# Weekly Report

National Security Division

***Week ending 21 Feb, 2020***

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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## Air Strike on Yemen kill 31 civilians after Saudi jet crash

A Tornado came down Friday in northern Al-Jawf province (norther Saudi Arabia). The incident took place during a government forces operation, a rare attack on the Saudi-led coalition fighting with the rebels.

The attack follows the deadly uprising in northern Yemen between multiple factions, threatening to worsen the war-battered country's humanitarian crisis.

"Preliminary field reports indicate that on 15 February as many as 31 civilians were killed and 12 others injured in strikes that hit Al-Hayjah area… in Al-Jawf governorate," the office of the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen said in a statement.

Lise Grande, the UN coordinator, denounced the "terrible strikes". "Under international humanitarian law, parties which resort to force are obligated to protect civilians," she said. "Five years into this conflict and belligerents are still failing to uphold this responsibility. It's shocking."

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## As Prepared Remarks by Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper at the Munich Security Conference

Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper gave a speech this week at the Munich Security Conference. Some of the topics discussed in his speech included implementing the National Defense Strategy, the era of great power competition, North Korea and Iran, extremist organizations, and China's admission into the World Trade Organization.

While on the subject of China, The more skeptical voices argued that, if granted membership, China would use the benefits of free trade and an open international order to grow its economy and access the technology required to build a strong military and security state capable of expanding the reach of their authoritarian rule.

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## Lead Inspector General for East Africa And North And West Africa Counterterrorism Operations I Quarterly Report to the United States Congress I October 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019

First African counterterrorism operations unclassified by the Lead Inspector General. It details the treat of al Shabaab and the intensified attacks. This includes the attack on the Kenya Manda Bay airfield that killed there U.S. military personnel.

Despite continued airstrikes U.S. airstrikes in Somalia and U.S. assistance to African partner forces, al Shabaab appears to be a growing threat that aspires to strike the U.S. homeland.

The Department of Defense is reviewing its deployment of resources worldwide, including a "Blank Slate Review" of USAFRICOM. One option under consideration, according to media reports, is a reduction of resources deployed to West Africa, where extremist violence is increasing and the humanitarian crisis has reached unprecedented levels.

In November, a U.S. surveillance drone monitoring terrorist activity was shot down over Tripoli in November by Russian paramilitary forces known as the Wagner Group, according to USAFRICOM's Commander. U.S. officials warned that expanded Russian influence in North Africa undermines the U.S. ability to enhance military relationships in the region.

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## USS Maine Successfully Tests Trident II D5LE Missile

The U.S. Navy conducted a scheduled missile launch in the Pacific Ocean. The missile was a Trident II (D5LE) off the USS Main (SSBN – 741) an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine, on the Western Test Range off the coast of San Diego, California, February 12, 2020.

This launch was a demonstration the readiness of the SSBN's strategic weapons system and crew before a deployment to prove they were fully operational. It is in conjunction with the submarine's engineered refueling overhaul.

"The professional performance by the crew of the USS Maine today demonstrated they are ready to stand the watch for our nation's strategic deterrence mission," said James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition who embarked USS Maine for the launch. "They, and the acquisition and sustainment teams that support them, showed the teamwork, commitment, and attention to detail needed to continue to provide the undersea strategic deterrence for our nation, just as the Navy has done uninterrupted for the last 60 years."

"Today's test demonstrates the continued reliability of our sea-based nuclear deterrent, which is made possible by our sailors, civilians and industry partners who bring expertise and dedication to the mission that is unmatched by any other country," said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe, director of the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs. "These same teams are now developing the next generation of the Trident strategic weapon system, which will extend our sea-based deterrent for the next 40 years."

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## Ship seizures included 'relatively new' Iranian surface to air missile bound for Houthi rebels in Yemen

The U.S. Navy sized weapons while in the Arabian Sea in November and February. This included surface-to-air missiles among other weapons bound for Houthi rebels in Yemen. The guided-missile destroyer Sherman sized components for the 351 land attack cruise-missile in November of 2019. U.S. officials claim it was used in mid-September to attack two Saudi Arabian oil fields.

Capt. William Urban, the lead spokesman for U.S. Central Command, told reporters Wednesday that the seized missile components were "relatively new" Iranian manufactured missiles that have not been "widely distributed."

Urban told reporters that the recent seizures were not necessarily a sign of an uptick in Iranian operations to supply proxy militias across the region. He went onto say that ship interdictions in the CENTCOM are a relatively "difficult process" that sometimes involves luck due to the vastness of the sea and the relatively small ships smuggling illicit arms.

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## *POW/MIA Update*

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

News Releases

February 18, 2020

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Savage, L.)

February 19, 2020

Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Roth, E.)

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Garcia, J.)

## *Staff Activity:*

- Staff attended GAO's Foresight, S&T, Cyber, and Data Science Capabilities. As Congress works to anticipate and respond to future policy challenges, GAO has a range of capabilities to help navigate the tech landscape here and over the horizon. Meet leaders from GAO's new Center for Strategic Foresight; the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) team; the Cybersecurity Oversight team; and its Chief Data Scientist and Innovation Lab.

- Staff attended a meeting with the Embassy of Japan to discuss the Diamond Jubilee in the coming month. The event is a showing of unity between both the U.S. and Japan for the last 60 years and many more to come.
- The Chief of Public Affairs hosted an MSO/VSO/NFE roundtable at the Pentagon with Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Joseph M. Martin. The Army leaders discussed and took questions on issues affecting the membership and personnel you represent and advocate for. Topics will include Operations, Readiness, Modernization, Army Budget, Army Housing, Legislation, etc. To which staff attended.

***Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division***