National Security Division Report

Week ending 24 July 2020

Bonhomme Richard Fire Forces Tough Choices On Navy and DoD

(Breaking Defense) The Navy's top admiral visited San Diego last Friday to see first-hand the damage suffered by the USS Bonhomme Richard after what appears to have been a catastrophic fire last week, scuttling the deployment of a ship that was next in line to launch F-35Bs from its flight deck. The Richard would have been the fifth ship modified to operate the F-35, the next-generation aircraft slated to act as the backbone of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps' efforts to conduct stealthy operations in the face of modern anti-aircraft capabilities.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday toured several decks where he saw extensive damage. While he insisted he is "100 percent confident that our defense industry can put this ship back to sea," he also questioned whether the investment in the 22 year-old ship would be worth it. Whether the ship should or can be repaired and put to sea at some point in the next several years is a question leaders will grapple with in the coming weeks, as inspections of the ship continue, as will discussions over US presence in the Western Pacific, and the Navy's modernization schedule.

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The World's Most Technologically Sophisticated Genocide Is Happening in Xinjiang

(Foreign Policy Magazine) Two recent disturbing events may finally awaken the world to the scale and horror of the atrocities being committed against the Uighurs, a mostly secular Muslim ethnic minority, in Xinjiang, China. One is an authoritative report documenting the systematic sterilization of Uighur women. The other was the seizure by U.S. Customs and Border Protection

of 13 tons of products made from human hair suspected of being forcibly removed from Uighurs imprisoned in concentration camps. Both events evoke chilling parallels to past atrocities elsewhere, forced sterilization of minorities, disabled, and Indigenous people, and the image of the glass display of mountains of hair preserved at Auschwitz.

The Genocide Convention, to which China is a signatory, defines genocide as specific acts against members of a group with the intent to destroy that group in whole or in part. These acts include (a) killing; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm; (c) deliberately inflicting conditions of life to bring about the group's physical destruction; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Any one of these categories constitutes genocide. The overwhelming evidence of the Chinese government's deliberate and systematic campaign to destroy the Uighur people clearly meets each of these categories.

Over a million Turkic Uighurs are detained in concentration camps, prisons, and forced labor factories in China. Detainees are subject to military-style discipline, thought transformation, and forced confessions. They are abused, tortured, raped, and even killed. Survivors report being subjected to electrocution, waterboarding, repeated beatings, stress positions, and injections of unknown substances. These mass detention camps are designed to cause serious physical, psychological harm and mentally break the Uighur people. The repeated government orders to "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins"; "round up everyone who should be rounded up"; and systematically prevent Uighur births demonstrate a clear intent to eradicate the Uighur people as a whole.

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U.S. Says Russian Hackers Are Trying To Steal Coronavirus Vaccine Research

(NPR) The National Security Agency, as well as its counterparts in Britain and Canada, all said Thursday that they're seeing persistent attempts by Russian hackers to break into organizations working on a potential coronavirus vaccine. The Western intelligence agencies say they believe the hackers are part of the Russian group informally known as Cozy Bear. The intelligence agencies refer to it as APT29.

That group has been linked to Russian intelligence and was blamed for hacking Democratic Party emails in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

"APT29 has a long history of targeting governmental, diplomatic, think-tank, health care and energy organizations for intelligence gain so we encourage everyone to take this threat seriously," said Anne Neuberger, the NSA's cybersecurity director. Russia denied the accusation. "We can say one thing — Russia has nothing at all to do with these attempts," Dmitry Peskov, a spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin, was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news agency.

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2020 Symposium: DoD budget cuts

(Defense Priorities) As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. GDP and tax revenue will shrink in 2020 with no certainty about when they might recover. Record deficits and debt endanger future economic growth. Domestic spending that aids recovery and increases domestic institutional resilience will remain a priority under any administration. Consequently, DoD spending, which accounts for nearly half of discretionary spending, will almost certainly face downward pressure. Smaller defense budgets will require cuts to programs, readiness, or overseas operations.

In response to this dramatically different budget landscape, Defense Priorities is hosting this symposium to stimulate thinking about the most responsible ways to reallocate DoD resources and still retain core capabilities.

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Staff Activity:

- On Tuesday, July 21, staff attended a webinar hosted by the Atlantic Council titled "North Star: The First Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy," featuring a conversation with Department of the Air Force's senior leaders. The senior leaders visited the Council as the DoD builds upon its strategy for the region released last year. As the department with the largest presence in the Arctic, from multiple bases in Alaska to space domain awareness assets in Greenland, the Department of the Air Force has increasingly emphasized the geostrategic significance of the Arctic and its services' crucial role for defense and security in the region. More information and video of the webinar are available here.
- On Tuesday, July 21, staff met with officials from the Taiwan Embassy to continue preparations for an upcoming event next week featuring National Commander Oxford and Republic of China (Taiwan) Ambassador to the U.S. Bi-khim Hsiao. Taiwan has graciously gifted 250,000 surgical masks to The American Legion to assist Legionnaires during the COVID 19 pandemic. On Tuesday July 28, the National Security Division will cohost a Gift Acceptance Ceremony at the Taiwan Embassy in Washington, DC. Commander Oxford will accept the masks on behalf of the organization and offer thanks to Ambassador Hsiao and Taiwan. Last December, Commander Oxford led a delegation from The American Legion to Hawaii, Taiwan, and Australia. While in Taiwan, Commander Oxford met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen, along with Taiwan ministers of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Foreign Affairs and its National Security Council. The National Commander has also sent letters to Congress in support of House and Senate resolutions commending the people of Taiwan on holding free and fair democratic presidential and legislative elections last January, and congratulating Madame Tsai Ing-wen on her re-election to the presidency of Taiwan. The American Legion supports these bills using Resolution No. 38: Taiwan Straits Dialogue, recognizing Taiwan as, "a long-time friend, ally, and major trading partner of the United States."
- On Thursday, July 23, staff facilitated a Microsoft Teams meeting with the National Security Committee chairmen. The meeting served as an opportunity for the group to further test the Teams platform as a collaborative tool to conduct Commission business in the absence of the National Convention.

Legislative Issue Tracker

Below is legislation the National Security Division is tracking in Congress. 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

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