Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 22 Nov 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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US Defense Secretary Esper accuses China of intimidating smaller Asian nations

(Department of Defense: Partnership)

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, right, and Vietnamese Defense Minister Ngo Xuan Lich review an honor guard in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Nov. 20, 2019

HANOI, Vietnam — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Wednesday (20 November 2019) accused China of using coercion and intimidation against smaller Asian nations to impose its will in the South China Sea. He urged Vietnam and others in the region to push back.

"We will not accept attempts to assert unlawful maritime claims at the expense of law-abiding nations," Esper said in a speech to the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, a government university.

Vietnam is one of the region's most vocal critics of China's sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea and has accused Beijing of encroaching into its waters.

"The United States firmly opposes intimidation by any claimant to assert its territorial or maritime claims, and we call for an end to the bullying and unlawful activities," Esper said.

Later, in remarks at Vietnam's Communist Party headquarters, Esper said, "We strongly oppose violations of international law by China and excessive claims in the South China Sea."

As part of a long-term effort to forge closer relations with Vietnam, Esper announced that the U.S. will provide Vietnam's coast guard with a surplus American ship. He said it would be provided next year, but he gave no details on payment or exact timing.

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DOD Official: Iran's Military Strength Relies Partly on Nonstate Actors

(Reform)

Iran relies in part on terrorist organizations, proxy groups and militant partners to protect its interests and to further its agenda of expanding influence in the Middle East, a defense official said.

Christian Saunders, a senior Defense Intelligence Agency analyst for Iran, spoke to Pentagon reporters today ahead of the release of the new report titled "Iran Military Power" — the third in a series that also includes China and Russia.

"As Tehran expands its capabilities and role as both an unconventional and conventional threat in the Middle East, it is more important than ever that we understand Iran's military power and the threat it poses to our interests, our allies and our security," Saunders said.

The use of unconventional capabilities, including the use of partners and proxies, is one of three core capabilities the Iranian regime uses to ensure its own survival and secure a more dominant position in the region, Saunders said.

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force, Iran's primary tool for unconventional operations, maintains a wide network of nonstate partners, proxies and affiliates throughout the region," Saunders said.

To advance their agenda, Iran, he said, provides financial, political and material support, as well as training, to groups that include Hezbollah, Iraqi Shia militias, the Houthis, some Palestinian groups, the Taliban and Bahraini Shia militants. Ballistic missiles also play a substantial role in the Iranian military effort. Iran has the largest cache of ballistic missiles in the Middle East, Saunders said.

With an antiquated military, he said, missiles play a large role in the Iranian military effort.
"Iran has embraced ballistic missiles as a long-range strike capability to dissuade its adversaries from attacking Iran," he said, adding that Iran's arsenal includes short, medium and long-range ballistic missiles that can strike targets throughout the region as far as 2,000 kilometers away.
Saunders said he expects Iran will focus now on increasing the number of more accurate and lethal ballistic missiles, as well as fielding land-attack cruise missiles. Its space launch vehicle program, he said, might also serve as a test bed for the development of intercontinental ballistic missile technology.

Iran is strategically positioned along the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and maintains naval forces capable of threatening navigation in those strategically important waterways, Saunders said.

"Iran's naval capabilities emphasize an anti-access, aerial-denial strategy," Saunders aid. "Iran's layered maritime capabilities emphasize asymmetric tactics using numerous platforms and wagons intended to overwhelm an adversary's naval force."

Saunders said Iran's continued use of cyber capabilities as a safe, low-cost method of collecting intelligence is a concern to the U.S. — and it's something they continue to improve on.

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To test 5G, the Pentagon will look at ‘smart warehouses’

(National Defense Strategy: Reforming the Department’s business practices for greater performance and affordability)

Select companies will test 5G technology at four U.S. military bases in 2020 as part of an ongoing effort. Department of Defense leaders expect to release new testing opportunities each quarter.

“History is replete with examples of the DoD partnering with the private sector to foster innovation and collaboratively bring leap-ahead technology to the forefront,” said Lisa Porter, deputy under secretary of defense for research and engineering during remarks at Mobile World Congress 19 in Los Angeles. "The DoD wants our American industry to lead in 5G. A strong American economy is vital to our national security.”

