National Security Division Report
Week ending March 19, 2021

F-35 in the crosshairs: Despite criticism, America needs the Fighter Jet

The F-35 is in the middle of a public relations storm. With the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith, referring to the program as a "rathole" and news reports attacking the aircraft, the public is left to wonder about America's newest fighter. However, reality dictates a far different conclusion: The F-35 is an operational success.

While the program has challenges that must be rapidly addressed, war-fighting realities demand we stay the course. Air superiority — a fighter's primary mission — is an imperative required for any successful military effort. Ships at sea, forces on the ground, space control stations, and rear echelon bases will stand little chance if subject to enemy aerial attack.

To read the full article, click the link here

THE WAY FORWARD ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Witness Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security

On Wednesday, March 17, 20201, the House Committee on Homeland Security held a virtual hearing with the newly appointed Secretary of Homeland Security, Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas. Secretary Mayorkas took the opportunity to detail the way forward for the Department of Homeland Security.

Secretary Mayorkas stated: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) confronts grave challenges, both seen and unseen, on behalf of the American people. The challenges include a deadly pandemic that has thrown every part of American life off its axis. Cyber-attacks that target the federal government, our nation's critical infrastructure, companies, and individuals alike. Terrorism, both foreign and domestic that endangers our communities and our way of life. Extreme weather events and other impacts of the climate crisis that threaten lives and livelihoods. At the same time, we are rebuilding an immigration system that was systematically dismantled during the prior administration. We are making risk-based investments in our border management system to create safe, legal, and humane pathways to asylum and humanitarian protection.

DHS is, fundamentally, a department of partnerships. Having been back at the Department for approximately 45 days, I continue to witness firsthand the importance of those partnerships. DHS interacts more with the American public daily than any other federal department or agency. To succeed in our mission, the Department must forge close relationships with state, local, tribal, and

territorial (SLTT) governments and law enforcement stakeholders, international partners, other federal agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations Congress.

The Department must do this critical work while always remaining faithful to the law, our mission, and our country's values. Upon entering office, I committed to issuing a long-delayed regulation to implement the bipartisan STOP Act. This law will help reduce the flow of opioids into this country and save lives. I am pleased to say that we have already issued the regulation. I thank members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle, for their leadership and support.

To read Secretary Mayorkas full testimony, click here

Navy's Vision for Future Fleet

The Navy isn't doing a great job of arguing for the service to expand to face the growing maritime threat from China, two members of the House Armed Services sea power and projection forces subcommittee said on Thursday.

In the last month, military leaders have played up the Chinese maritime threat in the Indo-Pacific with a particular emphasis on the rate of new warship construction by the People's Liberation Army Navy, with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command commander Adm. Phil Davidson saying mainland China could invade Taiwan in six years and is on track to dominate the Pacific.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wisc.) said recent studies from the Navy and the Pentagon on expanding U.S. naval forces don't adequately address Beijing's threat.

"If public reporting on wargame trends is correct and the Chinese invasion threat [to Taiwan] is looming in the next six years, where is our sense of urgency?" he said during a virtual event co-hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the U.S. Naval Institute on Thursday. "It would be like defense planners reaching a similar conclusion in 1935 and shoulder-

shrugging the coming crisis. Budgets that stay flat with inflation are not going to cut it. Kicking the can down the road on modernization is not going to cut it."

"By taking four years to come up with a brand-new, shiny, integrated force structure assessment, the Trump administration ended up in functionally the same place as its predecessor, which was laying out a solid plan for naval modernization but leaving the implementation to its successor," Gallagher said. "We don't have any more time to waste. We can't argue about the perfect future fleet architecture. We need to act with a sense of urgency, given the pace of shipbuilding. We can't keep this conversation on the academic level. We need to turn it into action."

To read the full article, click the link Here

DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY
FULFILLING OUR NATION'S PROMISE

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency released the following announcements. Click on the links to read more:

March 18, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Stewart, E.)

March 18, 2021: Marine Accounted For From World War II (Hill, J.)

March 17, 2021: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Valentine, N.)

March 17, 2021: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Smead, W.)

March 17, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Delles, L.)

March 15, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Bradley, C.)

March 15, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Hiskett, D.)

March 15, 2021: Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Parker, R.)

Legislative Issues

- Availability of Healthcare benefits for residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in proposed language of the FY22NDAA – The American Legions support funding that provides long-term solvency and viability of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (Resolution No. 107, 2016)
- Quality of Life for Service members and their Families – We owe our military men and women a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all that they — and their families — sacrifice to serve our country. The American Legion supports a fully funded quality of life (Resolution No. 85, 2016)
- Ensure the Coast Guard is paid – The American Legion supports a fully funded United States Coast Guard (Resolution No. 23, 2016)
- Expedited Citizenship through Honorable Military Service – The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed before discharge (Resolution No. 15, 2018)
- Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure – The American Legion supports refined processes and policies that will enhance interagency cybersecurity and promulgate best practices and standards and ensure the protection of critical infrastructure from cyber and other electronic attacks. (Resolution No. 20, 2017)
- Addressing the Forever Wars – The American Legion advocate for elevating diplomacy to build a better, safer world (Resolution No. 22, 2020)

The Military Women's Memorial honors and tells the stories of women, past and present, who serve our nation. As the only historical repository documenting all military women's service, the memorial educates and inspire through innovative and interactive exhibitions, world-class collections, and engaging programs and events for all generations. The Memorial honor the commitment, contributions and experiences of every woman who serves in, or with, the Armed Forces.

