National Security Division Report

Week ending 31 July 2020

A gesture of goodwill: Taiwan donates 250,000 medical masks to The Legion

(American Legion) American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford accepted a donation of 250,000 masks from Ambassador Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's representative to the United States. A ceremony celebrating the gesture of goodwill took place July 28 at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Washington, D.C.

"This gift of masks will save lives," Oxford said in his remarks. "Even before COVID-19, it was not unusual to see people – mostly in the Far East – wear facemasks out of consideration for others. It truly is a selfless act. We will ensure that veterans across the country receive these masks."

"We are proud of our longstanding friendship with the American Legion," Hsiao said. "Last August, President Tsai addressed the 101st American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis, where she spoke about our joint values, as well as the sacrifices our veterans have made for democracy and freedom in both our countries."

Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., also attended the event. He addressed the audience on the importance of the relationship between the United States and Taiwan and the commitment of both nations to freedom, democracy and human rights. "I stand here between two flags of two countries that represent peace, democracy, liberty and freedom," he said. "Those will never waiver."

The relationship between Taiwan and The American Legion was furthered during the national commander's trip to the Far East in 2019, when the delegation from The American Legion traveled

to Taiwan. While there, Oxford met with President Tsai Ing-Wen to discuss relations between the two nations and the shared values of freedom and democracy.

“When we think about the world situation as it is today…we come to understand the value of our alliances and our friendship,” Oxford said during the ceremony. This event was about more than the masks, said Hsiao. It’s about a shared commitment between Taiwan and the U.S., as well as a commitment to those who serve in the armed forces of both countries. “Today, we have brought 250,000 medical masks from Taiwan to donate to The American Legion, in part to thank them for their service to veterans and many communities here in the United States," she said, "but also as a symbol of friendship to jointly work to keep our communities and our veterans safe and healthy.

“We all owe a debt of gratitude to those that have served in defense of our many shared values.”

U.S. Space Force Accuses Russia Of In-Orbit Testing Of Anti-Satellite Weapon

(NPR) The recently created U.S. Space Force accused Russia on Thursday of testing an anti-satellite weapon from one of its satellites in orbit. "On July 15, Russia injected a new object into orbit from Cosmos 2543," the eight-month-old agency says in a statement. "Russia released this object in proximity to another Russian satellite, which is similar to on-orbit activity conducted by Russia in 2017, and inconsistent with the system's stated mission as an inspector satellite."

In a sign outer space could be turning into a theater of war for terrestrial adversaries, it marked the first time the U.S. military has publicly charged Moscow with carrying out a space-based weapons test. According to Gen. John "Jay" Raymond, who in addition to being the Space Force's chief of space operations also commands the U.S. Space Command, the Russian satellite system used in the test is the same one that prompted U.S. protests earlier this year after it allegedly sidled up close to a U.S. spy satellite.

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House approves amendment that could end the transgender military ban

(CQ) The House adopted by voice vote an amendment to the fiscal 2021 Defense appropriations bills Thursday that would effectively bring an end to the Trump administration's severe restrictions on transgender people serving openly in the U.S. military. The amendment was tucked into a massive en bloc package of amendments that were attached to the six-bill spending package (HR 7617) that includes defense funding.

Introduced by California Democrat Jackie Speier, chairwoman of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee, the amendment would block the use of funds to implement policy issued in April 2019 that would bar transgender people from joining the military and even keep some transgender people who are already serving from staying in.

The policy permits waivers, but critics say they are virtually non-existent. The amendment faces tough odds during conference negotiations with the Senate, however.

Joint Statement on Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2020

(DoD) On July 28, 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper hosted Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne and Minister for Defense Linda Reynolds on July 28 in Washington for the 30th Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN 2020).

More than a century since our two countries first fought side-by-side, 80 years after the United States and Australia established diplomatic relations, and 68 years since the formation of our Alliance, our shared commitment to freedom and democracy remains unbreakable. The Secretaries and Ministers discussed the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resolved to strengthen cooperation to support our collective recovery and foster a post-COVID-19 world where all countries prosper as sovereign States.

Secretaries and Ministers noted the need to strengthen global efforts to prevent and mitigate future health crises and pandemics and reaffirmed their commitment to bilateral health security cooperation, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific, in line with the release of the AUSMIN Global Health Security Statement. The full Joint Statement is available here. Relevant Legion Resolution No. 42: Foreign Policy Objectives

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

Staff Activity:

- On Friday, July 24, staff participated in a DoD press conference where the department announced three Defense Production Act Title III actions to help sustain and strengthen essential domestic industrial base capabilities and defense-critical workforce in the aviation, rare earth materials, and electronics industries. These actions will help to retain critical workforce capabilities throughout the disruption caused by COVID-19 and to restore some jobs lost because of the pandemic. The Department remains closely partnered with FEMA and HHS, providing almost $2.9 billion in life-saving medical services, supplies and equipment to service members and federal agencies in the nation's whole-of-government approach to the coronavirus pandemic
- On Tuesday, July 28, staff joined National Commander James "Bill" Oxford and National Security Commission Chairman Steven Brennan at a Mask Donation Ceremony cohosted by the National Security Division and the Taiwan Embassy. Taiwan has graciously gifted 250,000 medical masks to The American Legion to assist Legionnaires during the COVID 19 pandemic. Commander Oxford was present to accept the donation from Ambassador Bi-khim Hsiao. More about this event is available above or at this link.
- On Wednesday, July 29, staff participated in a press event where the Secretary of Defense announced an update to the status of the U.S. European Command Force Posture review as a part of the department's continued efforts to implement the National Defense Strategy. Following the decision to reduce the footprint in Germany, the Secretary provided direction to the Department to develop options for repositioning U.S. forces throughout Europe using five core principles: 1) Enhance deterrence of Russia; 2) Strengthen NATO; 3) Reassure allies; 4) Improve U.S. strategic flexibility and EUCOM operational flexibility; and 5) Take care of our Service members and their families in the process. In total, approximately 11,900 military personnel will be repositioned from Germany, with nearly 5,600 repositioned within other NATO countries and 6,400 returning to the United States to address readiness and prepare for rotational deployments. These force posture changes meet the Secretary's above core principles while adapting our force posture to address

national security concerns in today's environment. Relevant Legion Resolution No. 42: Foreign Policy Objectives.

- On Thursday, July 30, staff attended a webinar hosted by the Heritage Foundation titled: "Re-Designing the Marine Corps for Future War: Necessity or Madness?" Discussed was Marine Corps Commandant Berger's dramatic redesign of the Corps for future war. More information about the webinar is available here.
- On Thursday, July 30, staff attended a webinar hosted by the Cato Institute titled: "Hegemon: American Territorial Expansion and the Creation of the Liberal International Order." The United States is largely unique among historical great powers in its approach to the world. For the most part, American policymakers chose to avoid a traditional colonial empire. Instead, they built a globe-spanning system of alliances described by many as a "liberal international order." That order focused on institutions and alliances rather than imperial control, making it freer and more participatory than many in history. But it was not without its dark side; underlying the liberal order was a frequently illiberal set of policy choices: conflict, regime change, and bargains with dictators. Why did America choose to create this system rather than a more traditional empire? What drove policymakers? And how did America's domestic politics—notably attempts to protect the republic, democracy, and civil liberties—shape its foreign policy choices in the 20th century? More information and event video is available here.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division