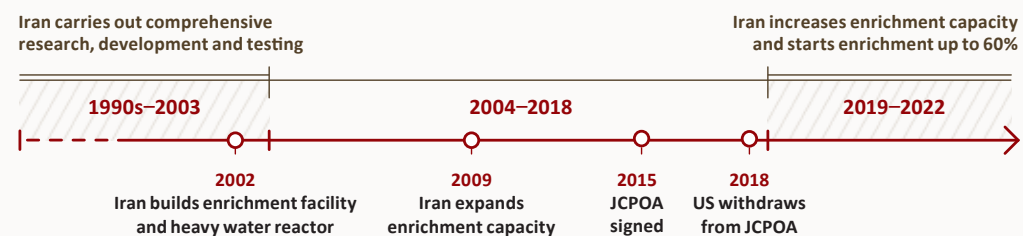
Image: From the nuclear negotiations with Iran in Vienna, 3 December 2021. Issues still remain unsolved.

### Iran's nuclear and missile programme

The nuclear programme is the main bargaining chip Iran can use to obtain sanctions relief. Should the nuclear talks fail, it could trigger a decision to produce nuclear weapons.

Since 2019, Iran has gradually accelerated its nuclear programme. This was a response to the US pulling out of the nuclear deal and re-introducing sanctions in 2018. Iran has increased its capacity and degree of enrichment and built up large stockpiles of enriched uranium. Although it is unlikely that Iran is currently seeking to complete

a nuclear weapon, the country is able to enrich sufficient amounts of weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear warhead in a matter of months. It will, however, require more time to develop and produce the warhead itself and integrate it in a ballistic missile. Iran's missile programme is not covered by the nuclear deal, and the country has a range of missiles suitable for carrying nuclear warheads. These could reach the entire Middle East and large parts of Europe. In order to threaten the US mainland, Iran needs an intercontinental ballistic missile. The development of such a system requires several test launches, but much of the development can be completed under cover of Iran's space programme.



origin of the coronavirus while seeking recognition for their domestic handling of the pandemic. China goes to great lengths to prevent any criticism of its policies on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. State-affiliated actors have created tens of thousands of fake accounts on social media to spread propaganda.

No attempts were uncovered to influence the Norwegian parliamentary and Sámi parliamentary elections in 2021. However, it is common that actors with ties to Russia spread disinformation and selective news about Norway on social media and websites. The extent of the influence activity is limited and mainly directed at Norwegian defence and security policies, aiming to undermine public support of Norway's NATO membership and military cooperation with the United States.

In recent years, China has demonstrated a greater willingness to make use of informal and deniable import and export restrictions in order to protect its reputation and to discourage countries, companies and individuals from criticising China. Examples include the reactions against Australia after the country demanded an independent investigation of the origins of covid-19, the reactions against Canada following the arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, and against Lithuania after the country allowed Taiwan to open a representative office in Lithuania's capital Vilnius.

seek to normalise relations with the Assad regime in Syria, and after years of rivalry, there are signs of rapprochement between Turkey and Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Several contentious issues are nevertheless preventing a full normalisation of relations between the regional powers. A main issue is the negotiations on a nuclear deal with Iran, the outcome of which will have consequences for the security developments in most of the Middle East.

In Iraq, there is potential for widespread social unrest also in 2022 due to political paralysis. ISIL is a security threat, but does not threaten state stability. The economic and humanitarian crisis in Syria is worsening. Russia is working to normalise relations between Damascus and the countries in the region, and few people see any realistic alternative to Assad.

Political unrest and armed conflict in the Middle East and Africa give more freedom of action to international terrorist organisations. The fact that the US is scaling back gives Russia and China more freedom of action. In Afghanistan, the situation is dire, and a humanitarian crisis is imminent. ISIL Khorasan will seek to destabilise the country, and remains the main threat to the government and local population.

### Militias and militant Islamists in Libya and the Sahel

It is unlikely that Libya will succeed in building a functional state. Militias and criminal actors will continue to have considerable freedom of action, but militant Islamists have no position of importance in the country.

As long as Mali is without a legitimate government, national stabilisation processes will come to a halt and the security situation will continue to deteriorate →

### Nuclear deal is key to the developments in the Middle East

Countries that have previously relied on US security guarantees must take greater responsibility for their own security. In 2021, there were diplomatic talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Several Arab countries



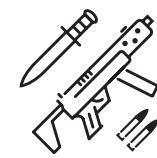
Taliban security police on patrol in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, 20 October 2021.



The outcome of Iran's nuclear deal will affect security developments in the Middle East



US withdrawal from certain regions gives Russia and China more freedom of action



Terrorist threats to Norway stem mainly from individuals without strong ties to international networks

as international terrorist groups continue to expand in the Sahel region.

between international terrorist organisations, local insurgent groups and political actors will become blurrier.

### Strong European terrorist networks

The terrorist threat to Norway, both from Islamist and right-wing extremism, mainly comes from individuals and loosely affiliated networks of sympathisers without strong ties to international terrorist organisations. Most of the activity in the European networks is related to radicalisation, funding and other types of support activities. Should incidents occur that are perceived to be offensive to Islam or Muslims, this could cause a surge in the number of attacks.

Right-wing extremist communities are becoming more transnational, sharing the same anti-liberal, anti-democratic ideas. Current affairs such as immigration and the climate crisis are exploited by far-right extremists to mobilise and recruit members. Overlaps between right-wing extremism and anti-state ideas persist, and right-wing extremists are joining anti-vaxxers and anti-state actors in conspiracy theories. □

The West's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the US's diminishing involvement in the Middle East and Africa plays into the hands of terrorist groups in these areas. Moreover, in some areas the distinction

” **Right-wing extremist communities are becoming more transnational, sharing the same anti-liberal, anti-democratic ideas.**



**\*\* ZERO-DAY VULNERABILITIES \*\***

Computer programs and updates sometimes contain errors that create vulnerabilities. A vulnerability that is discovered but not patched through a software update is called a zero-day vulnerability. These vulnerabilities constitute a race against time, both for those protecting Norwegian interests and those seeking to exploit security gaps to gain access to a system. The publication of a software update intended to patch the vulnerability in question raises awareness of the problem.

The incidents that targeted the Norwegian Parliament in 2021 were part of a global exploitation of zero-day vulnerabilities in Microsoft Exchange. Microsoft published software updates on 2 March, but large-scale exploitation of the vulnerabilities was observed even after this, both by state and criminal actors.

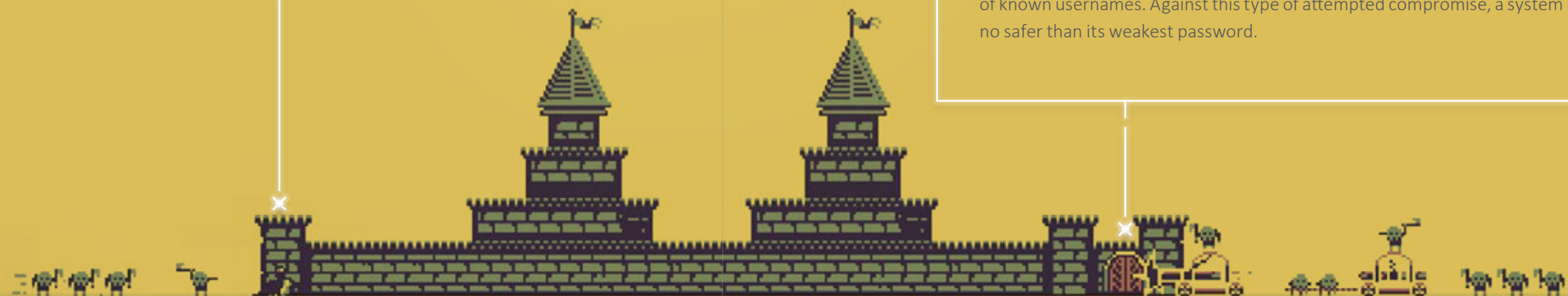
*NETWORK OPERATIONS*



**\*\* BRUTE-FORCE ATTACKS \*\***

Brute-forcing involves gaining access to a system by testing large numbers of passwords. Passwords can contain long combinations of numbers, letters and special symbols. Threat actors use automation tools to try vast numbers of passwords every second. The longer a password is, the longer a tool will take to guess it.