Department leaders announced Oct. 23 they would issue a draft request for proposals for 5G testing at some U.S. military bases in November ahead of a full solicitation in December. However, that schedule is dependent on passage of a 2020 defense appropriations bill.

Smart warehouses to leverage 5G’s ability to enhance logistics operations and maximize throughput. “We’re going to do large scale testing and experimentation of the three different use cases,” Porter said. “The use cases that we’re looking at have obvious military and commercial relevance. “We as the United States … have a real challenge with spectrum, especially in mid-band,” she added.

On Oct. 31, the DoD released which bases would be used for testing: Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; Hill Air Force Base, Utah; Naval Base San Diego, California; and Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Georgia.

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Hong Kong Human Rights And Democracy Act Passes US House

(Reform)

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill Wednesday (20 November 2019) which requires an annual review of Hong Kong's human rights situation and sanctions against officials linked to rights abuses in the city, setting the stage for possible signature by President Donald Trump.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which passed in an expedited process unanimously by the Senate Tuesday, cleared the House 417-1 on Wednesday. "The Congress is sending an unmistakable message to the world that the United States stands in solidarity with freedom-loving people of Hong Kong and that we fully support their fight for freedom," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Wednesday.

The House also passed the Protect Hong Kong Act, which would prohibit U.S. companies from exporting non-lethal crowd control and defense items to the former British colony.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, a bill introduced in June by Rubio and Chris Smith, co-chairmen of Congressional Executive Commission on China, would revise current U.S. policy since Britain handed the city to China in 1997.

U.S. policy treats Hong Kong separately from the rest of China in trade, investment, commerce, and immigration–based on Beijing's pledge to give the territory a high degree of autonomy under the "one country, two systems" model.

The new act would require the U.S. State Department to report annually to Congress whether Hong Kong is "sufficiently autonomous from China" to justify keeping the city's distinct trading status, and whether China has "eroded Hong Kong's civil liberties and rule of law," as protected by the city's Basic Law.

The bill, if enacted, will also enable the U.S. to freeze the assets of, and refuse visas to, officials deemed responsible for human rights violations in the city.

In Beijing on Tuesday, officials slammed the Senate's passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act as interference in China's internal affairs.

"The bill disregards the facts, confuses right and wrong, violates the truth, plays with double standards, openly intervenes in Hong Kong affairs, interferes in China's internal affairs, and seriously violates the norms of international law and international relations," the foreign ministry said in a statement on its website. "China strongly condemns and resolutely opposes it."

"This bad behavior of the United States doesn't only harm China's interests, but also undermines key interests of the United States in Hong Kong," the statement said.

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Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper Meeting With People's Republic of China's Minister of National Defense General Wei Fenghe

(*National Defense Strategy: Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners)*

Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper met with the State Councilor and Minister of National Defense, General Wei Fenghe, of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the margins of the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting Plus held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Secretary Esper held a productive exchange with General Wei in their first in-person meeting since his appointment as Secretary of Defense. Building on their November 5, 2019, video teleconference discussion, the Secretary further defined his vision and priorities for a constructive, results-oriented U.S.-China defense relationship marked by transparency and non-aggression. He emphasized his desire to strengthen communication channels, effectively manage differences, and find common ground.

The meeting advances Secretary Esper's interest in ensuring the U.S.-China defense relationship serves to prevent and manage crisis; reduce risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding; and enhance cooperation on shared interests.

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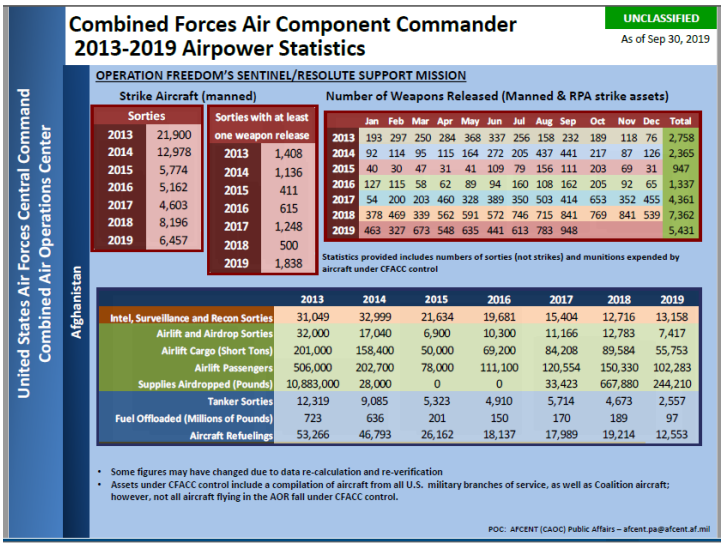
Air strikes and bombs falling at record pace in Afghanistan



