National Security Division Report
Week ending 23 October 2020

SECDEF Repeats U.S. Commitment to Guarantee Israel's Qualitative Edge

Esper repeated the American commitment after meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz in the Pentagon. It was the second visit of the future Israeli prime minister to the Pentagon in less than a month. "It was important for me once again to reaffirm the special relationship between our two countries, the commitment we made to Israel security that's based on our shared values, our shared history and the commonalities between our two peoples," Esper said. " I want to thank you for your personal efforts in the past few weeks, and I want to state again, how committed we are to Israel's qualitative military edge when it comes to defense sales, and our commitment to Israel security, which has been long-standing and guaranteed and ironclad."
Gantz thanked the secretary for the guarantees and praised the bipartisan consensus around aid to Israel. "I want to thank the American administration for supporting it," Gantz said. "Now that we are entering an era of good and positive normalization processes in the Middle East, which actually can face aggressive Iran over all the region. This continued cooperation, I would say, is so very important."
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Already facing grueling year, National Guard revs up for election and aftermath

The National Guard, already facing one of its busiest years, is prepping for election-related missions that include cybersecurity for local electoral authorities, ballot counting in at least one state and backup for police or if unrest erupts after the vote.

The preparations come as the United States heads into one of its most contentious presidential elections, which is taking place in the middle of a global pandemic and amid persistent suggestions by President Trump that he may dispute the results if he loses. Parts of the country have also been experiencing racial justice protests and environmental threats ranging from wildfires to hurricanes, which have further stretched a Guard already on the front lines responding to the pandemic.

The Guard's domestic deployments this year under state authorities reached a peak of 86,367 forces in June, according to a spokeswoman for the National Guard, far larger than the approximately 50,000 guardsmen who deployed domestically to respond to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. There are about 450,000 members of the National Guard across the country.

For the election, some Guard units are preparing to deploy under "state active duty" status, meaning they will answer to the governor of their states and use state funds. Some units could deploy outside their states after the election if a governor requests help handling post-election unrest.

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Russia, U.S. trade blame over armored vehicle skirmish in Syria

Leaders from U.S. and Russian militaries are stepping up their war of words over a collision involving armored vehicles in Syria on Tuesday that injured seven U.S. service members.

The Russians displayed "deliberately provocative and aggressive behavior" and did not use established channels to request passage through the eastern Syria security area near Dayrick on Tuesday, U.S. Central Command spokesperson Capt. Bill Urban said in a late Thursday statement.

Following its "unauthorized incursion" into the area, the Russian convoy met a joint patrol of U.S. and Syrian Democratic Forces troops and proceeded to "aggressively and recklessly pursue" the coalition convoy, Urban said. The encounter included a "sideswipe" of a U.S. vehicle and an "extremely low level overflight" by a Russian helicopter.

The seven soldiers sustained "mild concussive-type injuries and muscular strains consistent with vehicular crashes," Urban said. All have returned to duty.

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POW/MIA Update

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

October 15, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Jones, C.)
October 15, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Gooch, G.)
October 15, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Wimmer, B.)
October 15, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Treadway, S.)
October 19, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Kyser, D.)
October 19, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Flanagan, J.)
October 19, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Johnson, E.)
October 19, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Perdue, C.)

October 19, 2020: USS West Virginia Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Barnett, W.)
October 20, 2020: Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Smith, E.)
October 21, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Butts, R.)

Legislative Issue Tracker

Below is legislation the National Security Division is tracking in Congress. New bills are highlighted in yellow. Click on the bill numbers to see more information about the bills.

Bill #	Short Title
H.R.8494	To reaffirm the critical role of congressional consultation and to require appropriate deliberation to assess the effects of the sale or export of major defense equipment to countries in the Middle East on the qualitative military edge of Israel
S. Res. 510/H. Res. 910	A resolution commending the people of Taiwan on holding free and fair democratic presidential and legislative elections, and congratulating Madame Tsai Ing-wen on her re-election to the presidency of Taiwan
H. RES. 1012	Recognizing the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War
H.R. 3508/ S.1634	South China Sea Sanctions
H.R.367	Pay Our Coast Guard Parity Act of 2019
S.2297	Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019
H.R. 4710	The bipartisan Pharmaceutical Independence Long-Term Readiness Reform Act

H.R. 303	Retired Pay Restoration Act
H.R. 4890	The Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 5151	Honoring the Oath Act
S.2794	Bring Our Heroes Home Act
H.R.6395	FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act
S. 3393	A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.
S. 1041	Veterans Visa and Protection Act of 2019
S. 3732	A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to further protect officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes
S 1218/HR 2249	World War I Valor Medals Review Act
H.R.4807	Cold War Service Medal Act
H.Con,Res 10	Authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol to honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient of the Second World War upon death.
S. 3258	SHIPS Implementation Act
H.R.3233	National Defense Strategy Implementation Act

Click on the link below to open an Excel spreadsheet to see the full legislative tracker:https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KgPaIfx04RA13m20qLDh5br8dyxiupVX5Dc5ByZteRQ/edit?usp=sharing

Staff Activity:

- National Security Staff virtually attended The Space Force Association's webinar hosted by Bill Wolf, President and Founder, who provided expertise and analysis on U.S. Space Force policy, strategy, and operation decisions. Encouraged audience to become familiar with the space capstone publication *Space Power*; key doctrine for Space Force.
- National Security Staff continues to work on the strategic engagement plan documenting how the division will implement the six (6) resolutions adopted during the 2020 Fall National Executive Committee Meeting.
- National Security Staff welcomes and congratulates all of the new appointments to the National Security Commission, Committee, Liaison, and Council. Correspondence via regular mail will soon follow.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division