
From:
Sent:
Subject:
Signed By:

(b)(6)

Monday, April 27, 2020 6:38 PM

OSD(PA) COB

(b)(6)

ON TOP

* Syria. CBS News and several other outlets queried regarding reports that two U.S. service members were missing following an attack in Deir Ezzor. Referred to @OIRSpox Tweet: "Sadly Another Nonsense Article. There is no incident related to coalition forces in Deir ez-Zor. We can say that if there are prizes for fake news, this news agency deserves to receive all these awards, if any."

RELEASES

* Navy UAP Video Release. Released a statement (below) on the official release of three Navy UAP videos. The statement and the posting of the videos on the NAVAIR FOIA Reading Room generated queries about the videos and the old AATIP program throughout the day from multiple outlets. CNN, ABC, CBS, Task and Purpose, Washington Examiner, Military.com and other outlets ran stories. Provided clarification to Washington Examiner on a common misconception in their article, and the reporter updated it immediately. Statement: "The Department of Defense has authorized the release of three unclassified Navy videos, one taken in November 2004 and the other two in January 2015, which have been circulating in the public domain after unauthorized releases in 2007 and 2017. The U.S. Navy previously acknowledged that these videos circulating in the public domain were indeed Navy videos. After a thorough review, the department has determined that the authorized release of these unclassified videos does not reveal any sensitive capabilities or systems, and does not impinge on any subsequent investigations of military air space incursions by unidentified aerial phenomena. DOD is releasing the videos in order to clear up any misconceptions by the public on whether or not the footage that has been circulating was real, or whether or not there is more to the videos. The aerial phenomena observed in the videos remain characterized as "unidentified." The released videos can be found at the Naval Air Systems Command FOIA Reading Room: <https://www.navair.navy.mil/foia/documents>."

* DoD Small Business Webinar Series. Released an announcement on the third Defense Small Business Webinar Series that will be held on April 29, at 3 p.m. EDT, and will focus on "Foreign Investment: Tools for Small Businesses and How DoD Can Help." The release noted that the Department of Defense's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) continues to partner with Defense Industrial Base (DIB) small businesses to identify impacts of COVID-19. The Foreign Investment webinar will help inform small businesses about the issues of adversarial foreign investment, provide education about regulations in place to counter adversarial capital, and offer an overview of tools available to industry to protect themselves. The webinar will feature Mr. David Stapleton and Mr. Andrew Pahutski, DoD leads for Trusted Capital and Global Markets & Investments, respectively.

Tuesday, April 28

- SD records V-E Day video message, PBR - 9:45 a.m.
- CIO Deasy records 60th Birthday message to DISA workforce, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- USD(P&R) Donovan participates in virtual AFA Mitchell Institute "Aerospace Nation" event streamed live at mitchellaerospacepower.org - 5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 29

- SD, CJCS press briefing, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- Army LTG Charles Flynn, DCS of G-3/5/7, backgrounder w/Pentagon Press Corps on Army plan for returning to steady state of operations - 2 p.m.
- CISO Katie Arrington, OUSD(A&S), interview, Q&A @ NextGov webcast on "Unpacking the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification" (nextgov.com) - 2 p.m.
- (T) Illinois Natl Gd BG Richard Neely, Polish Military Medical Corps MG Cezary Wisniewski press briefing by phone - TBD
- CSA Gen. McConville travel w/press (Nancy Youssef/Wall St Journal) to JRTC/Fort Polk to discuss options to increase collective training safeguards (visit/discussions on background in anticipation of future article)
- CSAF Gen. Goldfein interviews w/Politico (Bryan Bender), Wash Post (Dan Lamothe) on COVID-19 efforts, AFWN, JADC2
- Asst SECAF (AT&L) Dr. Roper media roundtable to discuss Agility Prime, COVID-19 impacts to AF programs, and acquisition
- AFGSC Gen. Ray takes part in on-the-record AFA Breakfast Series engagement in conjunction with the Mitchell Institute

Thursday, April 30

- USD(A&S) Lord press briefing, PBR - 10 a.m.
- SECARMY McCarthy, CSA Gen. McConville press briefing, PBR - noon
- SECARMY McCarthy, CSA Gen. McConville participate in Brookings Institution webinar ("What role will the Army play in great power competition after COVID-19?"), livestreamed at brookings.edu - 3:30 p.m.
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray media roundtable from White Sands Missile Range during Precision Strike Missile test

QUERIES OF NOTE

- * Southern Border. Ryan Browne, CNN, asked whether it's true that discussions are underway to have National Guard take a larger role in the missions along the southern border, but under Title 10 leadership. After checking with OSD(Policy), have confirmed on background that there have been discussions to that effect, but provided no further comment.
- * CAPE Assessment of ABMS. Sara Sarota, Inside the Air Force, asked if it would it be possible to receive a copy of a Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) report, what prompted CAPE to do this study, and did CAPE make specific recommendations to the Air Force about how to plan for ABMS. Provided the CAPE-approved response: "We are currently working the ABMS AoA Sufficiency Assessment. We do not provide pre-decisional studies or assessments."
- * Middle East Deployment Numbers. Julie In, CNN, asked for updated deployment numbers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Provided the following response: "Iraq: Approximately 5,200; Syria: More than 600; Afghanistan: As of Feb. 28, 2020, (prior to the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement) U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan were approximately 13,000. U.S. Forces-Afghanistan continues to reduce force levels and expects

to be at 8,600 U.S. troops within 135 days (mid-July) of the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement. USFOR-A remains committed to supporting our Afghan partners throughout the process and maintains the capabilities and authorities to accomplish our objectives.”

