Weekly Report
National Security Division
Week ending 25 Oct 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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U.S. Marines Complete Their Eighth Rotation in Australia

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

U.S. Marines have completed the eighth iteration of Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D), a six-month rotation of Marines in Australia's Northern Territory. The U.S. Marines that comprised the 2019 rotation have departed Australia and returned to their home stations or have gone to Okinawa, Japan to participate in other training activities.

"This year's rotation was a tremendous success," said U.S. Marine Col. Russ Boyce,

commanding officer for MRF-D. “We executed more than a dozen bilateral and multilateral training activities at locations across the entirety of Northern Australia and throughout the region with neighboring partners and allies. These activities enhanced our combined capabilities, and ultimately improved our ability to respond to crises as a united, international team.”

MRF-D is designed to increase interoperability with the Australian Defence Force, engage with regional partners and allies, and provide a forward-deployed force capable of responding to crisis within the Indo-Pacific region.

One of the most significant achievements during the rotation was the employment of the entire Marine Air-Ground Task Force and integrated Australian Defence Forces during the culminating activity, Exercise Koolendong, according to Boyce. Koolendong demonstrated the combined Australia and U.S. readiness to respond to high-end threats, in addition to achieving considerable interoperability objectives.

This year’s rotation achieved an important milestone of the U.S. Force Postures Initiatives by reaching the 2,500 personnel goal, which was established in the U.S and Australia Force Posture Agreement.

Future rotations will be similarly structured, again including all elements of a MAGTF, and will allow for Australian and U.S. planners to include additional units and equipment that provide unique capabilities designed to best support strategic objectives set forth in the USFPI.

The Marine Corps’ rotational presence reflects the enduring Australia-U.S. alliance and common security interests in the region.

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Esper wants European allies to send troops to the Gulf to counter Iran

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Thursday that he wants allies in Europe to send forces to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to reinforce U.S. military movements aimed at countering Iran.

Esper also pushed back against critics who said the U.S. enabled Turkey's advance into Kurdish-held Syria and named China's ambitions as the West's greatest long-term concern, during a wide-ranging talk at the German Marshall Fund in Brussels.

"The burden cannot be shouldered by the United States alone … we urge our allies in Europe to contribute their own support to deter Iranian aggression," Esper said. The U.S. deployed fighter squadrons, an air expeditionary wing and other personnel to Saudi Arabia recently and has sent other units to the region since May, when U.S. officials said that intelligence reports indicated Iranian threats to U.S. interests and personnel.

While crises in the Middle East abound, including Turkey's "unwarranted incursion into Syria," such issues risk a "sap of resources" and distraction from bigger dangers, he said. "There are new threats on the horizon that we ignore at our own peril," Esper said. For allies in Europe, Russia has been the top security concern in recent years, but Esper warned that China's economic ambitions outweigh the threat posed by Moscow.

"China first, Russia second," Esper said. And that applies not just to allies in the Pacific, but also in Europe, he said. Both countries, Esper said, want to "reshape the world" and undermine the "rules-based order" at the expense of the West. While Russia is a military threat, Europe must be cautious about locking into deals connected to China's "One Belt, One Road" global trade plan that could put Beijing in a position to dominate and set the global agenda, Esper said.

Esper also warned allies against making deals with China's Huawei telecommunications company, and that if Chinese 5G technology becomes the norm in Europe it will hinder U.S. military cooperation on the Continent. In Brussels, allied defense ministers are expected to agree to update baseline requirements for telecommunication security.

Although the longer-term threat posed by China has increasingly become a NATO focal point, defense ministers are likely to be consumed this week with the crisis in Syria. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was determined to invade regardless of the U.S. presence on the border, and the U.S. troops in the area were in danger, Esper said. "I am not about to start a fight with a NATO ally," Esper said. If that happened, "we would be having a different discussion today about the future of the alliance."

Meanwhile, Esper said he supported an idea forwarded by German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer to establish an international security zone in northern Syria, in cooperation with Russia. Allies are expected to discuss the matter during talks at NATO headquarters Thursday and Friday.

However, if such a plan materializes it would be a matter left to the Europeans to figure out, Esper said. "I think it is fine and good for those countries that want to step up," Esper said. "We don't intend on contributing ground forces to that operation." Russia and Turkey struck an

agreement on Syrian security earlier this week and it remains unclear if they would be interested in a broader European peacekeeping presence.

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What Is NATO, What Does it Do?