One type of brute-forcing involves trying the same password on a large number of known usernames. Against this type of attempted compromise, a system is no safer than its weakest password.





# RUSSIA'S OVERT USE OF FORCE

Russia's behaviour is characterised by the overt use of force in the service of the authorities' interests, both on the international arena and at home.

Over time, Russia has shown itself both willing and able to use the armed forces in order to achieve political objectives, even when it could trigger a conflict with the West. The conflict in Ukraine is an obvious example of this.



### EXTENSIVE ARMAMENT PROGRAMME

The Russian state armament programme continues the major modernisation which the Russian armed forces have undergone over the past decade.

○ FRANZ JOSEF LAND



### ADVANCED SYSTEMS

Many of Russia's most sophisticated weapons are ready for use.



### RUSSIA'S USE OF FORCE

At home, the Russian authorities ensure control through the overt use of force and suppression.

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RUSSIA'S OVERT USE OF FORCE

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The modernised Russian armed forces pose the main military threat to Norway's sovereignty, population, territory, key functions in society and infrastructure. The Russian armed forces are geared to operate across the entire conflict spectrum, from peace to crisis and war. Russia is seeking to lessen its dependency on the international system, and developing indigenous technology and reducing its reliance on imports are two of the measures introduced to achieve this. In terms of foreign and domestic policy, it involves not bending to criticism of the conditions for Russian oppositionists. In addition, Russia promotes its policies on the UN Security Council and maintains its principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

Moscow will continue to use covert means, such as information operations, to undermine Western cohesion and sow division within individual countries. The aim is to weaken states and actors Moscow considers to be adversaries, or to increase support to groups with positive views on Russia. At home, the Russian authorities ensure control through the overt use of force and suppression. In the run-up to the presidential election in spring 2024, fear of internal instability will guide the formulation of Russian policy. The authorities will use tough rhetoric to respond to alleged Western influence attempts and to portray the West as an enemy to the Russian people.

### The authorities take steps to secure their position

Efforts to control the opposition and civil society continue. Prior to the State Duma elections in 2021, there were crackdowns on freedom of speech, freedom of association and the use of the internet.

Further measures are expected in the run-up to the presidential election. Moscow's ambition is to prevent a new opposition from establishing itself. Aleksey Navalny remains in prison, and other leading opposition politicians will find it difficult to convey their messages from exile. Several independent media outlets have been branded 'foreign agents', which makes it difficult for them to continue operating.

The 2021 State Duma elections, which were manipulated, nevertheless cemented the authorities' position. However, elections are losing their power as a means to ensure the Russian authorities' legitimacy, and the latter will have to take other steps to preserve a modicum of support in the population.

Some reshuffles are expected before the run-up to the presidential election begins in earnest. The aim is to give the impression of renewal, yet the ruling elite does not consider it beneficial to introduce reforms. Similarly, Russia cannot expect significant economic growth in the years ahead. Fewer resources to distribute among both the elite and the population at large suggest greater instability in the longer term.

Whether President Putin will run for re-election in 2024, or give his place to a potential successor, is unlikely to be settled in 2022. By keeping all options open, Putin ensures that the elite does not position itself prematurely for a change of power.

### Continued pressure on Ukraine

Moscow's ability to use non-military means to influence the formulation of policy in Ukraine and the Ukrainian public opinion has diminished since 2014. The Russian authorities will seek to reverse this trend. Moscow does not consider a solution to the conflict



Russian riot police during a protest in support of the opposition politician Aleksey Navalny in Moscow, 21 April 2021.



Russian troops carried out large-scale landing exercises on the Crimean Peninsula in April 2021.



Russia's goal is to become less dependent on the international system



Internal control is maintained by overt use of force



Long-range missiles are intended to pose a direct threat to Norway and NATO

in eastern Ukraine beneficial unless it serves Russia's aim of keeping Ukraine out of NATO, the EU and the West. Additionally, Russia seeks to bolster its presence on Crimea, receive international recognition of the annexation and secure sanctions relief.

In spring 2021, Russian forces conducted large-scale troop movements to western Russia and the Crimean Peninsula. There was a high level of Russian military activity on the Crimean Peninsula during that same period, and Russian divisions and heavy materiel have remained in the area since. The situation has intensified further since autumn 2021, and Russia has gathered large troop numbers near the Ukrainian border. With its expanded military presence, Russia has increased its military freedom of action considerably. The situation has escalated further throughout the winter. In 2022, there is a real risk of Russia once again invading Ukraine.

### Stronger influence in Belarus

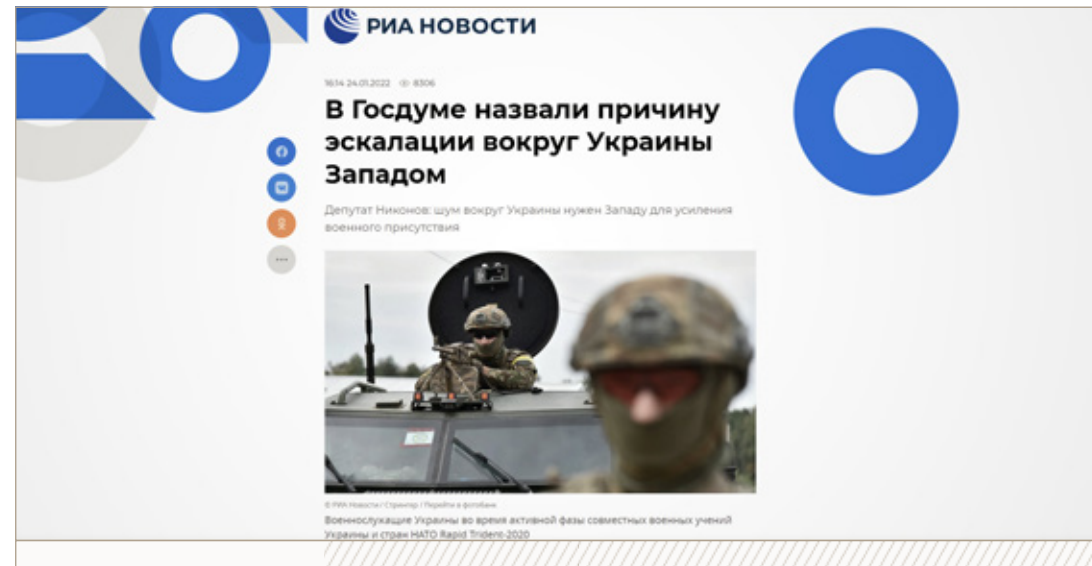
To Moscow, retaining control of developments in Belarus remains a foreign policy priority. The protest movement against President Lukashenko has lost

momentum, yet the Russian authorities are concerned that the country could pivot towards the West in the longer term. Russia will continue to oppose any democratic development in Belarus.

In autumn 2021, Moscow and Minsk reached an extensive agreement on closer economic integration. The agreement will tether the Belarusian economy even more closely to the Russian economy, and increase Moscow's ability to control developments in its neighbouring country. Belarus relies on economic support from Russia, and will attempt to put off the parts of the agreement that undermine its independence.

### Russian balancing act in the Arctic

2022 will be an extremely important year for Russia in the Arctic, mainly because the country is chairing the Arctic Council until 2023. The Russian authorities have put the region high on their agenda, and will use the chairmanship to promote Russia as the key player in the Arctic. From a Russian perspective, increased Western military activity exacerbates tensions in the High North. This is one of the reasons →



Sidebar #03  
» Background

Image: Screenshot from Russia's state news agency Ria Novosti. Russian state media claim the West is escalating the situation in Ukraine as a pretext for strengthening NATO's presence in the country.

