NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION REPORT

National Security Division Report
Week ending May 7, 2021

Air Force Aborts ICBM Test After Problem on the Ground

The U.S. Air Force aborted the test launch of an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, after an undisclosed issue on the ground, the service announced Wednesday.

The incident is under investigation, Air Force Global Strike Command, which oversaw the launch, said in a release.

"The Air Force adheres to strict protocols while performing operational test launches, only launching when all safety parameters with the test range and missile are met," the command said in the release. Officials are assessing when the launch can be rescheduled.

"There has not been an incident like this in recent memory. However, the missile did exactly what it was designed to do. During the terminal countdown, the missile computer detected a fault in the sequence of checks it does prior to launching. Upon detection of this fault, it shut itself down," Air Force Global Strike Command said in a later statement.

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Resolution No. 160: United States Military Forces In Peacekeeping Operations

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Military Panel Urges Taking Sexual Assault Cases Out Of Commanders' Control

A special Pentagon panel recommends a seismic shift in how the U.S. military handles sexual assault cases, saying independent judge advocates, not commanding officers, should decide whether to pursue legal charges in such cases.

Such a shift would run counter to years of military practice. The Pentagon has long resisted the idea of taking sexual assault cases outside of the standard chain of command.

The decision of whether to put the panel's recommendations into practice now rests with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who created the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military on President Biden's orders.

"Sexual assault and harassment remain persistent and corrosive problems across the total force," Austin said when he created the panel. "I expect every member of our total force to be part of the solution and leaders — both civilian and military — across the Department to take direct accountability to drive meaningful change."

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Resolution No. 67: Military Sexual Trauma

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 26, 27, 28, 2014, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense (DOD) to improve its investigation and prosecution of reported cases of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) to be on par with the civilian system

More than 130 House Lawmakers Push to Ramp Up F-35 Purchase

More than 130 members of the House of Representatives have signed a letter urging continued financial support for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, signaling a potential roadblock for lawmakers hoping to cut F-35 procurement in fiscal 2022.

An April 28 letter called on the leadership of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Appropriations Committee's defense subpanel to fully fund the Defense Department's request for F-35s during FY22, as well as any additional F-35s listed in the service's unfunded requirements list.

The Letter — signed by 132 lawmakers in total — was authored by the co-chairs of the Joint Strike Fighter Caucus: Reps. John Larson, D-Conn.; Marc. Veasey, D-Texas; Michael Turner, R-Ohio; and Chris Stewart, R-Utah.

"We are concerned that any cuts in the Fiscal Year 2022 will leave the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps with a capability gap that legacy aircraft or new variants thereof cannot fulfill, while also

reducing the enterprise's ability to continue cost reduction activities at the planned rates, ultimately adding unnecessary life cycle cost into the system," the lawmakers stated.

The Letter comes weeks after a heated House Armed Services Committee hearing on the program, where the chairmen of two HASC subcommittees warned they might cut purchases of the aircraft in FY22. Over the past month, HASC Chairman Adam Smith repeatedly voiced concerns about the program's cost.

The American Legion will continue to monitor this situation. It is imperative that our military is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and that its personnel are fully trained. This would align with National Security's Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

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Resolution No. 35: National Defense Budget

RESOLVED, That Congress never allows our military forces to reach a weakened state in these uncertain and perilous times.

April 30, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Ufford, R.)
April 30, 2021: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Helms, H.)

Legislative Issues

• Availability of Healthcare benefits for residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in proposed language of the FY22NDAA – The American Legions support funding that provides long-term solvency and viability of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (Resolution No. 107, 2016)

• Quality of Life for Service members and their Families – We owe our military men and women a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all that they — and their families — sacrifice to serve our country. The American Legion supports a fully fun• Ensure the Coast Guard is paid – The American Legion supports a fully funded United States Coast Guard (Resolution No. 23, 2016)

• Expedited Citizenship through Honorable Military Service – The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed before discharge (Resolution No. 15, 2018)

• Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure – The American Legion supports refined processes and policies that will enhance interagency cybersecurity and promulgate best practices and standards

and ensure the protection of critical infrastructure from cyber and other electronic attacks. (Resolution No. 20, 2017)

• Addressing the Forever Wars – The American Legion advocate for elevating diplomacy to build a better, safer world (Resolution No. 22, 2020)

Staff Activity:

-Staff, along with National Commander Bill Oxford, participated in a virtual meeting with the U.S. National Security Council to discuss the need to expedite Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan Interpreters/Translators. Expressed was The American Legion's support to the White House in protecting those who played an essential and valuable role in assisting our Troops while conducting essential missions.

-Staff conducted a courtesy call with the Embassy of Afghanistan's Defense Attache` COL Abdul Hadi Barakzai, to express our support for Afghans Interpreters. They stood shoulder to shoulder with our U.S. Troops while serving in significant combat operations during multiple campaigns. A follow-on meeting will be scheduled to meet and greet Her Excellency, H.E. Roya Rahmani, Afghan Ambassador to the United States.

-Staff followed up on the Letter to the Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and concurrently requested desk-side briefs on Afghanistan and Iraq with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in direct support of the Special Immigrant Visa Program for Afghan and Iraqi Interpreters/Translators and their families.

-Staff participated in a virtual MSO/VSO Roundtable with the Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on multiple topics impacting veterans and their families. Of note, The American Legion expressed concerns over multiple DoD Memorandums outlining potential removal of and impacts on VSOs conducting services on military installations. SECDEF assured the stabilization of VSOs on military installations both domestic and abroad and expressed his concerns for any misunderstandings.

-Staff joined The American Legion's virtual Spring National Executive Committee Meeting May 5-6, 2021, where the National Security Chairman Steven A. Brennan recommended approval for three resolutions to include opposing deportation for non-citizen immigrant veterans; opposing deportation for family members of non-citizen immigrant; and updates to the Spirit of Service Award to include the U.S. Space Force award. In addition, the recommendation included the N.S. Commission resolution to rescind 98 prior resolutions

-After conducting a successful interview for a Volunteer Academic Summer Intern from The Washington Center's Internship Program, staff submitted a requisition. In the nation's capital, this volunteer summer internship opportunity allows college students to gain real-world experience, connections in their degree field, and a feasible and suitable plan for life after graduation. The experience gained from volunteering for the National Security Division will provide valuable knowledge on how U.S. National Security and Foreign Relation policies are formulated, reviewed, and implemented.

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