National Security Division Report

Week ending 10 July 2020

Defense spending bill includes $1M for Army to change Confederate base names

(The Hill) House Democrats' version of the annual defense spending bill would give the Army $1 million to help remove Confederate names from bases and other property.

The bill would set aside $1 million from the Army's operations and maintenance account to use on "expenses for the renaming of Army installations, facilities, roads and streets named after confederate leaders and officers," according to draft text released by the House Appropriations Committee.

A Democratic summary of the bill said the money would be provided because "the Army has the preponderance of the entities to change." The Army has 10 bases named after Confederate military officers.

It's the latest move in Congress to nudge or require the Pentagon to rename properties that have Confederate monikers as President Trump continues to express opposition to the move.

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Military's top officer is open to renaming Army posts honoring Confederate generals

(Military Times) Despite clear opposition from President Donald Trump, the Joint Chiefs chairman on Wednesday expressed support for the idea of renaming 10 Army posts named for Confederate generals. During testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Army Gen. Mark Milley took a hard line against the losing side of the Civil War, and left open the discussion for removing symbols from the armed forces that would glorify it.

“I personally think that the original decisions to name those bases after Confederate generals … those were political decisions …100 years ago,” he said. “And they’re going to be political decisions today.”

Milley suggested a commission be created to look into renaming the posts. The Southern installations, including Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Fort Lee, Virginia; were named by their Congress members, in a nod to Confederate heroes.

The idea of changing the names has bubbled up several times in the past few years, but the initiative has been passed from the Army to the Defense Department to Congress and back again, with little motivation from those organizations to make that change.

But in the wake of this summer’s Black Lives Matter movement, and subsequent conversations about race in America, the effort has gained traction in Congress and within DoD.

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Africa must adopt 'aggressive approach' against COVID-19

(Al Jazeera) African countries need to urgently ramp up their efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus, a regional disease control body has said, as the number of confirmed cases in the continent exceeded half a million. The call on Thursday by John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) came as he warned new infections across Africa rose by 24 percent in the past week.

"The pandemic is gaining full momentum," he told a virtual news conference from Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, urging countries to increase testing and the use of face masks. "We must adopt an aggressive and bold approach: #maskonallfaces, ramp up Test, Trace, and Treat, strengthen community response. This will save lives and save (the) economy," he added on Twitter.

Of the 512,039 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the continent, 71 percent have been reported in just five countries: South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana and Algeria.

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A B-52 exercises Dynamic Force Employment with Joint partners in Indo-Pacific

(U.S. Strategic Command) One B-52 Stratofortress bomber from the 96th Bomb Squadron, 2nd Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, took off from home station and participated in a maritime integration exercise with the USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike groups in the South China Sea before landing at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The B-52 flew the 28-hour mission to demonstrate U.S. Indo-Pacific Command’s commitment to the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

This was part of a bomber task force dynamic force employment used by U.S. Strategic Command to conduct training with and in support of Geographic Combatant Commands efforts to help maintain global stability and security. These type of missions support the National Defense Strategy's objectives of strategic predictability and operational unpredictability.

"Bomber Task Force demonstrates U.S. capability to rapidly deploy to a forward operating base and execute long-range strike missions," said Lt. Col. Christopher Duff, 96th Bomb Squadron commander. "This sortie demonstrates our ability to reach out from home station, fly anywhere in the world and execute those missions, rapidly regenerate from a forward operating base and continue operations."

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Why the 'Old Normal' Along the Sino-Indian Border Can No Longer Stand

China's fait accompli in Eastern Ladakh has disintegrated more than two decades of bilateral mechanisms and understandings.

(The Diplomat) By the time 20 Indian soldiers had died and a still-unknown number of Chinese soldiers faced casualties after a high-altitude melee in the normally obscure Galwan Valley on June 15, India and China were already well into a border crisis. The events of June 15 simply had the effect of sharply raising the profile of this latest Himalayan dispute between Asia's two giants;

they marked the most serious violence between them since 1967 and the first fatalities along this border since 1975. As facts-on-the-ground have quickly changed in this treacherous Himalayan terrain, what the world may be witnessing is nothing short of a fundamental redefinition of the nature of Sino-Indian border disputes—and the broader relationship between these two Asian powers.

Starting on May 5, troops from both countries entered tense standoffs at multiple points along their border. These standoffs took place both along the undefined, un-delineated, and un-demarcated Line of Actual Control (LAC) and along part of the settled international border between the two countries, between the Indian state of Sikkim and China's Tibet Autonomous Region. In Eastern Ladakh in recent weeks, the core points of contention have included the Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso (Lake), the Gogra-Hot Springs area in the Chang Chenmo River valley, and the Depsang Plains. Around 1,200 kilometers away, a separate standoff had taken place at Sikkim's Nathu La Pass, along the supposedly settled Sino-Indian border there.

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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:

July 7, 2020
Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Melville, W.)
July 9, 2020
Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Rochon, F.)

Staff Activity:

- On Tuesday, July 7, staff attended a Webinar on "Rethinking Approaches to Peacebuilding in Yemen." Discussed was a new report released by the Crisis Group, which is based on a year and a half of extensive field research inside Yemen, and more than 100 in-person and telephone interviews with Yemeni actors, and regional and international stakeholders. The report maps out shifts in Yemen's political geography over five years of conflict, recommends that policy makers rethink the requirements for peace and argues that a wider range of actors need to be included in UN-led talks. It calls for a more limited agreement to end the war focused on securing a ceasefire and the resumption of services, while avoiding too rapid a recentralization of power in the capital.
- On Wednesday, July 8, staff attended a virtual Retirement Planning Seminar for USAR Soldiers currently preparing to retire and for those that have already retired. The event was conducted on the All Partners Access Network (APAN), the Unclassified Information Sharing Service (UISS) for the Department of Defense. APAN uses Adobe Connect web conferencing software, One purpose of attending the event was to get first-hand experience with the platform in order to evaluate it for use by the National Security Division for future virtual events.
- On Thursday, July 9, staff attended a Sasakawa USA virtual meeting on the topic of the "New Force Design for the Marine Corps and its implication to the U.S.-Japan Alliance." Almost exactly a year ago, Marine Corps Commandant General David Berger published his Commandant's Planning Guidance, which revolutionizes the future of the Marine Corps and aligns it with the National Defense Strategy (NDS). The guidance recommends drastically shifting the Marine Corps' focus to the Indo-Pacific region and describes how Marines "will be trained and equipped as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness and prepared to operate inside actively contested maritime spaces in support of fleet operations." This new force design and shift to the Indo-Pacific region will have significant implications to the U.S.-Japan Alliance. The meeting featured remarks by LtGen Wallace "Chip" Gregson, USMC (Ret.) who described the nature of the major strategic changes to the Marine Corps, its implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and what needs to be done to achieve these goals from his perspective. His presentation was followed with commentary by LtGen Lawrence Nicholson, USMC (Ret.) and LtGen Koichiro Bansho, JGSDF (Ret.). More information about the topic is available in this commentary from the Japan Times here.
- On Thursday, July 9, staff attended a virtual House Foreign Affairs hearing on the topic of: "Russian Bounties on U.S. Troops: Why Hasn't the Administration Responded?" Testimony from the hearing is available here and video of the hearing here. A good recent AP report on the topic is available here.
- On Thursday, July 9, staff emailed a "Chairman's' Message" from National Security Chairman Steven Brennan to all members of the National Security Commission/ Committees/Council. The message served as an opportunity for the chairman to introduce himself to the group and provide guidance on improving communication among the Commission and to facilitate the conduct of Commission business in the absence of the Spring NEC and National Convention, both cancelled.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division