Staff was honored to conduct an in-person social distancing private viewing of the latest exhibit titled 'The Color of Freedom; honoring the Diversity of America's Servicewomen."
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Members of Congress all for measures that would waive citizenship fees for families of Purple Heart Recipients

A new measure introduced in the House Thursday would waive fees for family members of Purple Heart recipients seeking to become American citizens, saving them hundreds of dollars.

The Sergeant First Class Javier Gutierrez Purple Heart Survivor Naturalization Fee Relief Act of 2021 -- introduced by Florida Republican Rep. Michael Waltz and California Democrat Rep. Salud Carbajal -- would eliminate processing fees for parents, spouses, and children of service members who were awarded the Purple Heart.

"The very least we can do to help these Purple Heart and Gold Star families are to help them become Americans," Waltz said in a statement.

Waltz, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a Green Beret in the National Guard, noted that this bill wouldn't speed up the citizenship process for families or eliminate steps; it's strictly intended to waive fees.

The fee to submit the I-360, a petition for American citizenship, is $435. The N-400, an application for naturalization, requires a $640 fee. The fee to process biometrics, including fingerprints, is $85.

The American Legion's National Security Commission is currently working on a resolution that will support this initiative.

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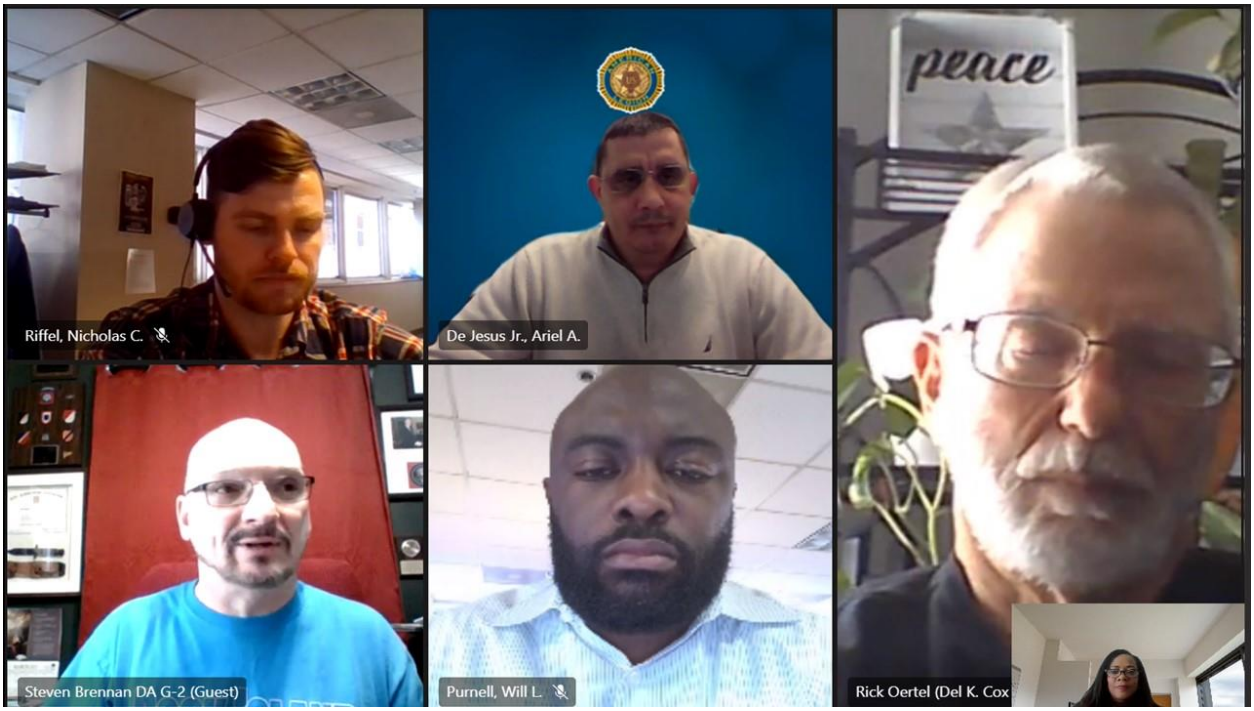
Future of the F-35 Lightning II Program



On Friday, March 19, Director Powell and the National Security staff met with Steven Brennan, National Security Commission Chairman, and Rick Oertel, Aerospace Committee Chairman, to discuss the F-35 Lightning II status Joint Strike Fighter program.

The F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program remains DOD's most expensive weapon system program. DOD is three years into a loose development effort based on Agile software development processes to modernize the F-35 aircraft's capabilities.

The Department of Defense (DOD) delayed essential testing completion until problems with the F-35 aircraft simulator are resolved. In August 2020, the program office determined the aircraft simulator to replicate complex test scenarios that could not be accomplished in real-world environment testing and did not fully represent F-35 capabilities.

On March 1, the Government Accountability Office made three recommendations to DOD, including updating its modernization schedule to reflect achievable time frames, identifying and implementing tools to enable automated data collection on software development performance, and set software quality performance targets. DOD agreed with GAO's recommendations.

Chairman Oertel requested that the team standby for the final results of the Air Force feasibility study. The National Security staff will continue monitoring and providing updates regarding the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program.

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Week ending 03/19/2021