United States Air Forces Central Command
Combined Air Operations Center
Afghanistan

Combined Forces Air Component Commander
2013-2019 Airpower Statistics

UNCLASSIFIED
As of Sep 30, 2019

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL/RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

Strike Aircraft (manned)

	Sorties	Sorties with at least one weapon release
2013	21,900	1,408
2014	12,978	1,136
2015	5,774	411
2016	5,162	615
2017	4,603	1,248
2018	8,196	500
2019	6,457	1,838

Number of Weapons Released (Manned & RPA strike assets)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	193	297	250	284	368	337	256	158	232	189	118	76	2,758
2014	92	114	95	115	164	272	205	437	441	217	87	126	2,365
2015	40	30	47	31	41	109	79	156	111	203	69	31	947
2016	127	115	58	62	89	94	160	108	162	205	92	65	1,337
2017	54	200	203	460	328	389	350	503	414	653	352	455	4,361
2018	378	469	339	562	591	572	746	715	841	769	841	539	7,362
2019	463	327	673	548	635	441	613	783	948				5,431

Statistics provided includes numbers of sorties (not strikes) and munitions expended by aircraft under CFACC control

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties	31,049	32,999	21,634	19,681	15,404	12,716	13,158
Airlift and Airdrop Sorties	32,000	17,040	6,900	10,300	11,166	12,783	7,417
Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)	201,000	158,400	50,000	69,200	84,208	89,584	55,753
Airlift Passengers	506,000	202,700	78,000	111,100	120,554	150,330	102,283
Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)	10,883,000	28,000	0	0	33,423	667,880	244,210
Tanker Sorties	12,319	9,085	5,323	4,910	5,714	4,673	2,557
Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)	723	636	201	150	170	189	97
Aircraft Refuelings	53,266	46,793	26,162	18,137	17,989	19,214	12,553

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification
- Assets under CFACC control include a compilation of aircraft from all U.S. military branches of service, as well as Coalition aircraft; however, not all aircraft flying in the AOR fall under CFACC control.

POC: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs – afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil

U.S. and allied warplanes are dropping bombs and doing firing missions at a record pace on insurgent and Taliban militants. The surge in firepower coincides with the Trump administration that gives greater authority to military leaders to authorize strikes on IS militants and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Seth Jones, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and former advisor to the special operations command in Afghanistan stated, "The logic is that the Taliban may be more likely to agree to a peace deal acceptable to the United States and the Afghan government if the Taliban believe they can't win the war in Afghanistan." From January one through October of this year (2019) U.S.-led forces have used 6,208 missiles and bombs in Afghanistan. That is the highest numbers since the war started.

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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
November 20, 2019
USS West Virginia Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Heavin, H.)
USS West Virginia Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Ashby, W.)
Marine Accounted For From World War II (Bayens, J.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Tackett, W.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Lacsamana, M.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Nielsen, A.)

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
- Acting Director, National Security Division is accompanying The National Commander on his Indo-Pacific engagement in Hawaii; departing later in the week to Taiwan. The National Commanders continues to engage with Senior Military Leaders, Service Members, key Partner Nation decision-makers, and American Legion Post Members.
- Staff member from National Security Division attended a briefing on The Middle East: A GPS to successfully navigating the current reality. Topics discussed include western influence in the region, public opinion and policy, language barriers, cultural barriers, and information manipulation. Western mediators of knowledge, guided by a western mindset and western codes of think developed concepts, narratives and theories regarding the Middle East. A better way to bridge the gap from one region to another.

Freddy Gessner, Acting Director, National Security Division