* Afghanistan Drawdown. Joe Tabet, Al Hurra, asked if there are any discussions to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan. This follows an NBC article claiming the president told his advisers that the U.S. should pull all troops from Afghanistan due to COVID-19 concerns. Provided the following response: “The department has received no change in guidance on the drawdown in Afghanistan. U.S. Forces-Afghanistan continues to reduce force levels and expects to be at 8,600 U.S. troops within 135 days (mid-July) of the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement.”

* Overseas Service Members Deaths Since 9/11. Abigail Ita, Warm Springs Productions, is a producer working on the “Lara Logan Has No Agenda” documentary. She requested the “numbers of US fatalities in wars and conflicts since 9/11, including official wars and other conflicts.” Referred her to the DMDC website (<https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties.xhtml>) where the requested information can be found.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

* Humanoid Robots Combatting IEDs. Coordinated with NASA and SOLIC’s Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office to review and approve an informational video about the cooperative efforts between agencies to develop humanoid robots, which can support advances in counter improved explosive devise efforts. The video will post to CTTSO’s webpage upon OSD(Policy)’s final approval.

Public Affairs Operations

(b)(6)

From:

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Sent:

Friday, April 24, 2020 6:48 PM

Subject:

OSD(PA) COB

Signed By:

(b)(6)

ON TOP

* Navy Inquiry Into COVID-19 Outbreak On TR. The following statement, attributable to ATSD(PA) Hoffman, released late this afternoon: "This afternoon, Secretary Esper received a verbal update from the acting Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations on the Navy's preliminary inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak on the USS Theodore Roosevelt. After the Secretary receives a written copy of the completed inquiry, he intends to thoroughly review the report and will meet again with Navy leadership to discuss next steps. He remains focused on and committed to restoring the full health of the crew and getting the ship at sea again soon."

BRIEFING

* ATSD(PA) COVID-19 Update. ATSD(PA) Hoffman briefed the media from the Pentagon Briefing Room, taking questions from reporters both in the room and over the phone. After providing an update on continuing DOD efforts in the fight against COVID-19, questions focused on results of the Navy investigation into CAPT Crozier's removal as TR captain; the status of the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort in NY City; the status of DOD plans to test and track troops for COVID-19; reports of a COVID-19 outbreak on the USS Kidd; what steps DOD may take as it returns to the new normal, and how long masks will be required; will the USNS Mercy redeploy; what is U.S. military doing to counter Chinese disinformation on COVID-19; how many patients have been treated on Mercy and Comfort; the status of U.S. and Chinese naval activity in S. China Sea; and could current telework arrangements remain post-pandemic. Transcript will be posted when available.

NEWS RELEASES

* Multi-City Flyovers To Show National Unity. Joint Navy-Air Force announcement posted this afternoon says Blue Angels and Thunderbirds will take part in a series of multi-city flyovers in the next two weeks in a show of national solidarity. "America Strong" is a collaborative salute from the Navy and Air Force to recognize healthcare workers, first responders, and other essential personnel while standing in solidarity with all Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. (<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2164689/america-strong-blue-angels-thunderbirds-to-conduct-multi-city-flyovers-champion/>)

* SD Esper Phone Call With Japan's MoD. Readout provides following summary of today's call: "On April 24, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper spoke with Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono by phone to discuss bilateral coordination on the response to COVID-19, regional security issues and threats to a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, and continued cooperation to implement U.S. forces realignment initiatives."

* SD Esper Phone Call With Italy's MoD. Readout posted last night provides following summary of Thursday call between Secretary Esper and Italian MoD: "Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper conducted a follow-up call with Italy Minister of Defense Lorenzo Guerini by phone April 23 to express solidarity with our close NATO Ally Italy, which has been hit hard by COVID19. Secretary Esper outlined the aid package to Italy from the Department of Defense which will include logistics, humanitarian funds and personnel support. Minister Guerini thanked the Secretary for DoD assistance received thus far and U.S. leadership on the crisis, and expressed sympathies for the impact on COVID19 on the United

States. Minister Guerini noted Italy plans to provide assistance to NATO Allies, especially in sharing lessons learned. Both ministers discussed the importance of countering Chinese and Russian disinformation campaigns and agreed to work closely as both nations confront the COVID19 pandemic together and with other Allies."

THREE DAY FORECAST

Monday, April 27

- CJCS records V-E Day video message, PBR - 1 p.m.
- ASA(ALT) Dr. Bruce Jette interview by Skype w/WJLA-TV Government Matters (Francis Rose) on modernization efforts and Army response to COVID-19 - 3 p.m.

Tuesday, April 28

- SD records V-E Day video message, PBR - 9:45 a.m.
- CIO Deasy records 60th Birthday message to DISA workforce, PBR - 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 29

- SD, CJCS press briefing, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- CSA Gen. McConville travel w/press (Nancy Youssef/Wall St Journal) to JRTC/Fort Polk to discuss options to increase collective training safeguards (visit/discussions on background in anticipation of future article)
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- Asst SECAF (AT&L) Dr. Roper media roundtable to discuss Agility Prime, COVID-19 impacts to AF programs, and acquisition
- AFGSC Gen. Ray takes part in on-the-record AFA Breakfast Series engagement in conjunction with the Mitchell Institute

QUERIES OF NOTE

* Military Flyover of D.C., Baltimore Area Hospitals. Local NBC TV affiliate asked for confirmation that there will be a Saturday (April 25) aerial flyover of several hospitals in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., to honor health care workers by KC-135R aircraft, F-16Cs flown by AF Thunderbirds, and F/A-18s flown by Navy Blue Angels. Sent query to AF for confirmation.