### ■ Cyberspace as a security policy arena

In 2021, Putin signed a new national security strategy. In this document, the Kremlin emphasises the growing significance of cyberspace and the information sphere as a security policy arena, and talks about 'information confrontation', a uniquely Russian term which includes network and influence operations. This concept is based on the idea that Russia and the West are locked in a constant information struggle. According to the Russian narrative, the West seeks to destabilise Russia, and the country is therefore under attack in the information sphere.

In recent years, the Russian intelligence and security services have undergone a major re-organisation in order to improve the coordination and execution of information confrontation. The other parts of the Russian government apparatus also play an important role. Going forward, the Kremlin will be taking additional steps vis-à-vis its own population, both to secure Russian IT infrastructure and to control the domestic flow of information.

for Russia's scepticism towards other states' intentions in the Arctic. This mistrust is evident in the new Russian security strategy, in which Russia claims that other states are using climate concerns as a pretext for preventing Russian activity in the region.

The security policy climate is also affecting Russia's relationship with Norway. On several occasions, Russia has publicly accused Norway of facilitating increased 'militarisation' of the Arctic. Russian officials have also criticised Norway's Svalbard policy for being part of the 'militarisation of the north'.

Despite Russian mistrust, the country's behaviour thus far shows that a stable Arctic is in its interest. The Northern Fleet has not behaved confrontationally towards allies in the High North for the past year and a half. Russia is expected to use its chairmanship of the Arctic Council to present itself as a responsible actor in the region and to seek pragmatic cooperation with other Arctic states as far as possible. Russia looks to maintain a good overview of Norwegian and allied military activity in the High North. To Moscow, maintaining situational awareness and freedom of action is crucial in order to warn of and respond to Western activity near Russia's strategic resources in the High North.

### The Russian armed forces begin using new Arctic support hubs

Russia continues to expand its military bases and support hubs along its entire Arctic coastline, with the centre of gravity on the Kola Peninsula and around the Barents Sea. The support hubs will be important to Russian assertion of sovereignty, military capability, and search and rescue readiness along the Northeast Passage. Russia is fielding modern weapons systems

that are capable of supporting a range of operations involving land, sea and air forces. Meanwhile, the country is also expanding its early-warning chain with new radars. The new military base at Nagurskoye on Franz Josef Land is the most recent example of this activity. The airbase can accommodate combat aircraft, long-range bombers and maritime surveillance aircraft.

” **Russia is fielding modern weapons systems that are capable of supporting a range of operations involving land, sea and air forces**

In March 2021, Russia staged a military exercise on Franz Josef Land; Moscow has indicated that this will become an annual occurrence. Its purpose was to cement Russian presence, control and military capability in the Arctic. Three of the Northern Fleet's submarines performed a complicated under-ice operation in order to demonstrate that their missiles can be launched from the ice cap. Russian fighters also trained forward-deployed air defence in the area.

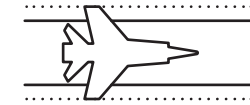
### Deterrence in the Baltic Sea region

The dynamic in the Baltic Sea features more confrontation. Here, Russia has maintained a high level of activity for the past year, and demonstrated its will to take confrontational action against allied exercise activity, primarily for deterrence purposes. This carries a heightened risk of unintended incidents and escalation. At the same time, Moscow has for the past year raised the need for agreements that enable

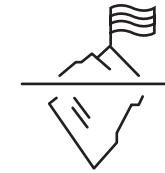
” The modernised Russian armed forces pose the main military threat to Norway’s sovereignty, population, territory, key functions in society and infrastructure.

*Image: The new and the old are combined in TU-160 Blackjack strategic bombers. The aircraft have been modernised and upgraded, for instance with new missiles. Russia recently resumed production of the aircraft type after 30 years.*

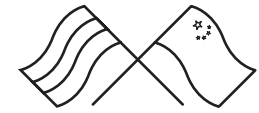




The construction of military bases along the Arctic coastline continues



Russia wants to be perceived as a responsible actor in the Arctic



Russia's cooperation with China is intended to counterbalance the US-led world order

military communication to manage risks and incidents; similar efforts are expected in 2022.

” Although diplomacy will remain Russia's primary instrument vis-à-vis the Nordic authorities, the need for more pronounced military posturing may increase.

In Russia's view, overall developments in the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea are increasingly marked by ongoing military activity by the United States and NATO. Moscow looks with concern at how, in its view, the United States' bilateral cooperation with the Nordic countries is rapidly expanding US military freedom of action in the Baltic Sea. In this regional outlook, Norway is considered a facilitator of allied and US force projection capability in the Baltic Sea region as well as in the Arctic. Similarly, the Nordic defence partnership is accused of supporting NATO and acting as a backdoor to the alliance for Sweden and Finland. Although diplomacy will remain Russia's primary instrument vis-à-vis the Nordic authorities, the need for more pronounced military posturing

may increase. As long as Moscow remains under the impression that the region is increasingly becoming an integrated area for Western force projection against Russia's core areas to the west, Russian deterrence is likely to continue to dominate in 2022. Primarily, deterrent efforts will take the form of political statements and military activity.

**Cooperation with China as a counterweight to the US**

In recent years, as part of its effort to challenge the US-led world order, Russia has formed closer ties to China. This has progressed over time, but has become more important since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent sanctions against Russia. Moscow views Beijing as a partner that shares its principles of non-interference and 'internal stability', and one that will not openly criticise Russian domestic policy. The cooperation also provides Russia with an ally against a perceived Western hegemony in international affairs. The relationship will continue to evolve as long as Russia's relationship with the United States and the West remains strained.



In October 2021, the Russian multirole submarine *Severodvinsk* tested the hypersonic *Tsirkon* missile for the first time in the White Sea.

Both Russia and China describe their bilateral relationship as a strategic partnership. The two countries cooperate diplomatically, militarily and economically. In 2022, we expect coordinated action on the UN Security Council and in other multilateral forums, joint military exercises, technology partnerships and a continuation of economic cooperation. Russia will also emphasise its good relationship with China in public. In parallel, however, the Russian authorities will have concerns about China's long-term ambitions, particularly in the Arctic and Central Asia, which Russia considers part of its sphere of interest.

### Military developments

Russia's military strategy involves targeting an opponent's morale as well as its military capability. Therefore, Russia has a wide range of means at its disposal which could also be used against civilian targets, such as the political leadership, critical infrastructure and targets of high economic value. Several of these targets are located in southern Norway. They can also be influenced or attacked by a range of means even before an open military conflict becomes a fact, including through political influencing, information warfare, network attacks, sabotage, infiltration, cuts in energy supplies and border violations.

The Russian state armament programme continues the major modernisation which the Russian armed forces have undergone over the past decade. In the period to 2030, Russia will seek to prioritise the development of new types of weapons systems, such as hypersonic missiles, anti-satellite weapons and unmanned systems (UAVs). In addition, there is an emphasis on long-range precision-guided weapons, new naval vessels and combat aircraft, space

assets and modernisation of the strategic deterrence forces. Russia is looking to secure its strategic and regional deterrent with both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons. Russia's improved ability to target vital NATO targets on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in a potential conflict is central to this.

” **Russia's military strategy involves targeting an opponent's morale as well as its military capability.**

The military power of NATO and Russia meet in the High North, and in Moscow's view, Western military activity in the region poses a threat to Russian interests. However, although tensions between Russia and NATO countries have remained high over the past year, particularly in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea regions, Russian military activity and response to allied activity near Norwegian borders has been restrained and moderate.

