The National Security Division

WEEKLY REPORT

THE EXPANSION OF US TROOPS GROWS TO 5,200

The U.S. military footprint at Hamid Karzai International Airport has expanded to 5,200 troops, and there are now more gates for entry onto the field, said Army Maj. Gen. William D. "Hank" Taylor, the Joint Staff's deputy director for regional operations. This will help ensure safe and efficient operations for evacuees.

Taylor and Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby held a briefing this morning shortly after an interview with President Joe Biden on the situation in Kabul was broadcast. In that interview, Biden vowed to get Americans, Afghans enrolled in the special immigrant visa program, third country allies and Afghans designated "special risk" out of the country. He left the door open to extending the mission past the August 31 deadline.

"If he believes that there's a need to alter the timeline … he would revisit that at the appropriate time," Kirby said. In the past 24 hours, 13 C-17s arrived with additional troops and equipment, and 12 C-17s departed carrying more than 2,000 people, Taylor said. These flights left Kabul and arrived at designated safe havens and staging areas in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

Since the start of non-combatant evacuation operations on August 14, the military has airlifted about 7,000 evacuees.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

It is very challenging watching the media coverage on evacuating Americans and Afghan allies from Afghanistan. As our advocacy efforts continue, we would like to say to every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, Coast Guardsman who conducted operations in Afghanistan, you are appreciated. Because of your actions, there has not been an attack on American soil for 20 years. Click here to TALK ABOUT IT

https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/

Afghanistan: Let's Talk About It

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Foreign Relations Committee

Will Afghanistan Become a Terrorist Safe Haven Again?

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power is a victory for al Qaeda. But just how much of a win is it? This question is at the heart of the Biden administration's decision to withdraw from the country. Defending his choice despite the chaos and horror descending on Afghanistan as the government collapsed, President Joe Biden declared on Monday, "Our only vital national interest in Afghanistan remains today what it has always been: preventing a terrorist attack on [the] American homeland."

Republicans are taking Biden to task on this very point. Representative Michael McCaul, a Republican from Texas and the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, warned, "We are going to go back to a pre-9/11 state—a breeding ground for terrorism." General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, cautioned that al Qaeda and the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) could quickly rebuild their networks in Afghanistan.

The risk of an al Qaeda comeback is real, but Afghanistan's reversion to its pre-9/11 role as a safe haven for jihadi terrorism is unlikely. Although the Taliban's victory will undoubtedly make Washington's counterterrorism policy far harder to carry out, al Qaeda's weakness, the Taliban's own incentives, and post-9/11 improvements in U.S. intelligence coordination, homeland security, and remote military operations all reduce the threat.

With the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban triumph, the jihadi world gains a propaganda victory similar to one it experienced more than 30 years ago. A core myth of the modern jihadi movement is that foreign fighters battling to oust the Soviet Union from Afghanistan were not only crucial to Moscow's defeat in 1989 but also sped the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in general. This myth persisted even though foreign volunteers were not militarily important in the overall anti-Soviet struggle.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Foreign Relations Committee

Will Afghanistan Become a Terrorist Safe Haven Again?

Like 800,000 other service members who served in Afghanistan, the conflict in that nation is personal to Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "We have a moral obligation to help those who helped us," he said. "I feel the urgency, deeply."

Austin spoke directly to the force during his press conference. "I know that these are difficult days for those who lost loved ones in Afghanistan and for those who carry the wounds of war," he said. "Especially now, we mourn those who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. Let me say to their families and loved ones, our hearts are with you. And the U.S. military stands as one to honor those we've lost.

"Afghan war veterans aren't some monolith," he continued. "I'm hearing strong views from all sides on this issue. And that's probably the way that it should be. What's important is that each of us will work our way through this in our own way. We need to respect that and we need to give one another the time and space to help do it. Our greatest asset as a nation is the extraordinary men and women who volunteer to keep us all safe and their families. We honor your service. We understand your sacrifice and we will never forget."

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Foreign Relations Committee

U.S. Army Update to Partners on Afghanistan
As of August 19, 2021

Army Support to the US Central Command mission at the Hamid Karzai International Airport, Afghanistan

- The Army is providing significant support to the Joint force securing the Hamid Karzai International Airport to enable the safe departure of U.S. and allied personnel from Afghanistan via civilian and military flights.
- The Army is providing housing, medical, and logistical support as part of DOD's assistance to the Department of State program to temporarily house Afghan special immigrants and their families awaiting Special Immigrant Visas at Fort Lee and is prepared to support at Fort Bliss and Fort McCoy.
- For twenty years, U.S. Army Soldiers served honorably and performed the mission they were given. We encourage all our Soldiers, including Soldiers for Life, to reach out to Afghanistan veterans, hear their stories, and tell them we are proud of them.
- Military members interested in confidential help may contact 800-342-9647 or visit militaryonesource.mil.
- Many media and NGO colleagues have reached out to members of our PA community for information and assistance about transportation out of Afghanistan. Please forward requests to the Department of State at ATF-TF3@State.gov. Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations Hotline – (888) 407-4747, (202) 501-4444.