* Letter from Senators Regarding Border Wall. Tanvi Misra, CQ Roll Call, asked about a letter by Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (<https://www.warren.senate.gov/download/20200423-letter-to-dod-ig-about-border-wall-contract-final>) asking that the DOD IG investigate wall contracts. Replied that "as with all congressional correspondence, we will respond directly to the authors of the letter."

* COVID-19 a Bioweapon. Sasha Ingber, Newsy, asked if the DOD is putting resources into protecting the country from COVID-19 as a bioweapon. Referred to Joint Staff Surgeon Air Force Brigadier General Paul Friedrichs statements in the press briefing on April 6. (<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2141351/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-assistant-to-the-secretary-of-defense-h/>)

* COVID-19 Rumors. Jane Tang, Radio Free Asia, asked about rumors regarding the origin of COVID-19. Referred her to our rumor control website (<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Rumor-Control/>).

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

* Navy UAP Videos. Following extensive review, and coordination within intel channels, three Navy videos showing purported encounters with unidentified aerial phenomena will be officially released by DOD on Monday, April 27. These three videos have been circulating in the public after unauthorized release since 2017 and earlier. Media attention is expected.

* Hypersonics. On-the-record phone interview of Mike White, Asst. Dir. Hypersonics, OUSD(R&E), with Garrett Reim, FlightGlobal. The discussion focused on the mechanics of hypersonics and the DOD roadmap for development of the technology for transition to the warfighter.

Public Affairs Operations

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From:
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Friday, September 20, 2019 4:50 PM
OSD(PA) COB

ON TOP

* Australia Enhanced Honor Cordon. SD Esper hosted an enhanced honor cordon and meeting welcoming Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia Scott Morrison. Readout posted to defense.gov.

* DOD Options to the White House. Received multiple media queries concerning alleged meetings at the White House and what options, if any, DOD was providing in regards to a response to Iran aggression in Saudi Arabia. Responded our conversations with the White House are private and we do not share that information.

THREE DAY FORECAST

Monday, Sept. 23

-- DARPA Dir. Walker keynote discussion (10:15 a.m.), DUSD(R&E) Porter on panel (11:30 a.m.) @ CSIS 21st Century National Security Innovation Partnership Conference, Washington, D.C.

-- SD hosts enhanced honor cordon and meeting (pooled press topper) iho German MoD Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer - 10:15 a.m.

-- USD(P) Rood (11 a.m.), Army Futures Command DCG LTG Wesley (3:15 p.m.) join panel discussions @ Center for European Policy Analysis Forum, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 24

-- GTMO Periodic Review Board proceeding for Hassan Muhammad Ali Bin Attash - 9 a.m.

-- JAIC Dir. LTG Shanahan participates in livestream interview on military readiness in the AI age @ the Atlantic Festival, Hotel Monaco, 700 F Street NW, Washington, D.C. - 9:30 a.m.

-- Army Futures Command DCG LTG Wesley discusses Army modernization @ Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. - 10 a.m.

-- CENTCOM Gen. McKenzie off the record dinner w/PPC, Army/Navy Country Club, Arlington, VA - 6 p.m.

-- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray interview w/Defense News (Jen Judson), Austin, TX

Wednesday, Sept. 25

-- SECDEF CONUS travel through Sept. 26

-- DSCA Dir. LTG Hooper, DSCA Dep. Dir. Kausner, DSCA Principal Director for Security Cooperation Workforce Development Cara Abercrombie media roundtable @ opening of Defense Security Cooperation University, Arlington, VA - 10:30 a.m. (invited press)

-- DUSD(R&E) Porter background interview w/Foreign Policy (Lara Seligman) on 5G, PA Conference Room - 11 a.m.

-- JAIC Dir. LTG Shanahan keynote interview @ Kalaris Intelligence Conference, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C. - 1 p.m.

-- ASD(IPSA) Schriver closing remarks for the International Republican Institute's report launch on Chinese Communist Party's malign influence and the impact on democracy across 13 countries, Washington, D.C. - 3:30 p.m.

-- Essye Miller, Principal Deputy, Chief Information Officer, keynote on digital modernization @ American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council membership meeting, Falls Church, VA - 4:30 p.m.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- * DOD Advice to White House. Eric Schmitt, NYT, requested confirmation of alleged input from DOD OGC to WH GC following the June 19 downing of a U.S. surveillance aircraft by Iran. Coordinating with OGC.
- * Edward Snowden New Book. Prepared an RTQ briefing card for potential questions about Edward Snowden's new book. Coordinated TPs with USD(I), ODNI, and NSA.
- * JEDI. Lauren Williams/Federal Computer Week and Connor O'Brien/Politico asked if JEDI would be impacted by a CR. Informed them both that we had nothing further on the acquisitions that would be affected by a CR beyond the response to the taken question during the Sept. 19 press briefing.
- * Refugee Ceiling. Ryan Browne, CNN, queried about the refugee ceiling, numbers, and DSD involvement. Responded it would be premature to talk about any refugee ceiling decisions.
- * Azerbaijan Security Cooperation. Rafiq Gurbanzade, CBC TV Washington, asked about DOD allocations of security cooperation to Azerbaijan. Responded with a total on 100 million, including a general breakdown of projects coordinated through OUSD Policy.
- * ESPN B-Roll. ESPN cameramen filmed exterior/interior shots of Pentagon for possible use on Sept. 23 ESPN Monday Night Countdown (6-8 p.m. pre-game show), and Monday Night Football game (8 p.m., Bears at Redskins).
- * UFOs. Received multiple queries concerning Navy confirmation of UFO videos. Responded with coordinated lines on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