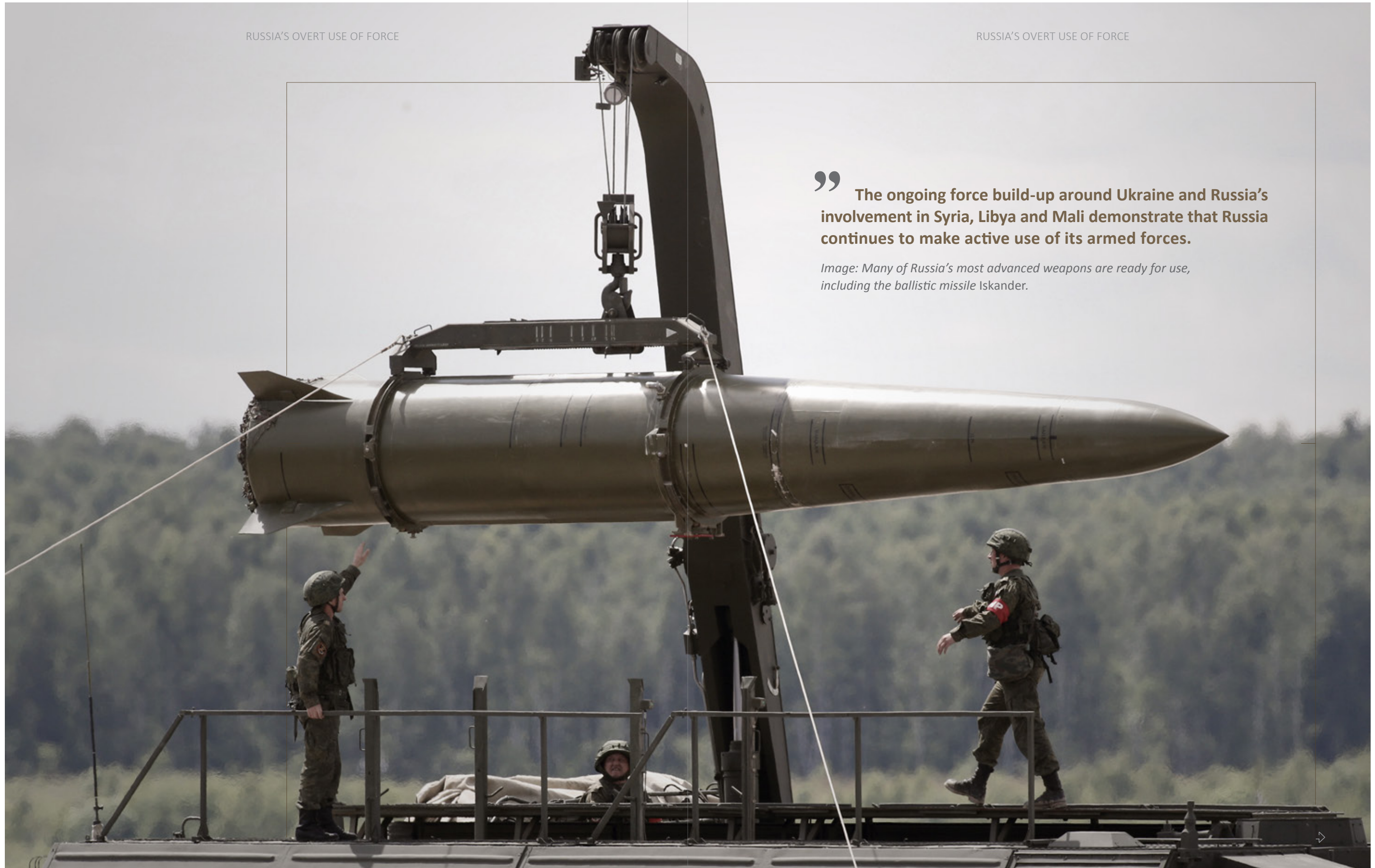
### Military developments I

#### Exercise Zapad demonstrated improved military capability

In September 2021, Russia staged the joint strategic exercise Zapad (West) together with Belarusian forces. Zapad's main activities took place in three exercise areas in western Russia and Belarus. The front line stretched from the Arctic to the Black Sea. There was slightly less activity in the High North this time than during the last iteration of the exercise, in 2017. The purpose was to train repelling a strategic assault from the west, but the exercise also acts as strategic

” The ongoing force build-up around Ukraine and Russia’s involvement in Syria, Libya and Mali demonstrate that Russia continues to make active use of its armed forces.

*Image: Many of Russia’s most advanced weapons are ready for use, including the ballistic missile Iskander.*





Sidebar #04  
» Background

Image: During the NATO exercise Trident Juncture in 2018, Russia responded with several confrontational measures. The image is from the exercise and shows British and French naval infantry landing at Byneset near Trondheim.

## ■ Russian responses to the NATO exercise Cold Response

In spring 2022, Norway will once again host the NATO exercise Cold Response. The main aim of the exercise is to drill NATO forces in combat in Arctic conditions and to test the reinforcement and defence plans for an imagined conflict in the High North. Russia has previously signalled its discontent with NATO forces exercising in larger numbers and closer to Russian borders than before. Therefore, the Russian side will seek to portray Cold Response as an illustration of NATO's 'aggressive intentions' towards Russia.

Russia is also expected to respond militarily to the exercise. Such a response could be anything from surveillance to large-scale shows of force for strategic deterrence purposes. Measures that could disrupt or complicate the exercise for NATO are to be expected. During the NATO exercise Trident Juncture in 2018, Russia responded with several confrontational measures. One example was extensive jamming of GPS signals in northern Norway, which caused serious disruptions for civilian aviation as well.

deterrence of NATO and Russia's neighbouring countries. It should also be viewed as an extension of the show of force near the Ukrainian border and on the Crimean Peninsula that we saw in April. The exercise illustrated how the modernisation of the Russian armed forces for the past decade has yielded significantly higher military capability. This is evident through the introduction of several advanced weapons systems, improved command and control of the Russian forces and an improved ability to move larger military units across great distances at speed; all of this shortens military warning times.

### Military developments II

#### New sophisticated weapons systems

The most important military capability development within the Russian armed forces in recent years has been their increased ability to precisely hit targets across great distances. Russia's long-range missiles in particular are intended to pose a direct threat to Norway and NATO. Russia is currently developing several new weapons systems intended to circumvent NATO defence systems.

The Northern Fleet has carried out several tests of the hypersonic missile *Tsirkon* over the past year, most recently from a Severodvinsk-class multirole submarine in October 2021. The hypersonic missile *Kinzhal* was also tested several times in the High

North in 2021; this missile is launched from fighter jets. Both systems can be used against ships as well as land-based targets. Hypersonic missiles fly at over five times the speed of sound and are extremely difficult to defend against.

In November 2021, Russia tested an anti-satellite system and downed its first satellite since 1976. It was also the first time Moscow admitted that this weapons system exists. The test was met with strong criticism from other countries, both for breaking with established norms for responsible behaviour in space and for creating a hazard, in the form of space debris, for astronauts and other satellites.

*Burevestnik*, a nuclear-powered cruise missile and one of Russia's most sophisticated new weapons systems, is being tested in the High North, and the autonomous nuclear-powered underwater drone *Poseidon* will soon undergo testing in the region. Both systems are being developed to have global range. □

” **The most important military capability development within the Russian armed forces in recent years has been their increased ability to precisely hit targets across great distances.**



# XI JINPING'S CHINA

The power in China lies in the hands of Xi Jinping and the Communist Party of China (CPC), and all the instruments of state power are at Xi's disposal.

In order to establish a more centrally governed and party-loyal system, the entire state apparatus has been the object of extensive changes. The authorities are using high technological monitoring and control systems to clamp down on anyone aiming to challenge the CPC's authority.

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### INTELLIGENT DEFENCE

Chinese actors are at the forefront of developing emerging and disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and autonomous systems.



### CONCENTRATION OF POWER

The Communist Party of China is able to mobilise a broad spectrum of actors as political instruments, including business actors.



### INCREASED PRESSURE ON TAIWAN

Increased military activity near Taiwan indicates an intent to gradually expand China's control.



Beijing wants to achieve ‘the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’. This involves incorporating Hong Kong and Taiwan into the Chinese state and expanding Chinese territorial control in the South China Sea. Domestically, the Communist Party of China (CPC) wants to bolster national security; this includes a higher level of prosperity and technology development as well as ideological campaigns and propaganda. National security is broadly defined; political security is the moving force of the concept, supported by military, territorial, polar, cultural, economic, technological and resource security.