NATO stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was formed in 1949 to provide collective security against the threat posed by the Soviet Union. The U.S. viewed an economically strong, rearmed and integrated Europe as vital to the prevention of communist expansion across the continent.

The original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. Though the Soviet Union has long since fallen, the world has continued to be a dangerous place throughout the nearly seven decades since NATO was formed. Now 29 nations are members of the alliance.

To make it easier for so many countries to communicate, NATO has two official languages: English and French. This means that it also has two acronyms — in French, NATO is OTAN, which stands for Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord.

NATO promotes democratic values and encourages consultation and cooperation on defense and security issues to build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.

Click on url for video:

https://cdn.dvidshub.net/media/video/1810/DOD_106087550/DOD_106087550-1280x720-2765k.mp4

One of the founding principles of NATO is Article 5 of its charter, which states that an armed attack on one member nation would be considered as an attack on all. The alliance invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history following the 9/11 attacks.

In addition to contributing to the war effort in Afghanistan, NATO member nations responded by helping the U.S. military with airspace defense and security over the United States and with maritime patrols in the Mediterranean Sea to guard against movement of weapons and terrorists.

Click here to read more.

Persistent Spouse Unemployment Affects Military Families

(National Security Division Line of Effort: Quality Of Life)

For many families, a dual-income household is needed to get by, but that's a challenge when one of those earners is a service member. The cost of things like education and housing have gone up greatly in the past 50 years, compared to the value of the dollar, meaning things are more expensive now than they were in the past, said Holly Petraeus, the former assistant director for Service member Affairs at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, during a panel discussion today at the Brookings Institute in Washington.

"Can the single income family really still do it anymore, and if they can't ... given the need for two incomes in military families and the challenges that presents to military spouses, is this changing the nature of today's military families?" Petraeus said.

Mike Haynie, the executive director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, said spouse unemployment, and the financial burden it brings, has already changed military families.

"Today, military families are more and more less likely to recommend military service to their children than they were as recently as five years ago," Haynie said. "That should tell us something and it should scare us."

Haynie also said that today, about a third of military spouses aren't living in the same location as their military service member, likely for financial reasons.

"There is not enough research being done as to the issues, questions, concerns impacting this community, certainly from an economic perspective," he said. "Undoubtedly, we are in a position where ... the stability and the health for those families is compromised as a function of the economic situation they face today."

Elizabeth O'Brien, the senior director of the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said military spouse unemployment was at 30% in 1985 — and not much has changed in the last 30 years.

"Dual income families are part of American life and we need that same access and opportunity," she said. "If we intend to keep our best and brightest service members in the military ... we have to provide an opportunity for military families to have economic stability."

That means, she said, that military spouses need more opportunities to be able to work.

"We have to find ways to put military spouses to work so that our families, not only are we retaining them, but when the service member transitions we are now going from two salaries to one salary, not from one salary to zero," she said.

"The Department is very cognizant of that and sees that as an important part of the strategy to maintain lethality," he said, adding that Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper said taking care of families would be part of the national military strategy.

Click here to read more.

POW/MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency made 7 new announcements. Click on the links to read more:

News Releases
October 23, 2019
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Grubb, C.)
Airman Accounted For From World War II (McTigue, J.)
Marine Accounted for from World War II (Matthews, E.)
Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Cagle, C.)
October 22, 2019

Airman Accounted For From World War II (Tyler, R.)
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Smith, J.)
USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Tumlinson, V.)

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
- A Staff member from the National Security Division returned from an engagement and planning visit of Sydney and Canberra Australia. The intent was to establish contact and survey the environment for The National Commander Indo-Pacific engagement. The engagement included office calls with U.S. Embassy Defense Attaché Office, US Embassy Foreign Policy Advisor. Further introduction and Office Calls were conducted with American Australian Associations, and The United States Studies Center, all of which were positive and supportive of The National Commander engagement. Finally office calls were conducted with The Australian Department of Veterans Affairs, who are extremely motivated to partner with The American Legion.
- Wednesday, Gold Star Family coordinator met with Navy Gold Star family as The American Legion continues to build a stronger voice, advocate for all Gold Star families
- Wednesday, staff participated in the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition veterans fly-in. USGLC invited a team of retired General Officers from across the country for a two day event that included meetings with members of Congress to discuss the importance of protecting the international affairs budget and its impact on National Security.

  Freddy Gessner, Acting Director, National Security Division