Additional Resources

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- Department of State (for requests for evacuation assistance)
- Afghanistan Logistics Task Force – ATF-TF3@State.gov and
- AfghanistanLogisticsTF@groups.state.gov -mailto: AfghanistanLogisticsTF@groups.state.gov
- Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations Hotline – (888) 407-4747, (202) 501-4444
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans Crisis Line – (800) 273-8255, text 838255, http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Foreign Relations Committee

UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

17 August 2021

Soldiers, Civilians, Family members and Soldiers for Life:

Over the past two decades, you have answered the call to serve our great Nation when needed. The sacrifices you've made, have and will be a lasting legacy of honor and commitment for all to remember.

As we all reflect on the events of this past week in Afghanistan, I want you to know how much I appreciate your service and your sacrifice and I could not be more proud of what you have accomplished. We have Soldiers presently supporting combatant commanders around the world and I know that you will continue to serve with honor and valor when called upon.

The attacks on September 11, 2001, reminded us of the true strength of our Nation and our military. You are a reflection of what makes us the best Army in the world and I ask that you remain committed as we work to get through this tough time.

In the next few days and weeks, I'd ask that you check in on your teammates as well as our Soldiers for Life, who may be struggling with the unfolding events. We will continue to move forward and serve our Nation with honor and dignity.

PROUD TO SERVE WITH YOU!

James C. McConville
General, United States Army

Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee

The Military Hunger Prevention Act (H.R. 2339 & S. 1488):
Bipartisan legislation that financially supports low-income active servicemembers and their families, to give basic needs allowance from the DoD that gives them the proper support to pay for necessities food and toiletries. This bill displays a sustained effort to break down barriers low-income military families face, such as being denied benefits that have hindered their ability to put food on the table. A basic needs allowance will be paid to active duty service members

- Resolution No. 85: Support for Military Quality of Life Standards

Unemployment, and underemployment among spouses is a leading contributor to military low-income families resulting in Food Insecurity

In addition to spousal unemployment and underemployment, other realities of military life stress families' budgets, including non-reimbursed costs of moving and the costs of off-base housing when on-base housing is unavailable or insufficient to meet families' needs. Young families in particular may lack skills and experience necessary to manage family finances.

For military families seeking federal assistance via the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the method of determining SNAP eligibility is considered inconsistent at best and problematic at worst. For servicemembers who live on base, the income USDA uses to assess SNAP eligibility does not include the cost of on-base housing, as this cost is subtracted from the servicemember's pay.

Unconventional Forces & Intelligence Committee

H.R. 2326 - Veterans' Cyber Risk Awareness Act:
This bill requires the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to conduct a communications and outreach campaign to educate veterans about cyber risks. These risks can include disinformation, identity theft, scams, and fraud spread via the internet or social media.

NSA to National Security Employees: Avoid Working on Public Wi-Fi

The NSA on Thursday released guidance for National Security System, Defense Department, and defense industrial base users describing how to identify vulnerable connections and protect common wireless technologies when working on public networks. US-CERT on Friday shared the guidance as well.

The first best practice, according to NSA, is to simply avoid connecting to public Wi-Fi at all. Instead, it's best to connect using personal or corporately-owned hotspots—just not open Wi-Fi hotspots. Hotspots should feature strong authentication and encryption, too, according to the guidance.

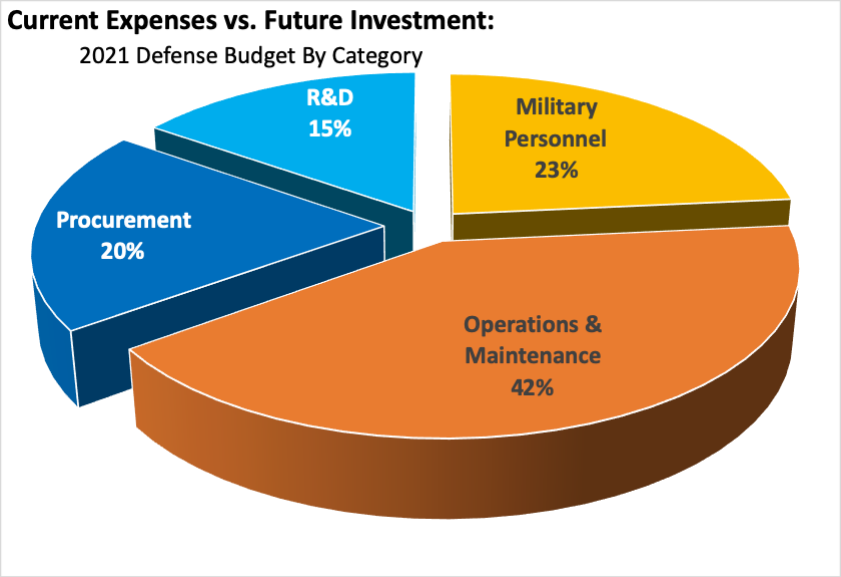
But when it can't be avoided, work on a public Wi-Fi network should be conducted over a corporate-provided virtual private network, or VPN. That way, traffic can be encrypted, and data traversing public Wi-Fi will be less vulnerable to theft. Users should also stick to Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure—https://—websites whenever possible. For laptops, users should also turn off the device file and printer sharing features on public networks. If possible, laptop users should use virtual machines, according to NSA.