It is a stated aim for China to become technologically independent of the West and dominant in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum technology. The authorities also emphasise the value of data as a production factor in the digital economy. Several decades of economic growth and military modernisation have boosted China’s confidence. Within the CPC, the common belief is that the global balance of power is shifting in China’s favour, and that the US’s dominant position has become weakened. The CPC leadership believes that China has a superior political and economic system and that the country is ready to assume international leadership. The country seeks greater influence in multilateral organisations and in formulating norms and rules in areas such as human rights, maritime law, technological standards, financial infrastructure and internet control.

At the same time, Beijing finds that other countries are sceptical to increased Chinese influence. The political elite consider themselves to be under siege by actors who want to contain China and undermine the position of the CPC. When faced with criticism, China appears confrontational and reluctant to compromise, especially on matters concerning the country’s reputation or what the authorities define as

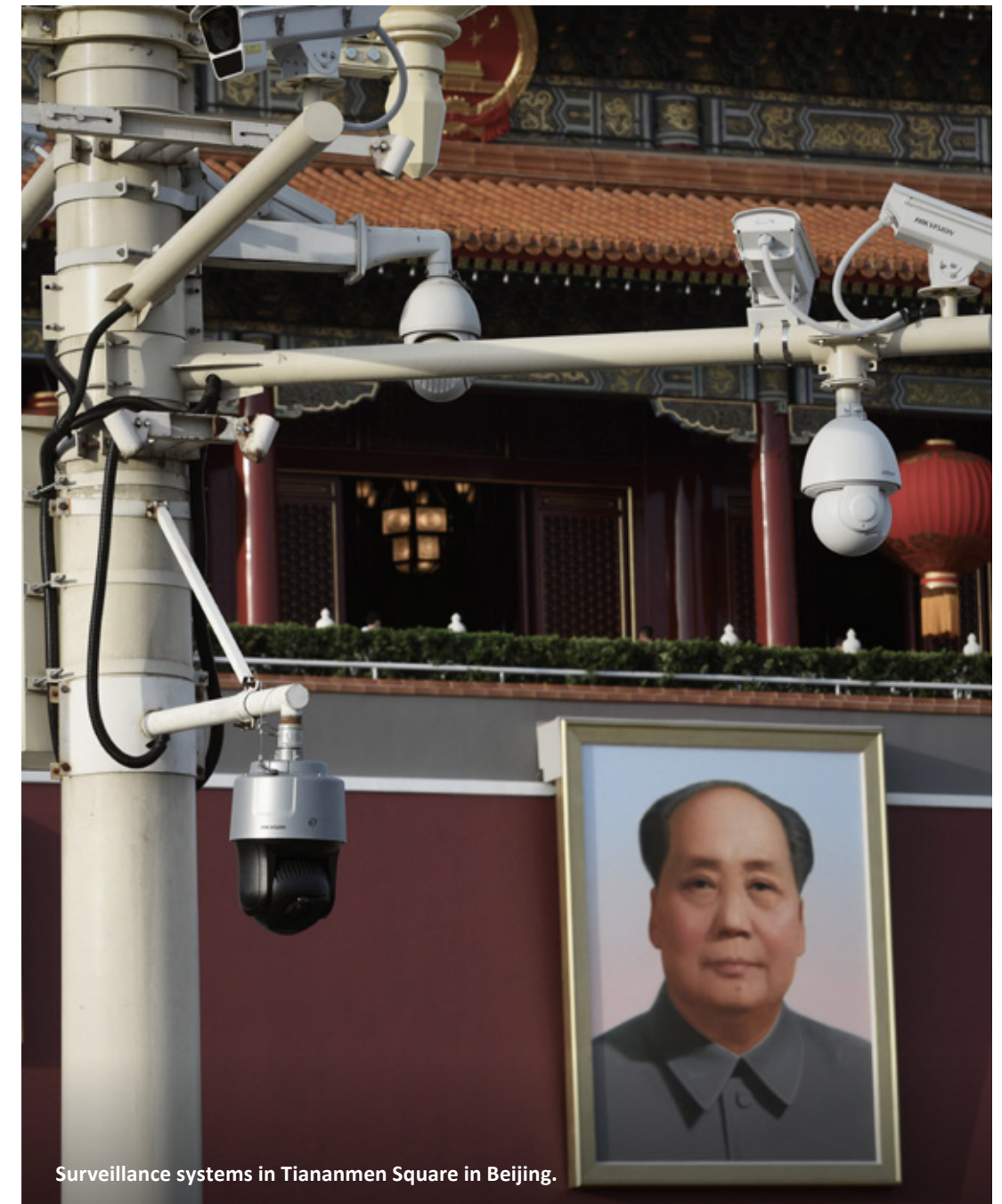
core interests. This approach has led to a higher level of conflict when interacting with other states, but Beijing is willing to weather these conflicts. The combination of confidence and the feeling of being opposed has given rise to a more offensive foreign policy and conflictual relationship with the US and the West.

### All instruments of state power

Xi took advantage of the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in the summer of 2021 to emphasise that the CPC will play a greater role in all parts of society. The CPC is able to mobilise a broad spectrum of actors as political instruments, including business actors. The CPC’s control of the state apparatus and the business sector, in combination with the absence of any legal restrictions, enables it to effectively mobilise actors outside traditional diplomacy to work towards foreign policy objectives. Both organisations and companies are ordered to let the foreign policy objectives of the CPC guide their activity abroad.

” **Both organisations and companies are ordered to let the foreign policy objectives of the CPC guide their activity abroad.**

Furthermore, a series of security laws ensure that all social actors can be ordered to aid China’s intelligence efforts, including espionage targeting both industry and refugees. Chinese companies, academic institutions and other actors can be used more easily by Chinese security services for intelligence activities →



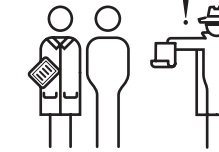
Surveillance systems in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.



Jack Ma, former head of the Alibaba Group, photographed in the Great Hall of the People on 18 December 2018. In recent years, the CPC has tightened its grip on tech companies.



Dependency on Chinese goods and services is exploited politically



Under current legislation, everyone can be ordered to aid China's intelligence efforts



Other countries' scepticism is interpreted as attacks on China and the Communist Party.

abroad. The acts' extraterritorial jurisdiction increases the pressure on Chinese citizens abroad. China's ambition of strengthening its influence in multilateral forums will lead to increased intelligence and influence activity against international organisations and foreign states.

Private actors will still be important for China's ambitions for growth, but they will have to operate within the scope specified by the CPC to a larger extent than before. The line between the private and public sectors has become blurred; nine out of ten of China's 500 largest companies have party committees, which are involved in decisions on important investments, choice of direction and employments. Several branches of foreign companies also have party committees. In addition, the CPC is using the United Front Work Department, who are responsible for Chinese influence activity, to increase its influence in the private sector. The goal is for private companies to identify with the CPC to a larger degree and not to act contrary to political guidelines.

Party building and widespread party-state ownership make it easier for the CPC to use the companies to promote its own strategic agenda, such as securing investments in politically prioritised sectors and countries. In addition, it becomes more difficult to

establish power bases with strong financial resources outside of the CPC's control. Recently, the CPC has tightened its grip on tech companies in particular. Furthermore, the civil-military fusion strategy contributes to blurring the lines between civilian and military enterprises. Civilian actors in the business sector and academia are incentivised to develop technology for military use.

### Trade position as foreign policy means of coercion

The size of the Chinese export economy and the country's growing market increases the significance of the use of economic measures for influence purposes. Xi Jinping seeks to shield China from external economic pressure while at the same time improving the country's ability to exert pressure on others. China employs deniable and informal restrictions on imports and exports in order to influence other countries' China policies. Accusations of low production quality are often used to limit market access; another trade policy measure is to exert pressure on individual companies that act contrary to the will of Beijing. In 2021, several

” In order to establish a more centrally governed and party-loyal system, the entire state apparatus has been the object of extensive changes.

*Image: Gala show marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China in Beijing, 28 June 2021.*



A Chinese WZ-7 unmanned reconnaissance drone is unveiled during the Zhuhai Air Show in September 2021.



