Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 28 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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Pentagon Officials are head into the hill this week to defend the fiscal 2021 budget request

Budget hearings are set in motion this week as congress returns from its recess. Leading the charge will be the Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, who will be testifying before the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday.

This Tuesday, the Senate Armed Services Committee will be meeting with Gen. Tod Wolters, head of U.S. European Command, and Gen. Stephen Lyon, who leads U.S. Transportation Command.

On Thursday, HASC convenes a hearing on the Navy budget with acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly, chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday and Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger.

The House Defense Appropriations panel also holds closed hearings on Thursday with Wolters and Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security Joseph Kernan.

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U.S. Suspends Offensive Operations in Afghanistan in Peace Bid

The U.S. in an effort to reduce violence in the country has committed to a seven day cease fire. The U.S. hopes to broker a peace deal with the Taliban in America's longest running war.

“Our operations are defensive at this point,” U.S. General Austin Scott Miller said in a press conference in Kabul Saturday. “We stopped our offensive operations as part of our obligations, but we remain committed to defend our forces as well as defending Afghan security forces.”

The reduction of violence is a “conditional effort; it’s a trial period” to see if all sides including the Taliban are able to meet their obligations, Miller said. If the Taliban are able to meet this deal the U.S. will then sign a peace agreement with the militants on February 29.

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Military Housing Privatization Initiative Tenant Bill of Rights Signed by Secretary Esper

Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper, Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy, Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly and Secretary of the Air Force Barbara M. Barrett have signed the Military Housing Privatization Initiative Tenant Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights commits the Department of Defense to ensuring privatized housing tenants receive quality housing and fair treatment from the Military Housing Privatization Initiative project owners that operate and maintain privatized housing.

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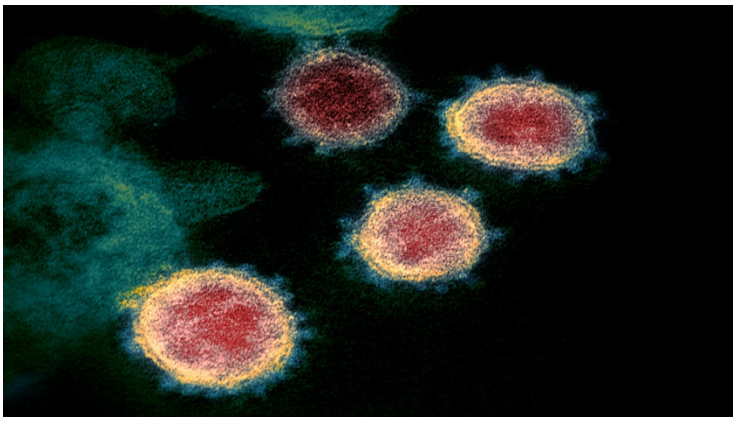
USFK Service Member Confirmed with COVID-19

A US solider has tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) making them the first. This has come at a grave concern for military leaders in the region.

The patient, a 23-year old male, is currently in self quarantine at his off-base residence. He visited Camp Walker on 24 Feb. and Camp Carroll 21-25 Feb. KCDC and USFK health professionals are actively conducting contact tracing to determine whether any others may have been exposed.

As the virus continues to persist it has left doctors and military members bracing for more potential cases. While the military is safe guarding themselves from this contagious virus other leaders in the region knew it was a matter of time before the first case would pop up.



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Senate Approves Legislation To Limit President's War Powers Against Iran

The Senate approved a bipartisan resolution to curb the President's war powers when it comes to Iran. The resolution would still allow the president to order strikes in cases of self-defense against imminent attacks.

"The resolution just says no war with Iran, unless you come and make that case to Congress. And if you make the case to Congress, in front of the American people, and we all have the discussion, ask the tough questions and conclude, sadly, it's in the national interest, that's one thing," Senator Kaine told NPR. "But if we're not even willing to have that discussion, we shouldn't be forcing people to risk their lives."

"We need congressional authorization. We've been lied to by the Pentagon for years regarding a war that has gone on two decades. That's long enough. ... We don't want any more wars without the people's elected representatives being able to debate," Lee said.

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China's missile force is growing at an unprecedented rate

China's missile force has top US advisors worried in the event of a conflict with the adversarial nation. In particular their long range missiles play the key role in the country's military plans.

The People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF), remains the most opaque branch of Beijing's military. Their fleet has expanded to range missile systems from the DF-31 and DF-17 which are intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Most of the details are relatively undisclosed at the moment.

But by tracking more subtle public announcements and news stories, it appears the number of missile brigades in the PLA has expanded from 29 to 40, this is more than a 35 percent increase in just three years.

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As soldiers arrive for Defender 2020, European infrastructure will be tested

Soldiers participating in the Army's division-scale Defender 2020 exercise across Europe have started to trickle onto the continent, just as generals involved in the effort warn of logistical challenges to operating with the infrastructure there.

A massive influx of troops to the region is not without its complications, the general in charge of U.S. European command and NATO to the Senate. "I'm concerned about the bandwidth to be able to accept this large force and I'm also concerned about road and rail from the center portion of Germany to the east — all the way to the eastern border," said Air Force Gen. Tod Wolters, NATO's supreme allied commander.

"The environment in Europe has to be mature enough to be able to absorb 20,000 soldiers and get those soldiers to the right pre-positioned locations to be able to grab the appropriate gear," Wolters said. "What we want to do is count every second that it takes to get the soldier from the first point of entry all the way to his or her foxhole."

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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 24, 2020

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Windle, E.)

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

February 25, 2020

Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Sewell, D.)

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Gebser, P.)

February 27, 2020

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Schmitz, A.)

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

Staff Activity:

- Staff attended a meeting that reports range from the spread of the virus to the current mortality rates of victims of the virus. But what does science know about this virus? And is there hope for a treatment before the virus becomes even more deadly? Join Dr. Ralph Baric, a leading epidemiologist, who has been working on finding a treatment for this virus. He will discuss what we know and what we still don't know about the coronavirus.
- Monday, staff participated in a conference call with senior defense officials to discuss quality of life policy changes focused on access to and availability of military child developments centers.
- This week staff conducted multiply conference calls with DoD officials in Europe as coordination for the upcoming European engagements continues.
- Friday, staff participated in a conference with senior defense officials at the Pentagon to discuss military housing issues and the new tenant bill of rights that was announced earlier this week.
- Staff met with Sons and Daughters in Touch (Americas Gold Star Children of the3 Vietnam War) to discuss their 30th anniversary celebration during father's day weekend.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division