Weekly Report
National Security Division
Week ending 13 Sept 2019

National Security Strategy:

1. **Protect the homeland, the American people, and the American way of life**
2. **Promote American prosperity**
3. **Preserve peace through strength**
4. **Advance American influence**

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National Defense Strategy:

1. **Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force**
2. **Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners**
3. **Reforming the Department's business practices for greater performance and affordability**

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Poland cleared to buy F-35 fleet
(National Defense Strategy; Lethality. Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal force)

The U.S. State Department has OK'd Poland to buy the F-35, America's most advanced fighter, setting up the country as the newest customer for the fifth-generation jet.

The proposed order covers 32 of the conventional-takeoff-and-landing F-35A variants, with an estimated price tag of $6.5 billion, according to a Wednesday announcement on the website of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. As with all DSCA notifications, quantities and dollar figures can change during negotiations.

While Congress can still act to block the sale, it's expected to run smoothly through Capitol Hill.

"This proposed sale of F-35s will provide Poland with a credible defense capability to deter aggression in the region and ensure interoperability with U.S. forces," the DSCA announcement reads. "The proposed sale will augment Poland's operational aircraft inventory and enhance its air-to-air and air-to-ground self-defense capability."

Poland formally sent its request for the F-35 in May with the goal of replacing its legacy MiG-29 and Su-22 fleets. Procuring the F-35 is part of a broader defense modernization effort from Warsaw, which will see the country spend $47 billion by 2026 on new equipment.

Along with the fighters, the proposed package includes 33 F135 engines, electronic warfare and C4 systems, access to the fighter's Autonomic Logistics Information System, a full mission trainer, and other support capabilities.

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Veterans Affairs finally has a deputy secretary

Senate lawmakers on Wednesday confirmed James Byrne for the second-highest post at the Department of Veterans Affairs, officially filling a key leadership vacancy after an absence of more than a year.

Byrne, a former Marine infantry officer who previously served as VA's general counsel, was approved for the post by a 81-11 vote. His nomination has been pending since April, but he has been serving in the post as acting director since August 2018.

Committee Chairman Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., praised Byrne as a key leader in recent reforms at the sprawling veterans bureaucracy.

"The VA is working," Isakson said. "We have some problems, but we have a lot fewer than we used to have. A lot of that is because of James Byrne. He has been working already, and we need to make him permanent."

Byrne is a Naval Academy graduate and a former international narcotics prosecutor at the Department of Justice. He also previously worked as an investigator with the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction before leaving government to work for the Lockheed Martin Corporation for several years.

During his confirmation hearing, Byrne praised reform efforts in the department in recent years, saying he is "extremely bullish" on the department's future.

With Byrne’s confirmation, the highest ranking vacancy at the department becomes VA’s undersecretary for health post. No one has been nominated for that position since Shulkin stepped down from the post after being confirmed as secretary in the second month of Trump’s presidency.

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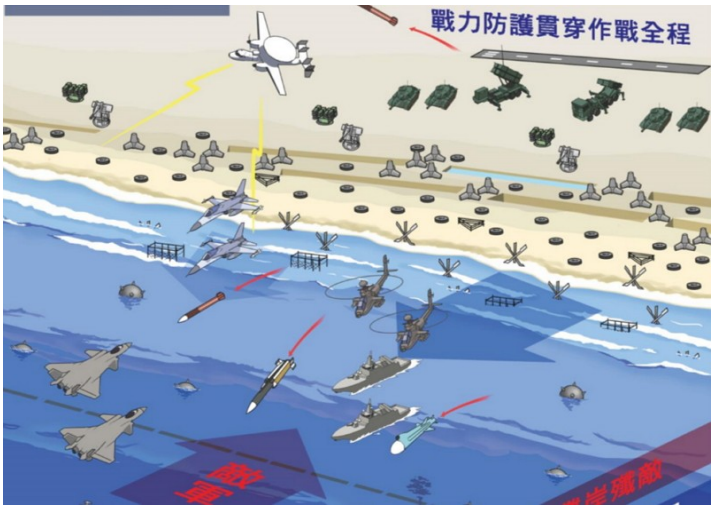
Taiwan defense report details coastal strategy to repel Chinese forces



Taiwan's latest defense report, released made public for the first time the military's plans to repel invading Chinese forces along the coast of Taiwan proper as part of the country's new defense strategy adopted since President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) took office in 2016.

In recent decades, the Armed Forces have seen beaches where enemy forces land as the focal point for repelling a potential Chinese invasion, but that emphasis has been broadened to an outer perimeter along the coast since 2017.

Taiwan has been forced to shift its strategy because China has been developing expeditionary warfare and over-the-horizon amphibious assault capabilities that pose a threat all along Taiwan's coastline, a military source previously told local media.

In its 2019 National Defense Report, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) also included a graphic showing exactly how the R.O.C. Armed Forces would repel a Chinese invasion along the coastline.

In this one-page graphic, larger military vessels are seen dispatched along the country's outer perimeter in coastal areas as the first line of defense against possible invaders.

Naval mines are used as a second line of defense behind those vessels together with other smaller naval vessels. Meanwhile, armored vehicles and other weapons systems are positioned to eliminate enemy forces on beach areas. Military aircraft and missiles are used as further deterrence, as shown in the graphic, which is part of the military's "multiple deterrence" strategy adopted in 2017.

