Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 6 Dec 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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China hits back at U.S. over Hong Kong

China said in a statement on Monday that they would suspend a visit to Hong Kong by American warships. China also stated possible sanctions to be imposed on several U.S. based nongovernmental groups, as a mostly symbolic retaliation for President Trump's tough human rights legislation. Hua Chunying a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said the actions taken were in response to "unreasonable behavior" by the United States. She later went on to say the human rights legislation was illegal interference into its domestic affairs.

“China urges the United states to correct its mistakes and stop any words and deeds that interfere in Hong Kong and china’s internal affairs.” Beijing has become increasingly more suspicious of all non-governmental organizations, especially those with humanitarian causes. On Monday protesters who work in the advertising industry started a five-day strike to show support for the anti-government protests in Hong Kong. In doing this protesters aid they would not go to work, respond to emails, or take part in conference calls.
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President Trump Visits Afghanistan and says he reopened talks with the Taliban

President Trump made a surprise visit to American troops in Afghanistan for thanksgiving. Trump went to say that he had reopened peace negotiations with the Taliban. Trump stated, “The Taliban wants to make a deal, and we’re meeting with them.” Afghanistan’s President, Ashraf Ghani along with Trump added, “We’re going to stay until such time as we have a deal, or we have total victory, and they want to make a deal very badly.” Trump reaffirmed the desire to reduce troops in the region from 13,000 to 8,600.

The Taliban made no official comment immediately after the surprise visit and President Ghani said little about the peace talks. Many have speculated if the President has reopened the peace talks with the Taliban. Ghani later took to twitter saying, “Both sides underscored that if the Taliban are sincere in their commitment to reaching a peace deal, they must accept a ceasefire. We also emphasized that for any peace to last, terrorist safe havens outside Afghanistan must be dismantled.”
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Thirty Civilians killed across Syria as violence rages

Air strikes killed 19 civilians on Monday in Syria's last major opposition bastion. This is the site of the deadliest major clashes of regime forces. This coming at a time after the august ceasefire. Since 2011 the Syrian civil war has claimed more than 370,000 lives and displace more than a million. Areas that still claim scores of lives are areas that reside out of government control. On Monday the regime air raids killed 13 civilians in a market in the Idlib region town of Maaret al-Numan according to the British-based Observatory. Civilians claim it was the most frightening bombardment they had witnessed in years, "We ran inside the shops and threw ourselves on the ground. They bombed half the market." The Observatory claimed six others died in a Russian and regime bombardment.

President Bashar al-Assad maintains that that his government will repose its control over the northwestern territory on the border with turkey.

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U.S. Bolsters Indo-Pacific Alliances in Face of Threats

John C. Rood, undersecretary of defense for policy, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that a growing concern, however, is the military, economic and political high-end threats to Indo-Pacific region allies and partners emanating from China.

Rood testified today at a hearing on strategic threats, ongoing challenges and National Defense Strategy implementation.

In response to regional threats from China, the Defense Department is strengthening its military relationships with a number of countries, he said, citing examples in his oral and written testimony:

Japan
The department is integrating its National Defense Strategy with Japan's analogous National Defense Program Guidelines and has an ongoing dialogues to reevaluate roles, missions and capabilities while increasing operational readiness and training, Rood said.

DOD is also increasing cooperation with the Japanese in space, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and artificial intelligence as well as cross-domain operations, he added.

India
"We are committed to a common vision for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership, which we will advance … on Dec. 18," Rood said.

Additionally, the department has agreed to expand military-to-military cooperation and improve interoperability, including by establishing a new tri-service amphibious exercise that will be called Tiger Triumph, he said.

Singapore
"No country in Southeast Asia does more than Singapore to enable a U.S.-forward presence in the Indo-Pacific," Rood said.

More than 100 U.S. warships and 800 to 1,000 U.S. military aircraft transit through Singapore each year, he noted.

Singapore supports DOD's rotational deployment of its littoral combat ships and P-8 Poseidon aircraft, Rood mentioned.

Also, Singapore forces have four active training units stationed in the United States. "We expect to agree soon on a permanent Singapore fighter training presence in Guam," he said, adding that Singapore is a top purchaser of advanced U.S. weapons systems.

Taiwan
Consistent with the policy articulated in the Taiwan Relations Act, the U.S. continues to make available to Taiwan the defense materiel and services necessary to enable it to maintain sufficient self-defense capability, Rood said.

This year, DOD has approved more than $10 billion in defense sales — such as M1A2 Abrams tanks and F-16 Fighting Falcon fighters — to recapitalize its force.

"We are supporting their development of more mobile, survivable and asymmetric capabilities," Rood said. "The ultimate goal is to develop a more combat credible force."

Vietnam
"In Vietnam, we are building a productive defense relationship and overcoming the legacy of the Vietnam War," he told lawmakers.

Last year, the U.S. Navy conducted the first aircraft carrier visit to Vietnam since the end of the war. The U.S. has also transferred a high-endurance Coast Guard cutter to Vietnam. In addition, Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper announced during his visit to Hanoi two weeks ago that the U.S. will provide a second such cutter to Vietnam.

Raptor on Runway - An F-22 Raptor jet from the 19th Fighter Squadron, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, lands at the Palau International Airport, Palau, during exercise Resilient Typhoon, April 25, 2019.Photo By: Air Force Airman 1st Class Matthew Seefeld VIRIN: 190425-F-VT057-1003

Besides mentioning those nations, Rood said the department is engaging with island nations throughout the Pacific and is planning to invest $521 million over the next five years in programs like the Maritime Security Initiative to build the capacity of allies and partners in the region, including developing partners' ability to conduct maritime security and maritime domain awareness operations and advancing interoperability with U.S. forces.

Air Force Lt. Gen. David W. Allvin, the Joint Staff's director for strategy, plans and policy, also testified. The two discussed a number of other topics.
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The U.S. Navy seizes suspected Iranian missile parts bound for Yemen

U.S. Navy warship has seized a significant cache' of suspected Iranian guided missile parts headed to rebels in Yemen. This marks the first time that such sophisticated components have been taken en route to the war there. The seizure from a small boat took place in the northern Arabian Sea last Wednesday.
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American Legion Far East Trip

From November 23rd-29th the Commander visited Taiwan and met with President Tsai, the Minister of Defense, Veteran Affairs, The National Security Council the 202 Military Police Company, and the ROC 542nd Armored Brigade, the American Institute in Taiwan, National Defense & Security Research Council, and the Commander was awarded the Minister of Veterans Affairs' Medal. Since the last meeting with President Tsai (last December) many circumstances have changed. Tsai called on China to accept and respect a free and democratic process throughout Taiwan and to stop meddling in their internal politics. These statements did not ease tensions prompting China President Xi Jinping to release the statement, "Taiwan must, and will be reunited with China."

Staff Activities

Attended a briefing on China and the United States new cold war at the Center for Strategic & International Studies. Topics included the escalating rivalry between the U.S. and China, common goals and aspirations, influence, the differences between the world post 1945-1990 to present, and a discussion on the road forward.

Freddy Gessner, Acting Director, National Security Division