Civil-military fusion ensures military application of civilian research and development



China has developed robust defence capabilities inside the First Island Chain



Increased military activity near Taiwan is a signal that China gradually seeks to expand control

Western fashion brands and retailers were affected by a consumer and company boycott because they are members of the *Better Cotton Initiative*. The Better Cotton Initiative has refrained from certifying cotton from Xinjiang because there is a chance that forced labour has been used there.

Furthermore, the fact that some countries rely on Chinese goods and services is exploited politically. In June 2021, it is highly likely that Beijing threatened Ukraine to withdraw its support to a UN statement about Xinjiang by using access to vaccines as coercion tactics. China has also stopped goods train traffic to Lithuania and made it difficult for companies to import components from China for production in Lithuania. This was done in part as punishment for the fact that the country allowed Taiwan to open a representative office in Lithuania.

The impact of China's use of economic measures varies. Beijing has secured increased influence in developing countries with strong economic ties to China, whereas with wealthy Western countries, customised measures are employed to demonstrate that there is a cost to having China-critical policies. A significant number of companies that have been exposed to Chinese pressure end up apologising in one way or another in order to accommodate Beijing.

### Military developments

In January 2021, China revised its defence law. The new act transfers the authority to mobilise the armed forces from the State Council to the party-controlled Central Military Commission. This supports the CPC's role in formulating defence policy; the law also authorises that threats to China's 'development interests' provide valid reason for military mobilisation. This mainly means economic interests, such as Chinese investments and strategically important supply chains linked to the Silk Road Initiative.

#### Military developments I

### The modernisation and growth phase continues

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is still in a phase of modernisation and growth. The main goal is to bolster joint operational capabilities and the ability to take advantage of modern technology in military operations. All services of the armed forces are introducing high-tech equipment while simultaneously making changes to personnel structure, doctrine and tactical training. China has developed robust defence



Sidebar #05  
» Background

Image: Taiwanese F-16 and Chinese H-6 bombers during an intercept in Taiwan's air defence identification zone. The image was released by the Taiwan Ministry of National Defence in February 2020.

### ■ Increased pressure on Taiwan

During 2021, the Chinese air force has dramatically increased its number of sorties within an area defined as Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ). The complexity of the activity is increasing and has included coordinated sorties with over 50 aircraft. This is not a violation of international law, but it challenges the status quo. At the same time, China's navy has increased its activity in the waters around Taiwan.

These actions indicate an intent to gradually expand China's control. The country also sends a signal to the international community of China's will and ability to claim territorial and maritime sovereignty in the area. China will continue to respond to US presence in the region and other matters that can be perceived as promoting Taiwan's sovereignty with verbal attacks and increased military activity.

capabilities inside the first island chain, which covers the East and South China Seas. The PLA's capabilities for global power projection are still limited, but they increase as modern aircraft and vessels are built and delivered. A third amphibious landing helicopter dock is being tested, and a third aircraft carrier is expected to be launched in 2022. China's lack of combat experience remains a limiting factor for further developments and is attempted remedied by military collaboration with other countries. Thus far, the bilateral relationship with Russia encompasses military collaboration; since 2014, joint exercises between the two countries have increased. The collaboration is mainly of symbolic value and is meant to demonstrate that there is content to the strategic partnership.

#### Military developments II

### Nuclear forces are modernised

China maintains its nuclear no first use policy. However, the phasing in of new nuclear weapons could be a sign that the Chinese military doctrine is changing. In a crisis, the lack of transparency on nuclear weapons and the mix of conventional and nuclear capabilities would cause difficulties with distinguishing between the weapon types and heighten the risk of misunderstandings.

The development programme for ballistic missiles is extremely extensive. The strategic forces make up a moderate yet robust force with around 100 land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and six strategic submarines. Some of China's medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles are equipped with nuclear warheads. Regional deterrence of US forces, India and Russia is the purpose of the systems. China has developed a new long-range precision-guided weapon, which could potentially be used against

military targets. The system comprises both conventional and nuclear variants; this raises the possibility of China scrapping its no first use policy. The Chinese authorities have rejected this, but this new capability will create more uncertainty. The development of several types of hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) continues. The speed HGVs can reach is very high, and this is a challenge for current missile defences. The systems are meant to support China's deterrent capability, but are also intended for regional warfare. HGVs can be fitted with either conventional or nuclear warheads. In 2019, China exhibited what is likely to be the world's first operational regional HGV.

#### Military developments III

### The transition to an 'intelligent defence'

Chinese actors, both in civilian and military sectors, are at the forefront of developing so-called emerging and disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and autonomous systems. China assumes that in the longer term, technology will become an intrinsic part of all aspects of warfare and military operations. Beijing expects that the transition from a mechanised and network-based defence to an 'intelligent defence' will give rise to new ways of waging war.

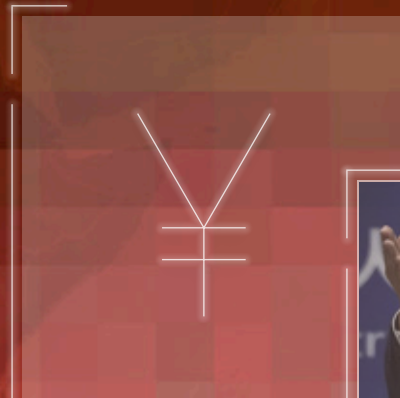
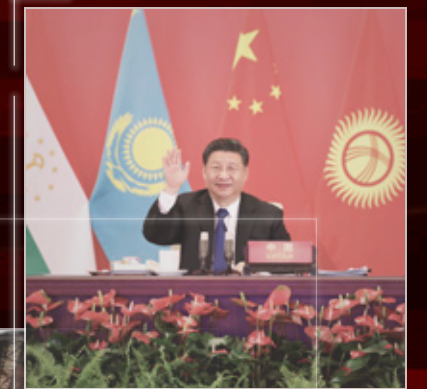
The introduction of intelligent weapons systems is still at an early stage. The full use of new high technology in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) requires close integration with the civilian sector and hinges on China's ability to implement the civil-military fusion strategy. The strategy is supposed to contribute to an extensive modernisation of the PLA. The ambition is to make use of civilian research and technology in the military sector while at the same time giving the civilian sector access to resources and expertise from the defence industry. □



# CHINA'S 'GREATER DIPLOMACY'

One of the concepts of China's foreign policy doctrine is 'greater diplomacy'. In practice, this is a doctrine for the use of all instruments of state power. In official statements, it is said that diplomacy is an expression of the state's will, and that its success hinges on the ability to coordinate the use of various measures; this entails making use of the whole gamut of actors from across the CPC and state apparatus. Xi has encouraged central and local authorities, the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the People's Liberation Army and the people of China as a whole to contribute to Chinese foreign policy and let the efforts be coordinated by the CPC.

Xi Jinping has issued ten core principles for Chinese diplomacy. The foremost principle is to uphold the authority of the Communist Party of China. In addition, China is to develop a distinctive Chinese style of diplomacy and advance a 'major-country diplomacy' with Chinese characteristics. This will underpin the other core principles, such as reforming the global governance system and upholding national sovereignty with China's core interests as a 'red line'.



30%





# INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

In 2022, the terrorist threat to Europe and Norway will mainly come from individuals and loose networks of sympathisers without strong ties to international terrorist organisations. This is the case with both Islamist extremism and right-wing extremism.



### SHARED CONCEPTIONS

The coronavirus pandemic continues to create connections across radical and extremist communities.



### STRONG NETWORKS

The European networks of militant Islamists are more robust today than they were before the establishment of ISIL.



### MORE FREEDOM OF ACTION

Al-Qaeda and ISIL have considerable freedom of action in Afghanistan, the Sahel, Somalia and central Africa.

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Norwegian Intelligence Service  
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

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The European networks of militant Islamists are more robust today than they were before the establishment of ISIL. These networks comprise a higher number of individuals, with more experience and closer contact across borders. Most of the activity in these networks is related to radicalisation of individuals or groups, funding of networks and other types of support activities. Incidents perceived to be offensive to Islam or Muslims could cause a rapid increase in the attack activity. ISIL and al-Qaeda will continue to encourage their supporters in Europe to carry out attacks, but Norway is not among the most prominent targets in the West.

