The National Security Division

WEEKLY REPORT

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

This week, The National Security Division, The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, and The Media and Communications Division collaborated to honor and commemorate the Tomb of the Unknown Centennial during our initial planning meeting. The Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is leading national efforts to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the sacred crypts at Arlington National Cemetery. The society plans events in multiple locations in the United States and France to honor the anniversary of the monument that came into existence in 1921 due to legislation from U.S. Rep. Hamilton Fish Jr., a founder of The American Legion, with support from the organization.

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Biden Follows Through On A Campaign Promise To Take In More Refugees

The Biden administration said the U.S. would take in 125,000 refugees and their families next year, fulfilling an earlier pledge to raise a cap that had been cut to a historic low under his predecessor.

The White House set the proposed annual cap in a report to Congress, saying there was unprecedented number of displaced people around the world because of conflict, humanitarian crises and climate change. Administrations make an annual recommendation in consultation with lawmakers.

Officials had earlier announced their intention to raise it to 125,000 for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. "The United States is committed to leading efforts to provide protection and promote durable solutions to humanitarian crises, to include providing resettlement for the most vulnerable," the State Department said Monday in releasing the report.

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Foreign Relations

PROTECTING SCHOOLS, DID IT HELP?

Nick Riffel, 32, served two tours in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2012. Riffel now works as the national security policy advisor for The American Legion, which was involved with advocating for veterans and Afghan allies during the withdrawal. Heading into his first deployment he had hope. Then 6th Marine Regiment went into the massive Battle of Marjah. Forty-five Marines died, many more were injured, an estimated 70 or more Afghan soldiers perished. They did the things Marines do — root out the enemy and fight. Marine Nick Riffel at a mosque in Marjah, Afghanistan in 2010. Riffel deployed twice to the country during his military service. (Nick Riffel)

When he returned to Helmand province a year later as a corporal and infantry team leader, “the whole vibe was different,” he said.
The deployment was more about security for humanitarian efforts. This included a school where interpreters assigned to his unit taught reading, writing and math to children ages six to 10.
“Two out of three times we’d get shot at, we’d get lit up in that position and it was directly related to the Taliban not wanting the children to have, especially, a Western-style education,” Riffel said.

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Marine Nick Riffel at a mosque in Marjah, Afghanistan in 2010. Riffel deployed twice to the country during his military service. (Nick Riffel)

STAFF ACTIVITY

Foreign Relations

- Our staff attend a hearing that takes the perspective of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Joint Chiefs Chair General Mark Milley, and General Kenneth McKenzie, commander of U.S. Central Command, to testify on the Afghanistan withdrawal. The Afghanistan withdrawal critique is met by a joint effort of senior officials who make it a focal point to thank all service members in the war. Moreover, they back the decision of President Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan and his efforts to take troops out as soon as his inauguration. Furthermore, they testified before the Armed Services Committee on September 28, 2021, in the U.S. capital building on behalf of the American defense leadership. Finally, the significance of this hearing is to hear the efforts our administration has undertaken and their account of events that transpired leading to the Afghanistan withdrawal.

- Our staff attended a hearing on the House Armed Services Committee this week. At the House Armed Services Committee Hearing, the committee heard testimonies from Chairman Joints Chief of staff General Mark A. Milley, Secretary of Defense Llyod J. Austin III, and U.S. Central of Command Commander General Kenneth McKenzie Jr. on the logistical failures that erupted from the conclusion of the United States military mission in Afghanistan. During the hearing, these service members outlined the process of communications exchanged between the President, Secretary of State, and the State Departments' rationale regarding how the evacuation process was going to take place. Both parties agreed with the United States armed forces withdrawal from Afghanistan, however disagreements erupted regarding the logistics within the United States final neo evacuation that took place August 31st, 2021. The dispute was about the logistical shortcomings of the events took place, internal and external factors that were not taken into consideration, and lessons learned that will be utilized to optimize future foreign affairs practices. The United States military occupation in Afghanistan has concluded after twenty years, but a new mission is on the horizon of the continuation and renewal of evacuating Afghan allies from endangerment.

The future of Afghanistan and the role of the United States

- As the people of Afghanistan grapple with their new reality under Taliban rule, what can they expect as they attempt to piece together their lives? Nearly six weeks after the shocking and devastating fall of Kabul to the Taliban regime, what are America's options for dealing with the Taliban going forward?

- On September 29, staff attended virtually the Center for Middle East Policy and the Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors at Brookings will co-host a panel discussion taking a multifaceted look at the questions facing the U.S. and the world in dealing with Afghanistan. The event will include a discussion of the Taliban's actions since taking power, and what to expect regarding the future of human and women's rights, economic and counterterrorism policies, as well as the role of the media in Afghanistan. The panel will also explore the options for U.S. policy in Afghanistan and the implications for the Biden administration's grand strategy. The panel featured Vanda Felbab-Brown, Brookings senior fellow and director of the Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors; Madiha Afzal, fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings; Saad Mohseni, director of the MOBY Group; and Fawzia Koofi, Afghan politician and women's rights activist.

DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

FULFILLING OUR NATION'S PROMISE

September 28, 2021

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

September 29, 2021:

- USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (McDonald, J.)
- USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Connolly, K.)
- Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Dowler, D.)
- Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Linder, W.)
- Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Fleeman, A.)

Marine PFC John Paul Langan arrived I Omaha, NE this week. He had been missing in action for nearly 78 years! PFC Langan will be laid to rest this week September 29, 2021, in St. Joseph Cemetery in Columbus, NE. Welcome home!

PROGRAMS

Military Surplus Equipment

- The American Legion has aligned with the U.S Army *TACOM* (Tank - automotive and Armaments Command) Army Donations Program. In doing so were are able to provide our members with ceremonial rifles and static displays to be used in parades, funerals, functions, and decommissioned military equipment displayed at the post.
- In the month of July, the National Security Division supplied...

Rifle - 46

Ammo - 4,960

Static Display - 0

Clips - 0

Departments - 0

Posts - 0

Tank-automotive & Armaments Command

ANNEX

MORE STORIES!

Troops ask the court to block DoD's vaccine requirement

Two service members have filed a complaint against federal government officials, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, hoping that a federal judge will step in and block the military's COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Robert, and Marine Staff Sgt. Hollie Mulvihill filed the complaint on Aug. 17 with Colorado's U.S. district court, alleging that the Defense Department's personnel vaccine rollout is illegal and unconstitutional. The lawsuit followed DoD's August announcement that military members would be required to take the vaccine. The two troops believe they should be exempt from the vaccine mandate because they already had COVID-19, and they're pushing to get the case certified as a class-action lawsuit.

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Multiple reports of assault, robbery among Afghan evacuees at military bases

Two Afghan refugees have been detained, and more are under investigation as the U.S. works to resettle tens of thousands evacuated from Kabul during the final days of the war in Afghanistan. Despite those incidents, including accusations of child molestation, domestic violence, and assaulting a female soldier, Air Force Gen. Glenn VanHerck, head of Northern Command, told reporters Thursday that he had crunched the numbers and found that crime rates in the evacuee resettlement facilities are much lower than in comparable U.S. populations.

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