It's also best to avoid entering sensitive passwords, conducting sensitive conversations, or accessing personal data like bank and medical information. Online shopping and other financial transactions should be avoided, too.

Leaving devices unattended in public settings is a no-no as well. And when naming a device, users should avoid putting their own name in the title, according to the guidance. Instead, devices should be updated with the latest patches and secured through multi-factor authentication whenever possible.

STAFF ACTIVITY

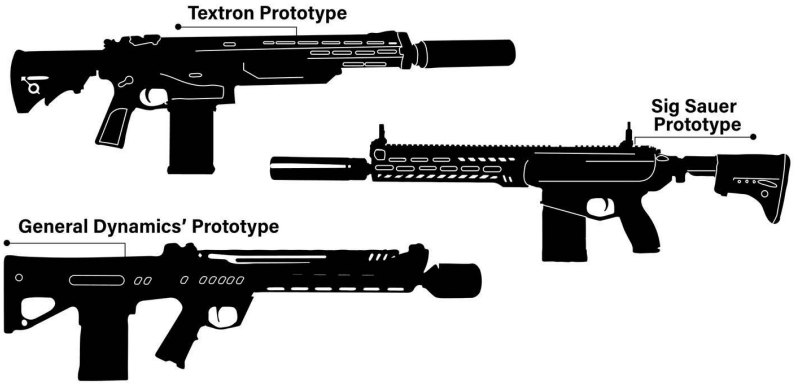
Conventional Armed Forces Committee



Every year the Pentagon develops a global force management plan to determine how it will deploy assets around the world. But the Defense Department's regional combatant commanders are allowed to ask for more, and they often do. A bipartisan group of House members is now concerned those additional requests for forces have become so routine that are hurting military readiness by stretching the forces too thin. In a new letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, they asked several questions about whether it's time to rethink DoD's force management practices.

Click here to read more

New in 2021: Army to pick a replacement for SAW and M4 for soldiers, Marines, and special operators



The Army in 2021 will select from among the three companies vying to build the Army's replacement for both the M4 carbine and Squad Automatic Weapon.

The Next Generation Squad Automatic Weapon project has been in the works for the past three years and, if completed and implemented, would mark the first substantial change in conventional small arms that the U.S. military has seen since the mid-20th century when it adopted the M16 service rifle in 5.56mm.

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

August 11, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Williams, J.)
August 12, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Carney, H.)

US Army Corps of Engineers Archaeologist Aids POW/MIA Team - Indo-Pacific

Welcome Home After 70 Years

A somber ceremony Wednesday at Arlington National Cemetery brought tears, salutes, and the scenes we've seen so often, along with grateful closure for the family of a fallen Korean War soldier from Powell Butte who had been listed as missing in action for nearly seven decades, until his remains were returned and identified.

The services for Corporal Norvin Brockett had been delayed by about a year due to COVID-19 restrictions. But for Katherine Gandara, the niece he'd never met, and for others in the family, it was finally time to say both hello and goodbye, and it also was time for the Army and his country to finally be able to thank him for his service and to bid farewell with the respect afforded in a burial with full military honors.

Brockett was only 17 when he convinced his parents to let him fight for his country, and just 18 when, in December 1950, the member of Battery A, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team was reported missing in action when his unit was attacked by enemy forces in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea.

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 - 20

Ammo - 7,440

Static Display - 2

Clips - 10

Departments - 5

Posts - 6

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

Tank-automotive & Armaments Command

ANNEX

MORE STORIES!

When Disasters Strike, Your Military Responds

Being prepared when a disaster strikes could be the difference between life and death. Not just a fighting force, the U.S. military applies warfighting skills and assets to help protect the homeland. Service members train and prepare year-round so when hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, and even volcanoes erupt, troops are ready to help those in harm's way.

Click here to read more

USSF establishes 2nd Field Command, Guetlein assumes command

The U. S. Space Force established the second of its three field commands in a ceremony here Aug. 13, as Space Force Lt. Gen. Michael A. Guetlein assumed command of Space Systems Command. Speaking during the establishment ceremony, Space Force Chief of Space Operations Gen. John W. "Jay" Raymond emphasized the important work that lies ahead for Guardians and Airmen of SSC. "America relies on space, and our strategic competitors are targeting space because of this reliance and the advantage space provides," Raymond said.

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Northrop bows out of the competition to build laser weapons for Strykers

Northrop Grumman is no longer in the running to build a powerful laser weapon system for the U.S. Army's Short-Range Air Defense System, sources tell Defense News.

While testing the 50-kilowatt laser module on the SHORAD system late last year, a fire broke out, according to sources with knowledge of the incident but not authorized to speak publicly. The fire was related to the power and thermal management system integrated onto the platform to support the laser module, the sources said.

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