The West's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the US's diminishing involvement in the Middle East and Africa plays into the hands of terrorist groups in these areas. Moreover, in some areas the distinction between international terrorist organisations, local rebel groups and political actors will become blurrier, which makes efforts to detect and prevent terrorist attacks more demanding.

### The local shift

ISIL continues to build the organisation in its heartland in Syria and Iraq. Over time, both al-Qaeda and ISIL have shifted their strategy, and attacks in the West are no longer considered as suitable as they were before. Instead, the organisations are focusing on building capabilities and staging attacks on local authorities and military targets in the areas where they have affiliates. The attack on the Ghwayran prison in Syria at the end of January is an indication of the capability ISIL has built in recent years. Because of the reduced Western military presence in Muslim countries, militant Islamist groups are less preoccupied with the

West. The number of local Western targets is also in decline. On the other hand, Russia and China are getting more involved internationally, and they are becoming a more prominent enemy of militant Islamists. Nevertheless, ISIL and al-Qaeda will still attack Western targets when the opportunity arises.

” Over time, both al-Qaeda and ISIL have shifted their strategy, and attacks in the West are no longer considered as suitable as they were before.

Jihadist groups will seek to mimic al-Qaeda's collaboration-oriented strategy, which has proven to be successful with the Taliban in Afghanistan. This will blur the distinctions between international terrorist organisations, local rebel groups and political actors, and make it harder for the international community to agree on who poses a threat and how they should be defeated.

### Increased capability of jihadists in Afghanistan and Africa

After the Taliban's takeover, both al-Qaeda and ISIL have become strengthened in Afghanistan, as they gain access to personnel released from captivity, weapons, training facilities and networks. ISIL Khorasan Province (ISKP), ISIL's Afghanistan affiliate, has increased its attack frequency in the country after the takeover. ISKP is a considerable threat to the Taliban and to civilian targets in Afghanistan, including Western ones. Over time, the capability increase of militant Islamist groups in Afghanistan could increase →



Sidebar #06  
» Background

Image: A Taliban fighter stands guard during an operation against an ISIL hideout in Kandahar, Afghanistan, 15 November 2021.

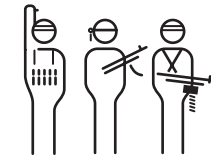
### ■ Terrorist groups in Afghanistan

Several terrorist groups, with both global and regional ambitions, have been present in Afghanistan since the 1990s. Among the groups with global connections are the affiliates of al-Qaeda and ISIL. Over the last 20 years, al-Qaeda has kept a low profile in Afghanistan, under protection of the Taliban. The group does not want to undermine the Taliban by planning any attacks against the West that can be traced back to Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the capability increase in Afghanistan could eventually benefit the entire al-Qaeda network and increase the threat from the group.

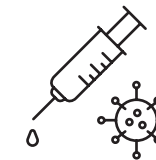
ISIL established its Afghan affiliate ISKP in 2015, and since then, the group has been in open conflict with the Taliban. ISKP lost its territorial enclaves in eastern Afghanistan in 2018, though covert cells have managed to carry out many attacks in the country. The Taliban are trying to stem ISKP, but the group will maintain a high level of activity in 2022 and remain the principal threat to the Taliban, the local population and the international community in the country.



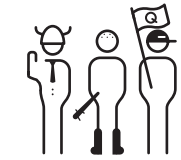
In October 2021, the British MP Sir David Amess was fatally stabbed. British police have categorised the attack as a terrorist attack motivated by Islamist extremism.



The capability increase among militant Islamist groups in Afghanistan could enhance threats to the West



Some right-wing extremists bond with anti-state actors over conspiracy theories



Several right-wing extremist communities have become more transnational in recent years

the threat to the West. Even today, ISKP can use supporters in Europe to stage smaller attacks, but they are unable to carry out large-scale and complex attacks in Western countries. Whether ISKP manages to develop this capability will largely depend on the extent to which the Taliban succeeds in defeating this ISIL affiliate.

It is unlikely that ISIL or al-Qaeda will facilitate any extensive recruitment of Western foreign fighters to Afghanistan in 2022. Outside Afghanistan as well, foreign fighters will primarily have a regional affiliation. The threat from Western foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq will be limited in 2022.

Sahel, al-Qaeda will be the key player. ISIL in Mali has been weakened by counter-terrorism operations. In Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ISIL's military progress from 2020 has ground to a halt, partly due to a military intervention in Mozambique by several countries in the region. However, ISIL has succeeded in building transnational networks capable of carrying out attacks in several countries in East and Central Africa. These networks constitute a growing threat to regional stability.

### Right-wing extremism is a persistent threat in the West

” **Al-Qaeda and ISIL will still have considerable freedom of action in the Sahel, Somalia and central parts of Africa.**

Al-Qaeda and ISIL will still have considerable freedom of action in the Sahel, Somalia and central parts of Africa. These areas are characterised by poor government control and marginalisation of communities, which gives favourable conditions for recruitment and operational freedom to these movements. In the

Since 2019, the number of right-wing extremist terrorist attacks in the West has declined. This is partly due to the absence of incidents that have previously motivated right-wing extremists, such as waves of refugees to Europe and large-scale right-wing extremist attacks that inspire copycats. Nevertheless, right-wing extremist communities in Europe are still large and elusive.

In recent years, many right-wing extremist movements have become more transnational and strengthened through international networking. This is partly



Sidebar #07  
» Background

Image: German police making arrests in December 2021 after plans to assassinate a German politician were uncovered.

## ■ Accelerationism

Accelerationism is a doctrine advocating the use of terrorism to provoke a spiral of violence and a subsequent collapse of society. Followers of the doctrine subscribe to a widespread right-wing conspiracy theory about an ongoing 'white genocide', which is a result of low birth rates among whites and immigration from non-white nations to the West.

Accelerationism calls for immediate action while there is still a white majority, and the aim is to destabilise society in order to start what they perceive as an inevitable race war. This makes the strategy a more potent terrorist threat than other right-wing extremist ideas. In addition, accelerationism reaches beyond the nation state and inspires and unites people across borders.

due to a shift among many right-wing extremists towards ideas that unite across borders. These communities bond over their sharing of anti-liberal and anti-democratic ideas.