Wednesday's report is the 15th since the MND began issuing the biennial report in 1992 and the second during President Tsai's tenure. At the same time, the military also tried to make its report more accessible to the public.

The main report contains 130 color photographs and a large number of charts. A comic-book version of the report was also issued to attract greater attention to national defense issues, according to the MND.

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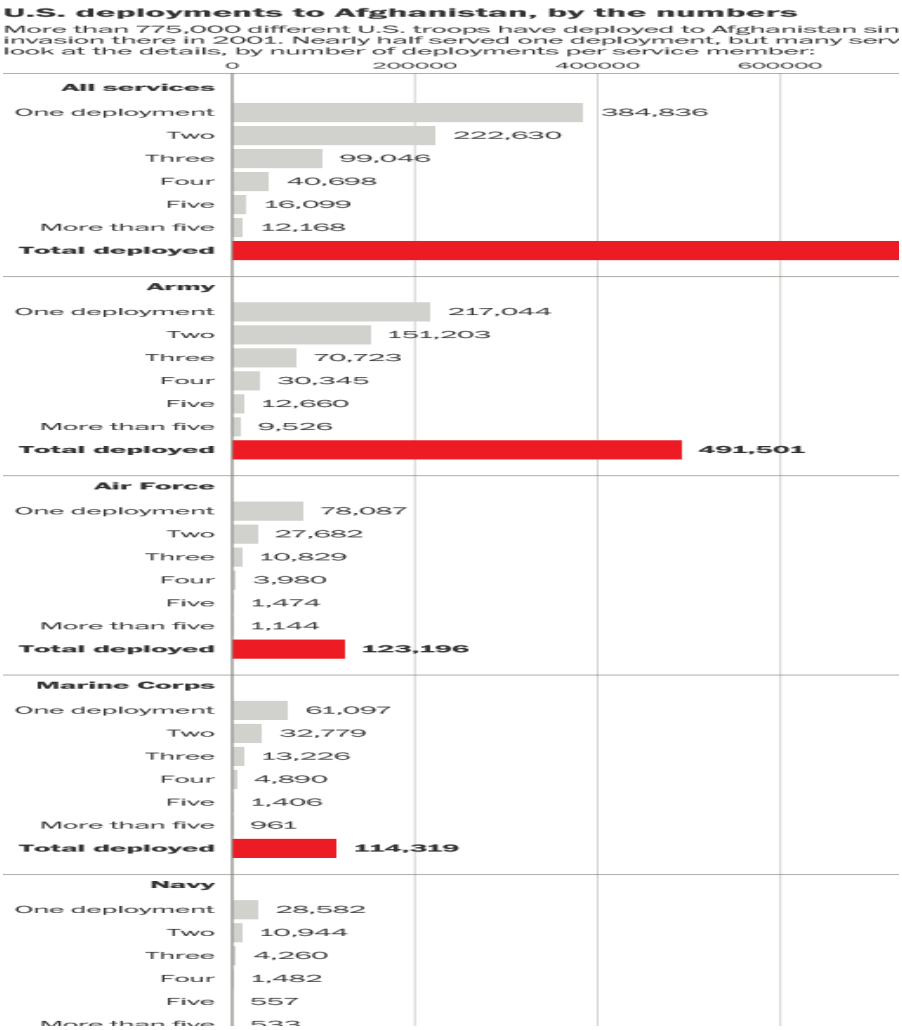
How 775,000 U.S. troops fought in one war: Afghanistan military deployments by the numbers

Data provided by the Pentagon shows that more than 775,000 U.S. service members have deployed to Afghanistan at least once. The numbers detail the story of a war that has persisted for an entire generation.



Among the key details:

— About half of all U.S. veterans of Afghanistan served one deployment there, but many served more. At least 28,267 U.S. troops have deployed there five or more times

The Army, the Pentagon's largest service, has deployed the most troops to Afghanistan. More than 491,500 soldiers have served there, including active-duty forces, Army reservists and National Guardsmen.

— The Air Force, whose presence in Afghanistan has persisted even as the overall number of troops shrank, has deployed the second most, with about 123,000 airmen involved.

— The Marine Corps deployed about 20,000 service members at a time during the height of the war in 2010 and 2011. Overall, more than 114,000 Marines deployed.

— Each military service has a legacy there, including the Coast Guard. More than 100 Coasties have served in the conflict.

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POW/MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency made 6 new announcements. Click on the links to read more:

News Releases
September 11, 2019
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Woods, L.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Webb, J.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Nielsen, A.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Day, F.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Artley, D.)
September 10, 2019
Marine Accounted For From Korean War (Crawford, G.)
September 9, 2019
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Crisp, G.)

Staff Activities

- This week staff continued to developed briefing and sponsor pages for National Security Commission programs. These sheets will be used by the Marketing Division to seek corporate donors to fund The American Legion's National Security programs that promote community
- This week National Security Division Staff begins drafting an update National Security Division Strategic Plan ensuring relevancy as a strong partner

- Gold Star Coordinator continues to build enduring relationship with Gold Star Mothers. Further planning and advancing quarterly roundtable forums for The American Legion to be host, while proving a one voice, united coalition.

Freddy Gessner, Acting Director
National Security Division