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Sent:

Thursday, September 19, 2019 5:19 PM

Subject:

OSD(PA) COB

Signed By:

(b)(6)

ON TOP

* Afghanistan. Received multiple queries on the air strike in the Nangarhar province which, according to news reports, resulted in the death of 30 civilians; referred to Resolute Support, who said that they are investigating. Mike Phillips, Wall Street Journal, asked about the number of troops deployed to Afghanistan and the number of deployments; provided a report from Defense Manpower Data Center with that information. Ben Finley, AP, requested the total number of service members who have died in Afghanistan in 2019; response coordinated with DMDC.

BRIEFINGS

ATSD(PA) Hoffman and CJCS Spokesman USAF Col. Pat Ryder conducted an on-camera press briefing today. Topics of questions from the press included the attacks on Saudi Arabia oil fields, Iran tensions, southwest border support and use of 2808 and 284 funds, continuing resolution, Gen. Hyten (as prospective VCJCS), and troop strength in AFRICOM AOR.

THREE DAY FORECAST

Friday, Sept. 20

- CJCS off-the-record editors roundtable @ NPR - 8:30 a.m.
- DASD(Cyber Policy) Wilson speaks @ Defense Strategies Institute (Leveraging Updated Cyberspace Policy and Strategy to Ensure National Security), Alexandria, VA - 9 a.m. (closed press)
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray keynote speaker @ the 2019 Symposium on Modern Warfare, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock, TX - 12 p.m. (CDT)
- SD hosts enhanced honor cordon and meeting (pooled press topper) iho Australia PM Scott Morrison, Pentagon River Entrance - 2:50 p.m.
- DSD hosts POW/MIA Recognition Day, River Terrace Parade Field - 4 p.m.

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- CENTCOM Gen. McKenzie off the record dinner w/PPC, Army/Navy Country Club, Arlington, VA - 6 p.m.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- * Privatized Housing. Haley Britzky, Task and Purpose, asked for details on DOD's input on a letter from OMB to Congress on the NDAA. Declined to provide specific details on DOD's input, and provided standing talking points on what DOD is doing to address concerns raised about privatized housing.
- * Refueling Reimbursement. Joe Gould, Defense News, asked whether Saudi Arabia and UAE have provided the refueling reimbursement, and if not, the percentage that has been paid. Coordinated response with OSD(Policy) and provided: "The process of reimbursement is continuing and we continue to expect full reimbursement of refueling expenses. I am not going to be able to provide specifics on the reimbursement process."
- * 5G Spectrum Allocation. John Hendel, Politico, queried about provisions in the Senate version of the FY20 NDAA related to 5G spectrum use. Responded that DOD does not comment on pending legislation.
- * JAIC. The Joint Artificial Intelligence Center provided GSA a quote from Lt. Gen. Shanahan for inclusion in a GSA press release about the GSA and JAIC partnership for a discovery sprint as part of GSA's Centers of Excellence initiative. Expect the press release to be sent on Sept. 25.
- * IMSC. Coordinated a statement with OSD(Policy) and CENTCOM welcoming UAE to the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC). Posted to centcom.mil and disseminated on social media.
- * Billingslea. Coordinated response for Washington Post query requesting DOD comment on "allegations from "some members" of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who say DOD is withholding potentially relevant materials regarding Mr. Billingslea and his work on interrogation/torture." Provided statement to reporter, coordinated with OUSD(I): "We continuously work with Congress and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to provide information they request. We don't have any details at this time on allegations that the DOD is withholding information regarding Mr. Billingslea."
- * Universal Postal Union. Received queries from Hearst and Federal News Network about the Universal Postal Union. Responded with the following statement: "The United States Postal Service, Department of Defense and State Department are developing operational plans to support the ability of our military and overseas Americans to cast their absentee ballots. At this time, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is communicating through its network of key stakeholders to encourage our overseas military, their families residing overseas and American citizens residing overseas to complete an updated Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to request balloting materials electronically and furnish an alternative physical address. Various methods will be employed to inform affected voters on how to take action and operational procedures will be provided to the states to share with local election officials."
- * Trump Properties. Received multiple queries on the recent letter from the House Oversight and Reform Committee about service members staying in Trump properties. Working a statement with Personnel & Readiness.

* Defense Security Cooperation University. Coordinated with DSCA on a media invite to the DSCU ribbon cutting and media availability on Sept. 25. Event will include USD(P) Rood, DSCA Director, LTG Hooper, and DSCU Commandant Ms. Cara Abercrombie. Invite was sent by DSCA today.

* UAPs. Continued to coordinate with Navy, OUSD(I), DIA, DOPSR and now USAF, on continuing multiple queries from multiple outlets about military aircraft videos depicting unidentified aerial phenomena that were highlighted in a summer program on the History Channel, the old AATIP program, the review and release procedures and investigations, and related matters.