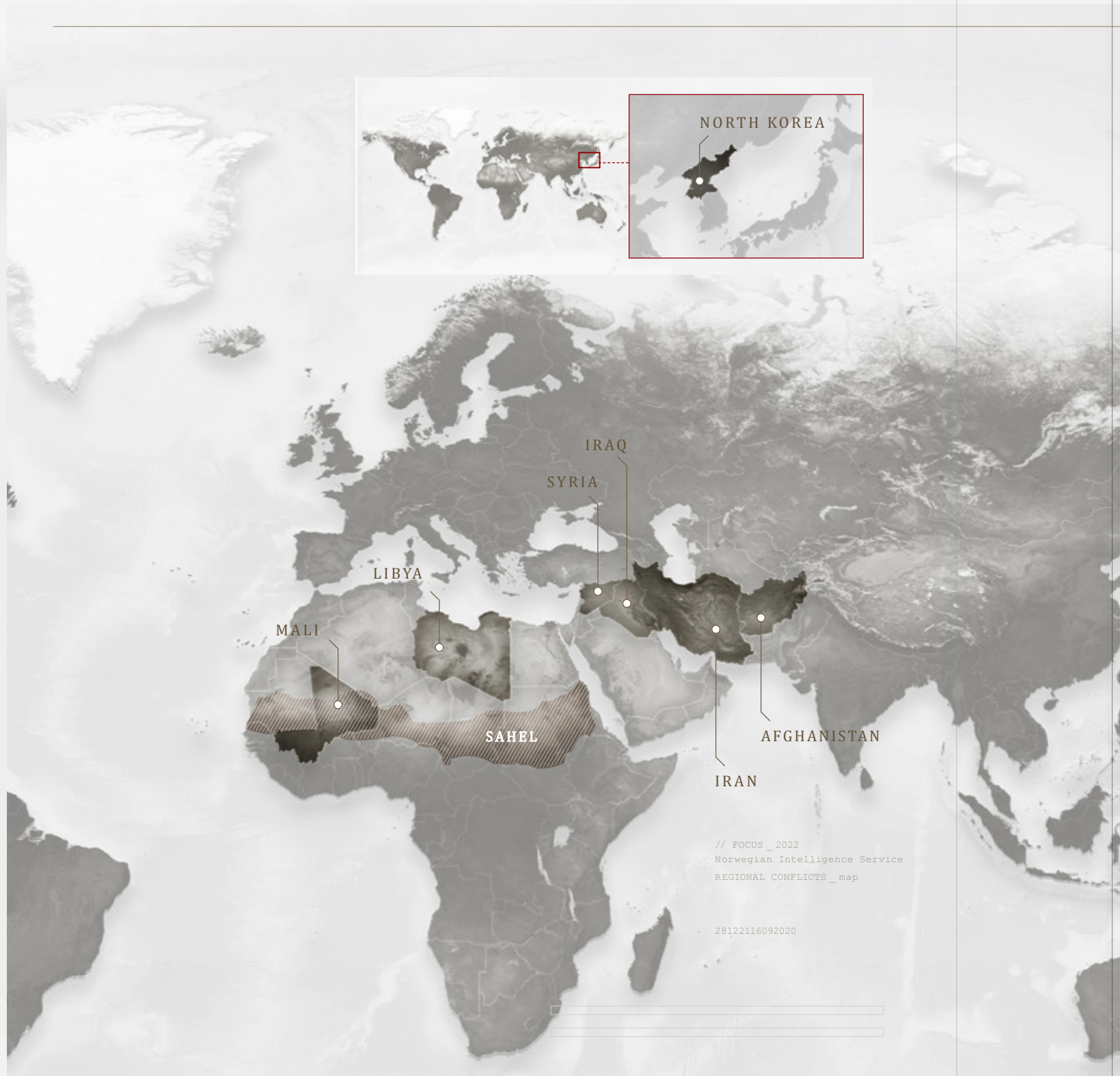
Current affairs such as immigration and the climate crisis are exploited by far-right extremists to mobilise and recruit members. The coronavirus pandemic continues to create connections across radical and extremist communities. Some right-wing extremists join anti-vaxxers and anti-state actors in conspiracy theories, for instance in their resistance to government measures. There have been several cases of right-wing extremists in Western countries planning and carrying out attacks against vaccination centres and prominent people in the covid-19 debate. In December 2021, a plot by anti-vaxxers to assassinate a high-profiled politician in Germany was uncovered. The combination of different conspiracy theories gives the actors a more complex enemy perception. Overlaps between right-wing extremism and anti-state ideas are expected to continue.

The most serious terrorist threat from right-wing extremists will still be single actors and networks supporting so-called accelerationism. The anonymity of digital platforms and the absence of any hierarchically structured organisations makes the threat environment even more complicated. The 2020 close-down of accelerationist organisations and arrests of key individuals have had little mitigating effect.

These networks are largely leaderless and have managed to survive the loss of central figures.

Most of the attacks by right-wing extremists and militant Islamists in Europe in 2021 have caused limited damage and been carried out with simple means, such as pointed weapons, and this has been a trend over the past years. In many of the prevented attacks, on the other hand, the plan was to use more sophisticated means, such as a combination of firearms and explosive devices. The prevented attacks indicate a terrorist threat with considerable damage potential. Nevertheless, should right-wing extremist attacks be carried out in 2022, the majority of them will likely involve the use of simple means. □

” **The anonymity of digital platforms and the absence of any hierarchically structured organisations makes the threat environment even more complicated.**



## REGIONAL CONFLICTS

The following overview describes regional conflicts and matters that will have an impact on the global security situation.

Both in the Middle East and Africa, political unrest and armed conflict will increase international terrorist organisations' freedom of action. The fact that the US is scaling back means that states that previously relied on US guarantees will have to take greater responsibility for their own security. The outcome of the negotiations on a nuclear deal with Iran will have consequences for the security developments in most of the Middle East. In 2021, there were indications that North Korea continued the production of both uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons use.



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**Iran: nuclear deal important to developments in the Middle East**



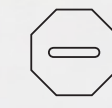
Iran's trajectory will have an impact on the entire Middle East. The deployment of drones and ballistic missiles in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen makes it possible for Iran to attack Israel, Saudi Arabia and US bases. These systems have a deterrent effect, they are used to put pressure on regional actors, and they are a crucial part of Iran's capability in the event of a conflict. In addition, Iran-aligned militias are a flexible and effective tool.

**Syria: deadlock and growing humanitarian crisis**



The economic and humanitarian crisis in Syria is worsening. The situation could cause more migration to countries in the region and to Europe. Russia is working to normalise relations between Damascus and the countries in the region, and few people see any realistic alternative to Assad. Russia, Turkey, Iran and the US will define future developments in Syria. There are no indications that the parties will agree on how to handle the opposition in Idlib. The situation in areas controlled by the Kurds remains unsolved. ISIL is still active in parts of the country, but is kept at bay as long as the military pressure from the US, Russia, Iran, the Syrian authorities and the Kurds is maintained.

**Iraq: political stagnation and instability**



Iraq will remain unstable, with a weak political system incapable of reducing the enormous expenditures on state subsidies and public sector salaries. Should the nuclear negotiations between the US and Iran fail, Iran will put considerable military pressure on Western targets in Iraq. ISIL is a threat to security, but not to the state stability in Iraq. The problems which were at the root of ISIL's growth in Iraq remain unsolved.

**Afghanistan: humanitarian crisis and terrorism**



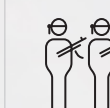
Afghanistan is experiencing a dire economic situation and the humanitarian crisis is growing. A large share of the population wants to leave the country, which initially will place a burden on Pakistan and Iran. The neighbouring countries are concerned that increased instability in Afghanistan will cause waves of refugees, a surge of Islamic extremism and more drug trafficking. The Taliban's ability to handle these concerns will determine future cooperation with regional actors. ISIL Khorasan Province (ISKP) remains the main threat to the government, local population and international community in the country.

**Libya: the difficulties of building a state**



It is unlikely that Libya will succeed in building a functional state. Pressure from Russia and Turkey reduces the Libyan factions' military freedom of action and adds to the military deadlock between the east and the west. Russia and Turkey are the main guarantors of the 2020 ceasefire. Militias and criminal groups will retain considerable freedom of action, but militant Islamists have no position of importance in the country.

**Mali and the Sahel: more freedom of action for militant Islamists**



As long as Mali is without a legitimate government, national stabilisation processes will come to a halt and the security situation will continue to deteriorate. The political situation in Bamako is complicating international military efforts in the country. In particular, Russia's increased level of involvement throughout the winter, using both state and private security actors, has complicated cooperation between the Malian government and Western and regional partners. International terrorist groups' freedom of action in the Sahel is steadily increasing. Despite military pressure from national, regional and international forces, the militant Islamists' influence, area of operations and

attack tempo have continued to increase. Under these conditions, international terrorist groups will continue to increase their influence in the region.

**North Korea: active nuclear programme and new missile tests**



Since 2017, North Korea has refrained from testing long-range missiles and nuclear weapons in order to keep the door open to talks on sanctions relief. No progress has been made in negotiations between the US and North Korea for the past year. In 2021, North Korea tested cruise missiles, short-range ballistic missiles, a regional submarine-launched missile and an early version of a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV). Pyongyang is seeking to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles with high explosive force that are capable of penetrating missile defences and reaching the entire US mainland. Further tests are needed to achieve this. There were also indications that North Korea has continued the production of uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons use. The country is in possession of a few nuclear warheads for short- and medium-range missiles. These are primarily intended to safeguard the survival of the regime by contributing to regional deterrence and credible retaliation against South Korea and US forces in the region. The development of missiles and nuclear weapons will continue in 2022. □



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