Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 7 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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Imagery Suggests Iran Is Preparing To Try To Launch A Satellite

New imagery suggests Iran is making repairs for a possible space launch. It has been followed by multiple attempts that have been failures over the last few years.

The images were taken Sunday by the commercial firm planet and shared with Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. The captured images shown includes, vehicles parked outside Imam Khomeini Space Center in northern Iran, which is the location used to build and assemble space rockets. A second group of vehicles is visible at a circular launch pad that was heavily damaged during failed launch preparations last year.

"It looks pretty clearly to us like Iran is going to try and put a satellite into space," says Jeffrey Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute who tracks Iran's space program.

Over the past year Iran has attempted to launch multiple satellites, but they have been less than successful. In January and February of 2019 both ended in failure, while a third attempt in August, a rocket apparently exploded on the launch pad (damage still visible from the images provided).

President Trump tweeted a high-resolution of the wreckage saying, "The United States of America was not involved in the catastrophic accident during final launch preparations for the Safir SLV Launch at Semnan Launch Site One in Iran. I wish Iran best wishes and good luck in determining what happened at Site One."

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US troops who recently traveled to China quarantined in South Korea

US military officials in South Korea announced on Sunday that a 14 day self-quarantine will be imposed on US troops. Of those being the individuals that recently traveled to China. Of all the service members none have so far been diagnosed with the coronavirus.

This quarantine applies to those troops that have been returning from mainland China to South Korea on or after January 19th Forces Korea (USFK) said in a statement.

Below is information on USFK's directed self-quarantine for U.S. service members. Please note the USFK Novel Coronavirus 24-hour hotline at Brian D. Allgood Community Hospital is 050-3337-2556, or DSN 737-2556.

— U.S. Forces Korea (@USForcesKorea)

"USFK continues to stress the overall risk to USFK personnel remains low, but that the quarantine measures implemented are out of an abundance of caution to mitigate risk to the USFK population," the command said in a statement.

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Trump appears to confirm killing of al Qaeda leader in Yemen via retweet

President Trump seemingly confirmed the reports on Saturday that the U.S. had killed Qassim al-Rimi, the leader of an al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen. New York Times originally reported the story on Friday that officials believed that Rimi, a 41 year old who headed al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), had likely been killed by a drone strike in January. The location as confirmed to be Wadi Abeddayh, which is an al Qaeda hotbed in central Yemen.

"This was not a DoD operation," a Pentagon official said Saturday. "He was/is an important figure for sure, but it's important not to overestimate the impact of taking out guys like him," said Thomas Joscleyn, a terrorism expert at the Foundation for Defense of democracies, who noted that others were waiting to replace him.

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Poland signs F-35 contract worth $4.6bn

Poland recently signed a deal with Lockheed Martin to purchase 32 F-35As with deliveries to star by 2024. The deal was signed on January 31st at the Polish air force academy in Dublin, the deal will also include training packages and logistical support services.

The Polish aircraft will be outfitted with electronic warfare equipment, also a breaking parachute, to increase land safety in poor weather conditions. The first batch of F-35As are expected to equip the first squadron, which should be declared operational in 2026. The logistical support will be provided until 2030 under the current deal. The costs are yet to have been decided.

As for where the F25As will be based, Warsaw is still nailing down further details. There will be three location sites its current RAC MiG-29s and Sukhoi Su-22s are located (Minsk Mazowiecki, Malbork and Swidwin).

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USAF conducts second test-firing of Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile

The US Airforce has launched an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a single test re-entry vehicle. The launches have taken place at the Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB) in California.

The launches were conducted to validate the accuracy and reliability of the ICBM weapon system. The data collected will be used by the US Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and US Strategic Command for continuing force development evaluation.

30th Space Wing commander colonel Chris Moss said: "The dedication and expertise of the combined 341st Missile Wing, 576th Flight Test Squadron and 30th Space Wing team is simply amazing. Their efforts to make this mission possible over the past ten months shows why they are some of the most skilled operators in the Air Force."

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NATO Eyes Troop Reductions in Afghanistan as U.S. Draws Down

The Trump administration has decided to eventually withdraw several thousand troops from Afghanistan. This has triggered a debate within the 29-country alliance known as North Atlantic Treaty Agreement (NATO). According to American and European officials some members of NATO are considering a withdraw as well of thousands of their troops once the US initiates their draw down.

Many of the nation's believe a draw down would be bets for all involved while Germany and Italy could leave a residual force under certain conditions. The 29 nations are divided as to how to sort out the region and fell the best strategy forward would be "in together out together."

The peace talks between the United States and the Taliban restarted in December. But they remain mired as negotiators wrestle over how to reduce violence first. The Afghan government wants a cease-fire, and the Taliban has scaled back some attacks — but only on cities and main roads.

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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 4, 2020

Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Smisek, L.)

Marine Accounted For From World War II (Koskela, O.)

Marine Accounted For From World War II (Waltz, R.)

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Wise, R.)

USS West Virginia Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Heavin, H.)

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Marine Accounted For From World War II (Cooper, T.)

Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Drews, H.)

Staff Activity:

- Staff attended a Subcommittee on Sea power and Projection Forces and Subcommittee on Readiness Joint Hearing: "Update on Navy and Marine Corps Readiness in the Pacific in the Aftermath of Recent Mishaps"
- Staff attended a Congressional reception on the widow's tax.
- Staff continues to coordinate European engagement trip.
- Staff continues to facilitate and coordinate the congressional reception and panel with the Japanese embassy.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division