VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

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September 30 – October 4, 2024

Meetings

- NS Staff participated in an MSO/VSO round table hosted by the Department of Defense. The focus was on sustaining Reserve Component readiness and well-being, with additional discussion on the impact of these issues on Active-Duty personnel and families in similar circumstances.

- NS Staff met with a coalition comprising national security experts and former diplomats. The focus was advocating for the United States to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) during the forthcoming lame-duck session of Congress.

- NS Staff accompanied NVC Mathison to Taiwan's National Day Reception, where we were introduced to the Ambassador to the United States.

- NS Staff watched a Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) event titled *"Conflict and Displacement in Sudan: The Urgent Need to Reduce Barriers to Humanitarian Response"* as a part of ongoing research on the civil war. The humanitarian crisis is exacerbating instability across the region and could create a domino effect of violence.

- NS Staff participated in a webcast hosted by the Brookings Institution titled *"The 2024 Knight Forum on Geopolitics."* The forum provides an overview and insights into the state of the world order and the long-term effects of wars and crises worldwide.

- NS Staff watched a CSIS seminar on the United Nations cybercrime convention to understand better how U.S. cybersecurity and governance compared to our allies and adversaries.

- NS Staff virtually attended a Brookings Institution event titled *"The United States and China in Latin America: Rivalry, Cooperation, or Something In-between?"* to compare U.S.-China competition in Latin America to China's winning strategy across the African continent.

- NS Staff virtually attended an event from the Washington Institute titled *"U.S. Policy in the Post-October 7 Middle East,"* which can be viewed here.

- NS Staff participated in a working group focused on the Richard Star Act, where we received updates on the bill's status and the ongoing efforts to ensure its inclusion in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

- NS Staff participated in a meeting about DoD Libraries and Tuition Assistance. The conversation highlighted the budget for DoD Libraries in the NDAA and expanding access to veterans.

- NS Staff facilitated a meeting with the Resolution Screening Committee and followed up with a meeting with the National Security Commission to review resolutions in preparation for the upcoming NEC meeting.

Policy

- NS Staff began researching the potential creation of a US Cyber force within the Department of Defense (DOD). Congress has proposed such an agency in the FY2025 NDAA, but DOD objects. Staff hopes to complete the research in the coming two weeks.

- NS Staff wrote a two-page brief for leadership on the Iranian missile barrage against Israel and is following updates on potential retaliatory strikes.

- NS Staff continues to monitor the Ukraine-Russia war and recently wrote a brief on developments in Ukraine's eastern axis, focusing on the loss of Vuhledar, a key city along the Donetsk frontline.

- NS Staff has prepared a letter outlining the FY25 NDAA provisions we recommend retaining in the final bill. Key provisions include enhanced access for military recruiters in secondary schools, pay raises for junior enlisted personnel, expanded eligibility for the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA), funding and staffing for child development centers, improved healthcare access for military families, increased suicide prevention programs, and amendments to the Afghan SIV Program.

- NS Staff has prepared talking points outlining the potential impacts of another continuing resolution or a government shutdown in anticipation of the December 2024 deadline. These talking points address key concerns, including the effects on defense operations and government services and the broader implications for national security and economic stability.

- NS Staff has finalized all documents and materials in preparation for the upcoming National Executive Committee meeting.

- NS Staff completed follow-up research on the newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba’s proposal to revise the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement.

Programs

- NS Staff fulfilled TACOM/JMC requests while educating the departments on the correct documents to send to the National Headquarters.

The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment

- Items requested: Ammo- 14,880; Rifles- 46; Clip- 150 Static Display- 0
- Requests submitted by: Posts- 15; Departments- 10

POW/MIA

Oct. 2, 2024

- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Zarifian, J.)
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DPAA has identified/repatriated 169 service members this year.

Be The One (BTO)

In alignment with the "Be The One" campaign, it is encouraging to see Behavioral Health leaders from Defense Health Network East and Military Readiness Command East gathered here to share best practices and highlight new programs to enhance care. Read more

Focus Topic:

Afghan Resettlement Webinar Next Week

If you are interested in learning more about sponsoring Afghan Allies who assisted the US military during the war in Afghanistan, please tune in to the upcoming webinar next week.

On October 10, at 3 pm, the organization Welcome Corps is hosting a webinar about sponsoring Afghans through the Welcome Corps program. Speakers include:

- A resettled Afghan refugee
- An experienced sponsor who recently welcomed an Afghan family
- Experts from the State Dept., Welcome.US, and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security

Please use this link to sign up! Webinar Registration - Zoom