Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 16 Aug 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**

Click here to read more.

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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National Defense Strategy excerpt (pg1)**:**

"This increasingly complex security environment is defined by rapid technological change, challenges from adversaries in every operating domain, and the impact on current readiness from the longest continuous stretch of armed conflict in our Nation's history. In this environment, there can be no complacency—we must make difficult choices and prioritize what is most important to field a lethal, resilient, and rapidly adapting Joint Force. America's military has no preordained right to victory on the battlefield."

Hypersonics Remain Top Priority for DOD

(National Defense Strategy; Lethality)

A hypersonic weapon moving at five times the speed of sound can travel across the Pacific Ocean in just over 100 minutes. U.S. adversaries are developing such weapons now, said Michael D. Griffin, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering.

"They are quite capable," Griffin said. "The advantage offered by a hypersonic offense is that it overflies air defenses as we understand them today, and it underflies our missile defenses. It goes into the gap between air defense and missile defense."

"By the time we can see it on defensive radar systems, it's nearly too late to close the kill chain," he said. "It would be difficult to close that kill chain for one threat. But in a raid scenario, you just can't get there from here, ... so we have to see them coming from further out."

Detecting the threat from hypersonics in enough time to neutralize, Griffin said, will require new detection systems in low Earth orbit.

"We need a proliferated layer of sensors, because we can't see these things from a few spacecraft in geostationary orbit," he said. "So the requirement leads you to a proliferated sensor layer in relatively much lower orbit."

Hypersonic defense, he said, is not limited to just the Missile Defense Agency and the Space Development Agency. "It touches space, it touches ground stations, it touches detection and tracking algorithms, and fire control algorithms," the undersecretary said. "Dealing with the hypersonic threat is even more of an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary problem than ground missile defense was."

Click to read more here.

Marines and sailors practice fighting at sea using an 80-year-old communication tactic

(National Defense Strategy, Line Of Effort: Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force)

Sometimes old school is good school.

No longer can Marines and sailors take for granted uninterrupted electronic communications at sea or on the battlefield. Despite ballyhoo about the need for military cyber, electronic warfare and more tech-adept forces for future war, the Navy and Marines are testing war tactics more common nearly 100 years ago.

Tech-capable forces from Russia to China are packing capabilities that can jam U.S. systems or hone in on radio communications to find U.S. forces and ships at sea.

That's why Marines and sailors aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship Boxer tested in early August an old silent communications tactic used during World War II, according to a command release.

The tactic is called a "beanbag drop," and during World War II pilots used to drop weighted beanbags carrying messages onto the decks of ships to avoid having their messages intercepted by enemy forces.

In early August, crew members with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron flying an MH-60S Seahawk conducted a beanbag message drop onto the Boxer as a proof of concept to deliver messages without relying on radio systems, the release detailed.

The Navy's experimentation with a communications tactic used in World War II sheds a small light on its tactical thinking and how it plans to prepare sailors and Marines for a major bout with adversaries with the capability to find, jam and sink U.S. Navy ships at sea.

"We've got the best communication technology onboard our helos [helicopters] but today we practiced the use of a more conventional form of aircraft-to-ship communication in the event electronic communication is not an option," Navy Lt. Taryn Steiger, the pilot who flew the HSC-21 Seahawk that dropped the beanbag, said in the release.

"The purpose of the bean-bag drop was to show timely pilot-to-ship communication can be done without electronic transition," Lt. Cmdr. Michael Brown, the HSC-21 detachment commander, said in the release.

Marines have been training and experimenting with reducing their radio and visible footprint from Norway to the battlefields of Syria.

Click to read more here.

Russia military expansion close to Finnish coast

The new base will be able to handle all types of combat helicopters used by Russia's wester military command. Russian forces are constructing five helipads, a command and control centre, weather station, fuel depot and maintenance facilities on the island of Gogland, which is known as Suursaari in Finnish.

Special lighting being installed could help with year-round, all-weather military operations. The construction was started in a training exercise the Russians are describing as "special tactical drills".

Click to read more here.

Important Date: 16 August 1946

Army Gen. Omar N. Bradley was sworn in as the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by then Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson in Washington, D.C. This followed an amendment to the National Security Act, signed by President Harry Truman Aug. 10, 1949, which officially created the position of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to help provide unified direction of the services following World War II to address the growing nuclear Soviet threat.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUgDWKJWVNR0sdMVTpJZryA

POW/MIA Update

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

News Releases
August 14, 2019
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Garrison, J.)
August, 13, 2019
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Marquez, J.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Cale, R.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Tackett, W.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Ortiz, Y.)
Airman Accounted For From World War II (Finneran, J.)

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 service.
- Monday, National Security Division Staff briefed the Leading Candidates on the vison and direction of the Division. The goal was to provide an overview of the key themes and issues of focus within the Department Of Defense and global issues to advocate on behalf of Service Members and Veterans.
- Monday, Gold Star Family and Quality Of Life coordinator participated in an Office Secretary of Defense telecon discussing Military ChildCare.com 2.0 website.
- Wednesday, National Security Division staff met with Office of Security Defense Public Affairs Staff thanking them for all their support for the American Legion, and to ensure we strengthen relationships and build a way-forward for future engagements.

Rhonda Powell, Director
National Security Division