National Security Division Report
Week ending 25 September 2020

Space and an All-Domain Future

Dr. Mark J. Lewis, Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering joins other experts to discuss "New Orbit: Space and an All-Domain Future." Noted were the 11 modernization interactive priorities across the New Orbit Space and an All-Domain future to conduct essential joint command, control and communication connectivity operations across land, sea, air, and space.

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Lawmakers Tussle Over Role Of Extremists In Protest-Related Violence

Republicans, Democrats and witnesses on Thursday were fighting in microcosm the national political argument over the demonstrations — and some violence — that have followed the police killing of George Floyd earlier this year.

The often-bitter debate, which played out Thursday at a House Homeland Security Committee hearing, is about the political legitimacy of that movement. Its supporters, mostly Democrats in this context, argued that it is a true grassroots response to injustice and bias by law enforcement. Only a small number of those taking part cause any problem, supporters say.

Critics, most of whom were Republicans in this hearing, focused on antifa, which they described as a well-organized domestic terror organization. They pressed FBI Director Christopher Wray about what they called antifa's sources of funding and asked him what the bureau is doing to rid it.

Wray tried to take pains to describe the FBI's perspective, which is different from the characterizations made by the members of Congress. Antifa, he said, is a "real thing," but he also characterized it as more of an "ideology or a movement," as opposed to a terror organization.

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Senate Skeptical Of F-35 Sale To UAE Despite White House Push

A top State Department official today skirted answering questions over the Trump administration's possible sale of F-35s to the UAE in the face of bipartisan Senate concern over Israel's continued military superiority in the region.

Asked about reports of the deal, the undersecretary of State for political affairs David Hale told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee there are talks ongoing about the UAE's "security needs," adding he was not aware if UAE had submitted a letter of request, a move needed to formally kick off the arms sale process in Washington.

What most concerned committee chairman Jim Risch and ranking member Bob Menendez was maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge, enshrined in US law.

Hale pledged that the administration would closely vet any possible sale and consult with the Israelis before moving forward, an answer that didn't go far enough for several senators.

"With all due respect, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if Israel's the only country in the Middle East that has F-35s, that selling it to someone else no longer produces that qualitative military edge in the air," Menendez shot back.

Earlier this month, President Trump said he would have "no problem" selling the F-35 to the United Arab Emirates, despite discomfort expressed by the Israelis over remaining the only regional power in the Middle East with the aircraft.

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Nuclear Weapons: NNSA Should Further Develop Cost, Schedule, and Risk Information for the W87-1 Warhead Program

The National Nuclear Security Administration plans to replace the W78—an older type of nuclear warhead used in intercontinental ballistic missiles—with the W87-1, starting in 2030. But it's unclear if NNSA can produce enough of the W87-1's fissile cores in time to meet its planned production schedule.

NNSA estimated that the new warhead could cost up to $14.8 billion, which could make it the most expensive program of this type to date. Upcoming design decisions for the weapon could affect cost. But the agency didn't have formal plans to assess the costs and benefits of these decisions.

Source: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Braydon Williams. | GAO-20-703

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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:

September 22, 2020: Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Eggud, G.)
September 22, 2020: Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Jeffers, O.)
September 22, 2020: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Daniels, B.)
September 23, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Owsley, A.)

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
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 continue preparations for the upcoming Fall NEC meetings to be held virtually October 14-15, 2020.
- 22 September, Staff participated in the Conservative Working Group weekly teleconference hosted by Republican leadership in the Senate. Among the topics discussed were updates on funding the Federal government after October 1 as current appropriations expire at the end of September. On this same day, late evening of 22 September, the House passed a continuing resolution that funds the government until 11 December. On Thursday 24 September, the Senate held a procedural vote to set them up for a final vote early next week, avoiding a possible government shutdown.
- 23 September, Staff participated in an MSO/VSO Roundtable with the Under Secretary of Defense Matthew Donovan, joined by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Tom McCaffrey, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Vee Penrod, and Executive Director for Force Resiliency Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle. A multitude of topics were discussed to include the challenges of the impact of COVID-19 on military personnel and their families during transition under the DoD Travel Restrictions. The Panel discussed and identified unmet gaps and promising policy updates to help mitigate those gaps to improve the quality of life for military personnel and their families and lends improvement to force readiness.
- 24 September, at the invitation of the White House, National Security Staff joined other Legion DC Staff at an event on the South Lawn as part of the initiatives of the White House Visitors Office resuming public tours with efforts to ensure the safety and health of all visitors. The Staff observed the arrival and take-off of the president's helicopter, Marine One.
- 25 September, Staff participated in a virtual event hosted by the Brookings Institute on the topic of "The needs of America's veterans." Experts explored how veterans have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, toxic exposures, military sexual trauma, access to health care, and more. More information is available here.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division