Defense Public Affairs Operations

(b)(6)

From:

(b)(6)

Sent:

Thursday, April 30, 2020 7:15 PM

To:

Hoffman, Jonathan R SES OSD OSD (USA)

Cc:

Summers, Charles E II SES OSD PA (USA); (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject:

Info for Review with Cards & Latest Tough Qs

Attachments:

200430 TL 2808 Adjusted Border Support.docx; EVERGREEN TL Privatized Housing as of 20.04.30.docx; BC TRANSCOM goods contract 20.04.30.docx; Enhanced_Counternarcotic_PAG_30April2020.docx; 20200429 TL FY19 DOD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military.docx; 20200430 BC America Strong Elvovers.docx; Tough Questions Rolling 20200430.docx

Signed By:

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- UAP Video Release (statement below, card forthcoming)

"The Department of Defense has authorized the release of three unclassified Navy videos, one taken in November 2004 and the other two in January 2015, which have been circulating in the public domain after unauthorized releases in 2007 and 2017. The U.S. Navy previously acknowledged that these videos circulating in the public domain were indeed Navy videos. After a thorough review, the department has determined that the authorized release of these unclassified videos does not reveal any sensitive capabilities or systems, and does not impinge on any subsequent investigations of military air space incursions by unidentified aerial phenomena. DOD is releasing the videos in order to clear up any misconceptions by the public on whether or not the footage that has been circulating was real, or whether or not there is more to the videos. The aerial phenomena observed in the videos remain characterized as "unidentified." The released videos can be found at the Naval Air Systems Command FOIA Reading Room: <https://www.navair.navy.mil/foia/documents>."

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VR/bd

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- APR+M, Fellow PRSA | Director of Public Affairs Operations | Office of the Secretary of

Defense |

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* Syria. CBS News and several other outlets queried regarding reports that two U.S. service members were missing following an attack in Deir Ezzor. Referred to @OIRSpox Tweet: "Sadly Another Nonsense Article. There is no incident related to coalition forces in Deir ez-Zor. We can say that if there are prizes for fake news, this news agency deserves to receive all these awards, if any."

RELEASES

* Navy UAP Video Release. Released a statement (below) on the official release of three Navy UAP videos. The statement and the posting of the videos on the NAVAIR FOIA Reading Room generated queries about the videos and the old AATIP program throughout the day from multiple outlets. CNN, ABC, CBS, Task and Purpose, Washington Examiner, Military.com and other outlets ran stories. Provided clarification to Washington Examiner on a common misconception in their article, and the reporter updated it immediately. Statement: "The Department of Defense has authorized the release of three unclassified Navy videos, one taken in November 2004 and the other two in January 2015, which have been circulating in the public domain after unauthorized releases in 2007 and 2017. The U.S. Navy previously acknowledged that these videos circulating in the public domain were indeed Navy videos. After a thorough review, the department has determined that the authorized release of these unclassified videos does not reveal any sensitive capabilities or systems, and does not impinge on any subsequent investigations of military air space incursions by unidentified aerial phenomena. DOD is releasing the videos in order to clear up any misconceptions by the public on whether or not the footage that has been circulating was real, or whether or not there is more to the videos. The aerial phenomena observed in the videos remain characterized as "unidentified." The released videos can be found at the Naval Air Systems Command FOIA Reading Room: <https://www.navair.navy.mil/foia/documents>."

* DoD Small Business Webinar Series. Released an announcement on the third Defense Small Business Webinar Series that will be held on April 29, at 3 p.m. EDT, and will focus on "Foreign Investment: Tools for Small Businesses and How DoD Can Help." The release noted that the Department of Defense's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) continues to partner with Defense Industrial Base (DIB) small businesses to identify impacts of COVID-19. The Foreign Investment webinar will help inform small businesses about the issues of adversarial foreign investment, provide education about regulations in place to counter adversarial capital, and offer an overview of tools available to industry to protect themselves. The webinar will feature Mr. David Stapleton and Mr. Andrew Pahutski, DoD leads for Trusted Capital and Global Markets & Investments, respectively.

Tuesday, April 28

- SD records V-E Day video message, PBR - 9:45 a.m.
- CIO Deasy records 60th Birthday message to DISA workforce, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- USD(P&R) Donovan participates in virtual AFA Mitchell Institute "Aerospace Nation" event streamed live at mitchellaerospacepower.org - 5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 29

- SD, CJCS press briefing, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- Army LTG Charles Flynn, DCS of G-3/5/7, backgrounder w/Pentagon Press Corps on Army plan for returning to steady state of operations - 2 p.m.
- CISO Katie Arrington, OUSD(A&S), interview, Q&A @ NextGov webcast on "Unpacking the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification" (nextgov.com) - 2 p.m.
- (T) Illinois Natl Gd BG Richard Neely, Polish Military Medical Corps MG Cezary Wisniewski press briefing by phone - TBD
- CSA Gen. McConville travel w/press (Nancy Youssef/Wall St Journal) to JRTC/Fort Polk to discuss options to increase collective training safeguards (visit/discussions on background in anticipation of future article)
- CSAF Gen. Goldfein interviews w/Politico (Bryan Bender), Wash Post (Dan Lamothe) on COVID-19 efforts, AFWN, JADC2
- Asst SECAF (AT&L) Dr. Roper media roundtable to discuss Agility Prime, COVID-19 impacts to AF programs, and acquisition
- AFGSC Gen. Ray takes part in on-the-record AFA Breakfast Series engagement in conjunction with the Mitchell Institute

