Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 3 April, 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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More sailors aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt test positive for coronavirus, officials say

More sailors aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier currently in the western Pacific have tested positive for coronavirus and officials fear the number will continue to rise.

There are now 38 Navy sailors who have been infected with COVID-19, U.S. officials told Fox News on Sunday.

Early last week, there were only three known cases aboard the warship with a crew of 5,000. It marked the first U.S. naval vessel at sea to have infected people onboard.

Early Friday, the "Big Stick" -- as the carrier is called -- pulled into port in Guam days ahead of schedule in order to disinfect the ship, transport infected sailors to a local hospital and order more bulk testing of the crew.

"We expect additional positive tests," Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, said in a statement Thursday. Gilday says none of the sailors infected so far are "seriously ill."

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North Korea Seen Expanding Rocket Launch Facility It Once Promised To Dismantle

North Korea appears to be expanding a key rocket launch facility it once pledged to dismantle, according to new satellite imagery.

The imagery, taken by commercial company Planet and shared via the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, shows new roads under construction at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station.

Now, satellite imagery shows new roads in a long-abandoned section of the site, according to Dave Schmerler, a senior research associate with the Middlebury Institute.

"We're seeing roadwork that would facilitate the possible addition of new structures," he says.

"The site was supposed to be shut down — apparently it's not," says Vipin Narang, an arms control researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who follows North Korea's program.

"It's hard to know what it is, but they're clearly reactivating it and preparing for personnel to be there, which suggests that they may want to start using it again," Narang says. "Maybe they want to test a satellite launch vehicle; maybe they want to test an ICBM; maybe they want to test an engine."

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First U.S. military service member dies from coronavirus

The first U.S. military service member has died from the coronavirus, the Pentagon said on Monday, as it reported another spike in the number of infected troops.

The service member was a New Jersey Army National Guardsman who tested positive for COVID-19 - the disease caused by the coronavirus - and had been in hospital since March 21. He died on Saturday, the Pentagon said.

“Today is a sad day for the Department of Defense as we have lost our first American service member - active, reserve or Guard - to coronavirus,” Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in a statement. “This is a stinging loss for our military community, and our condolences go out to his family, friends, civilian co-workers and the entire National Guard community.”

Earlier on Monday, the Pentagon said that 568 troops had tested positive for the coronavirus, up from 280 on Thursday. More than 450 Defense Department civilians, contractors and dependents have also tested positive, it said.

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Weakened ISIL's sectarian agenda exacts heavy toll in Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan - Mohammed Sharif sits in a tiny visitor's room inside a prison run by Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security [NDS], in the capital Kabul.

A member of the Islamic State of the Khorasan Province (ISKP), an ISIL (ISIS) affiliate, Sharif, 21, spent the last eight months in prison after he was captured during a raid in Kabul.

But in the past weeks, the group resurfaced again claiming responsibility for the killing of more than 50 people in two attacks targeting the minority Shia and Sikh communities in the Afghan capital.

This has raised concerns in the country's security establishment at the group's capability to carry out daring attacks in the capital, as the West-backed Kabul government prepared to hold talks with the Taliban as part of a United States-brokered peace process.

The US and the Taliban signed an agreement on February 29 in Qatar's capital, Doha, aimed at ending the 18-year war, with a gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from the country.

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POW/MIA Update

Like much of the world, the coronavirus (COVID-19) has had a significant impact on the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), and in particular, its operations.

Ultimately, the Agency's highest priority is the health, safety, and physical well-being of the assigned service members, civilians, and contractors, as well as the personnel of our partner organizations, all of whom contribute to the accomplishment of its worldwide mission. To this, DPAA is adhering to the Department of Defense (DoD) mandate of limiting all travel of personnel.

All field missions this month have completed or terminated earlier than planned, and personnel have returned home. Future missions are currently postponed or canceled, at least through early June.

Staff Activity:

- Monday, staff participated in the weekly conference call with the COVID-19 Military Support Initiative Partnership to share updates on the impact of the pandemic on military families.

- Staff continued planning for the National Commander's Far East Engagements.

- Staff are currently developing and updating SOP and milestone planning documents for annual recurring events.

- National Security Staff worked with the National Judge Advocate to review and update a MOU with the Defense Health Agency's Real Warriors Campaign.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division