Risky or Rewarding? Navigating diversity in contemporary Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)

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Abstract/Summary:

Adopting an international focus, this paper examines contemporary understudied Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) trends, extending its analysis to Command, Control, Computers, Communications, as well as Cyber, or C4ISR/C5ISR. As the March 2023 NATO Secretary General's Annual Report equally highlights, such developments are increasingly important in defence and security alliances to partnerships beyond.

The paper concludes that substantially greater diversity in ISR is reflected overall, thanks in part to the increasing adoption of emerging technologies, such as automation and artificial intelligence (AI), which impact several changes influentially.

Many rewards figure from engaging in C4/C5ISR work, notably 'information advantage' statuses. Less desirably, multiple pressing challenges and persistent uncertainties remain in the form of attendant risks, hazards, and other vulnerabilities, particularly of an ethical and cyber nature.

Continuing to be represented in a prominent manner, those last considerations are worthy of their constant, close, and careful evaluation into the future in overall C4/C5ISR enterprises. Those efforts extend towards advancing further sustainable command-and-control-related management and addressing via 'safeguards' and similarly-guiding 'tools' to 'frameworks' or 'guardrails' during navigation, which perform important 'containment' to 'rollback' functions.

Ultimately, developing concepts, such as 'Intelligence Engineering', increase. Both regionally to globally, many corresponding implications for defence and security alliances to other partnerships and operations to strategies prevail, as well as for war to peace more broadly, while significant disruptors, even 'spoilers', continue nearby.[1]

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[1] This paper is substantially based on: A.D.M. Svendsen, 'Risky or Rewarding? Navigating diversity in contemporary Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)', *RSIS Policy Report* (Singapore: March 2022) - via: https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/risky-or-rewarding-navigating-diversity-in-contemporary-intelligence-surveillance-and-reconnaissance-isr-strategies/#.YjHQRbinzOS; see also A.D.M. Svendsen, 'Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance', Chapter 22 in D.J. Galbreath and J.R. Deni (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Defence Studies* (London: Routledge, 2018) - via: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315650463-23.

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