Thursday, April 30

- USD(A&S) Lord press briefing, PBR - 10 a.m.
- SECARMY McCarthy, CSA Gen. McConville press briefing, PBR - noon
- SECARMY McCarthy, CSA Gen. McConville participate in Brookings Institution webinar ("What role will the Army play in great power competition after COVID-19?"), livestreamed at brookings.edu - 3:30 p.m.
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray media roundtable from White Sands Missile Range during Precision Strike Missile test

QUERIES OF NOTE

- * Southern Border. Ryan Browne, CNN, asked whether it's true that discussions are underway to have National Guard take a larger role in the missions along the southern border, but under Title 10 leadership. After checking with OSD(Policy), have confirmed on background that there have been discussions to that effect, but provided no further comment.
- * CAPE Assessment of ABMS. Sara Sarota, Inside the Air Force, asked if it would be possible to receive a copy of a Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) report, what prompted CAPE to do this study, and did CAPE make specific recommendations to the Air Force about how to plan for ABMS. Provided the CAPE-approved response: "We are currently working the ABMS AoA Sufficiency Assessment. We do not provide pre-decisional studies or assessments."
- * Middle East Deployment Numbers. Julie In, CNN, asked for updated deployment numbers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Provided the following response: "Iraq: Approximately 5,200; Syria: More than 600; Afghanistan: As of Feb. 28, 2020, (prior to the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement) U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan were approximately 13,000. U.S. Forces-Afghanistan continues to reduce force levels and expects

to be at 8,600 U.S. troops within 135 days (mid-July) of the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement. USFOR-A remains committed to supporting our Afghan partners throughout the process and maintains the capabilities and authorities to accomplish our objectives.”

* Afghanistan Drawdown. Joe Tabet, Al Hurra, asked if there are any discussions to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan. This follows an NBC article claiming the president told his advisers that the U.S. should pull all troops from Afghanistan due to COVID-19 concerns. Provided the following response: “The department has received no change in guidance on the drawdown in Afghanistan. U.S. Forces-Afghanistan continues to reduce force levels and expects to be at 8,600 U.S. troops within 135 days (mid-July) of the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement.”

* Overseas Service Members Deaths Since 9/11. Abigail Ita, Warm Springs Productions, is a producer working on the “Lara Logan Has No Agenda” documentary. She requested the “numbers of US fatalities in wars and conflicts since 9/11, including official wars and other conflicts.” Referred her to the DMDC website (<https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties.xhtml>) where the requested information can be found.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

* Humanoid Robots Combatting IEDs. Coordinated with NASA and SOLIC’s Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office to review and approve an informational video about the cooperative efforts between agencies to develop humanoid robots, which can support advances in counter improved explosive devise efforts. The video will post to CTTSO’s webpage upon OSD(Policy)’s final approval.

Public Affairs Operations

(b)(6)

From:

(b)(6)

Sent:

Friday, April 24, 2020 6:48 PM

Subject:

OSD(PA) COB

Signed By:

(b)(6)

ON TOP

* Navy Inquiry Into COVID-19 Outbreak On TR. The following statement, attributable to ATSD(PA) Hoffman, released late this afternoon: "This afternoon, Secretary Esper received a verbal update from the acting Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations on the Navy's preliminary inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak on the USS Theodore Roosevelt. After the Secretary receives a written copy of the completed inquiry, he intends to thoroughly review the report and will meet again with Navy leadership to discuss next steps. He remains focused on and committed to restoring the full health of the crew and getting the ship at sea again soon."

BRIEFING

* ATSD(PA) COVID-19 Update. ATSD(PA) Hoffman briefed the media from the Pentagon Briefing Room, taking questions from reporters both in the room and over the phone. After providing an update on continuing DOD efforts in the fight against COVID-19, questions focused on results of the Navy investigation into CAPT Crozier's removal as TR captain; the status of the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort in NY City; the status of DOD plans to test and track troops for COVID-19; reports of a COVID-19 outbreak on the USS Kidd; what steps DOD may take as it returns to the new normal, and how long masks will be required; will the USNS Mercy redeploy; what is U.S. military doing to counter Chinese disinformation on COVID-19; how many patients have been treated on Mercy and Comfort; the status of U.S. and Chinese naval activity in S. China Sea; and could current telework arrangements remain post-pandemic. Transcript will be posted when available.

NEWS RELEASES

* Multi-City Flyovers To Show National Unity. Joint Navy-Air Force announcement posted this afternoon says Blue Angels and Thunderbirds will take part in a series of multi-city flyovers in the next two weeks in a show of national solidarity. "America Strong" is a collaborative salute from the Navy and Air Force to recognize healthcare workers, first responders, and other essential personnel while standing in solidarity with all Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. (<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2164689/america-strong-blue-angels-thunderbirds-to-conduct-multi-city-flyovers-champion/>)

* SD Esper Phone Call With Japan's MoD. Readout provides following summary of today's call: "On April 24, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper spoke with Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono by phone to discuss bilateral coordination on the response to COVID-19, regional security issues and threats to a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, and continued cooperation to implement U.S. forces realignment initiatives."

* SD Esper Phone Call With Italy's MoD. Readout posted last night provides following summary of Thursday call between Secretary Esper and Italian MoD: "Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper conducted a follow-up call with Italy Minister of Defense Lorenzo Guerini by phone April 23 to express solidarity with our close NATO Ally Italy, which has been hit hard by COVID19. Secretary Esper outlined the aid package to Italy from the Department of Defense which will include logistics, humanitarian funds and personnel support. Minister Guerini thanked the Secretary for DoD assistance received thus far and U.S. leadership on the crisis, and expressed sympathies for the impact on COVID19 on the United

States. Minister Guerini noted Italy plans to provide assistance to NATO Allies, especially in sharing lessons learned. Both ministers discussed the importance of countering Chinese and Russian disinformation campaigns and agreed to work closely as both nations confront the COVID19 pandemic together and with other Allies."

THREE DAY FORECAST

Monday, April 27

- CJCS records V-E Day video message, PBR - 1 p.m.
- ASA(ALT) Dr. Bruce Jette interview by Skype w/WJLA-TV Government Matters (Francis Rose) on modernization efforts and Army response to COVID-19 - 3 p.m.

Tuesday, April 28

- SD records V-E Day video message, PBR - 9:45 a.m.
- CIO Deasy records 60th Birthday message to DISA workforce, PBR - 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 29

- SD, CJCS press briefing, PBR - 10:30 a.m.
- CSA Gen. McConville travel w/press (Nancy Youssef/Wall St Journal) to JRTC/Fort Polk to discuss options to increase collective training safeguards (visit/discussions on background in anticipation of future article)
- CSAF Gen. Goldfein interviews w/Politico (Bryan Bender), Wash Post (Dan Lamothe) on COVID-19 efforts, AFWN, JADC2
- Asst SECAF (AT&L) Dr. Roper media roundtable to discuss Agility Prime, COVID-19 impacts to AF programs, and acquisition
- AFGSC Gen. Ray takes part in on-the-record AFA Breakfast Series engagement in conjunction with the Mitchell Institute

QUERIES OF NOTE

* Military Flyover of D.C., Baltimore Area Hospitals. Local NBC TV affiliate asked for confirmation that there will be a Saturday (April 25) aerial flyover of several hospitals in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., to honor health care workers by KC-135R aircraft, F-16Cs flown by AF Thunderbirds, and F/A-18s flown by Navy Blue Angels. Sent query to AF for confirmation.

* Letter from Senators Regarding Border Wall. Tanvi Misra, CQ Roll Call, asked about a letter by Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (<https://www.warren.senate.gov/download/20200423-letter-to-dod-ig-about-border-wall-contract-final>) asking that the DOD IG investigate wall contracts. Replied that "as with all congressional correspondence, we will respond directly to the authors of the letter."

* COVID-19 a Bioweapon. Sasha Ingber, Newsy, asked if the DOD is putting resources into protecting the country from COVID-19 as a bioweapon. Referred to Joint Staff Surgeon Air Force Brigadier General Paul Friedrichs statements in the press briefing on April 6. (<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2141351/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-assistant-to-the-secretary-of-defense-h/>)

* COVID-19 Rumors. Jane Tang, Radio Free Asia, asked about rumors regarding the origin of COVID-19. Referred her to our rumor control website (<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Rumor-Control/>).

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

* Navy UAP Videos. Following extensive review, and coordination within intel channels, three Navy videos showing purported encounters with unidentified aerial phenomena will be officially released by DOD on Monday, April 27. These three videos have been circulating in the public after unauthorized release since 2017 and earlier. Media attention is expected.

* Hypersonics. On-the-record phone interview of Mike White, Asst. Dir. Hypersonics, OUSD(R&E), with Garrett Reim, FlightGlobal. The discussion focused on the mechanics of hypersonics and the DOD roadmap for development of the technology for transition to the warfighter.

Public Affairs Operations

(b)(6)

From: Joiner, A Kimberley (Kim) SES OSD PA (USA)
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2019 7:36 PM
To: Chewning, Eric SES SD
Cc: Berrios, Jillian CIV SD; BGen. David Lyons; Cacci, Ralph A SES (USA); Summers, Charles E II SES OSD PA (USA); Chris Logan SD; COL Cain Baker; Col. Jennifer Hammerstedt; (b)(6) Hood, Robert R HON OSD OASD LA (US); Johnson, Justin SES SD; Hoffman, Jonathan R SES OSD OSD (USA); Miller, Jamie J SES (US); Oliver Lewis (Ollie); Thomas, James A Jr SES OSD OASD LA (USA); (b)(6) (b)(6) Smith, George W Jr LtGen USMC PPANDU (USA); (b)(6) (b)(6) Thurman, Melissa Lt Col SD; Torza, Vincent COL SD; (b)(6) (b)(6) Verga, Peter SES SD
Subject: Daily Comms Update 20 Sept
Signed By: (b)(6)

Good evening,

-- Secretary Esper and General Dunford briefed the press this evening on additional defensive support to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Topics of questions from the press included capability and size of force being deployed, POTUS decision on kinetic vs non-kinetic action, degree of U.S. commitment, and support of international community.

-- Australia Enhanced Honor Cordon. Secretary Esper hosted an enhanced honor cordon and meeting welcoming Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia Scott Morrison. Readout posted to [defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov).

Best,
Kim

Kim Joiner
Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Strategic Engagement
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs

(b)(6)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DeptofDefense>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DoDO Outreach>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/deptofdefense>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DeptofDefense>
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/united-states-department-of-defense>
Join the conversation: #KnowYourMil

THREE DAY FORECAST

Monday, Sept. 23

- DARPA Dir. Walker keynote discussion ([10:15 a.m.](#)), DUSD(R&E) Porter on panel ([11:30 a.m.](#)) @ CSIS 21st Century National Security Innovation Partnership Conference, Washington, D.C.
- SD hosts enhanced honor cordon and meeting (pooled press topper) w/ German MoD Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer - [10:15 a.m.](#)
- USD(P) Rood ([11 a.m.](#)), Army Futures Command DCG LTG Wesley ([3:15 p.m.](#)) join panel discussions @ Center for European Policy Analysis Forum, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 24

- GTMO Periodic Review Board proceeding for Hassan Muhammad Ali Bin Attash - [9 a.m.](#)
- JAIC Dir. LTG Shanahan participates in livestream interview on military readiness in the AI age @ the Atlantic Festival, Hotel Monaco, [700 F Street NW, Washington, D.C.](#) - [9:30 a.m.](#)
- Army Futures Command DCG LTG Wesley discusses Army modernization @ Brookings Institution, [1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.](#) - [10 a.m.](#)
- CENTCOM Gen. McKenzie off the record dinner w/PPC, Army/Navy Country Club, Arlington, VA - [6 p.m.](#)
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray interview w/Defense News (Jen Judson), Austin, TX

Wednesday, Sept. 25

- SECDEF CONUS travel [through Sept. 26](#)
- DSCA Dir. LTG Hooper, DSCA Dep. Dir. Kausner, DSCA Principal Director for Security Cooperation Workforce Development Cara Abercrombie media roundtable @ opening of Defense Security Cooperation University, Arlington, VA - [10:30 a.m.](#) (invited press)
- DUSD(R&E) Porter background interview w/Foreign Policy (Lara Seligman) on 5G, PA Conference Room - [11 a.m.](#)
- JAIC Dir. LTG Shanahan keynote interview @ Kalaris Intelligence Conference, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C. - [1 p.m.](#)
- ASD(IPSA) Schriver closing remarks for the International Republican Institute's report launch on Chinese Communist Party's malign influence and the impact on democracy across 13 countries, Washington, D.C. - [3:30 p.m.](#)
- Essye Miller, Principal Deputy, Chief Information Officer, keynote on digital modernization @ American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council membership meeting, Falls Church, VA - [4:30 p.m.](#)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- * DOD Advice to White House. Eric Schmitt, NYT, requested confirmation of alleged input from DOD OGC to WH GC following the [June 19](#) downing of a U.S. surveillance aircraft by Iran. Coordinating with OGC.
- * DOD Options to the White House. Prior to evening press briefing, received multiple media queries concerning alleged meetings at the White House and what options, if any, DOD was providing in regards to a response to Iran aggression in Saudi Arabia. Responded our conversations with the White House are private and we do not share that information.
- * Edward Snowden New Book. Prepared an RTQ briefing card for potential questions about Edward Snowden's new book. Coordinated TPs with USD(I), ODNI, and NSA.
- * JEDI. Lauren Williams/Federal Computer Week and Connor O'Brien/Politico asked if JEDI would be impacted by a CR. Informed them both that we had nothing further on the acquisitions that would be affected by a CR beyond the response to the taken question during the Sept. 19 press briefing.

* Refugee Ceiling. Ryan Browne, CNN, queried about the refugee ceiling, numbers, and DSD involvement. Responded it would be premature to talk about any refugee ceiling decisions.

* Azerbaijan Security Cooperation. Rafiq Gurbanzade, CBC TV Washington, asked about DOD allocations of security cooperation to Azerbaijan. Responded with a total on 100 million, including a general breakdown of projects coordinated through OUSD Policy.

* ESPN B-Roll. ESPN cameramen filmed exterior/interior shots of Pentagon for possible use [on Sept. 23](#) ESPN [Monday Night](#) Countdown (6-8 p.m. pre-game show), and [Monday Night](#) Football game (8 p.m., Bears at Redskins).

* UFOs. Received multiple queries concerning Navy confirmation of UFO videos. Responded with coordinated lines on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2019 4:50 PM
Subject: OSD(PA) COB

ON TOP

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Defense Press Operations

(b)(6)

From: Joiner, A Kimberley (Kim) SES OSD PA (USA)
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2019 6:29 PM
To: Chewning, Eric SES SD
Cc: Berrios, Jillian CIV SD; BGen. David Lyons; Cacci, Ralph A SES (USA); Summers, Charles E II SES OSD PA (USA); Chris Logan SD; COL Cain Baker; Col. Jennifer Hammerstedt; (b)(6) Hood, Robert R HON OSD OASD LA (US); Johnson, Justin SES SD; Hoffman, Jonathan R SES OSD OSD (USA); Miller, Jamie J SES (US); Oliver Lewis (Ollie); Thomas, James A Jr SES OSD OASD LA (USA); (b)(6) (b)(6) Smith, George W Jr LtGen USMC PPANDO (USA); (b)(6) (b)(6) Thurman, Melissa Lt Col SD; Torza, Vincent COL SD; (b)(6) (b)(6) Verga, Peter SES SD
Subject: Daily Comms Update 19Sep
Signed By: (b)(6)

Good evening,

-- Numerous questions on Afghanistan today. We received multiple queries on the air strike in the Nangarhar province which, according to news reports, resulted in the death of 30 civilians; referred to Resolute Support, who said that they are investigating. Mike Phillips, Wall Street Journal, asked about the number of troops deployed to Afghanistan and the number of deployments; provided a report from Defense Manpower Data Center with that information. Ben Finley, AP, requested the total number of service members who have died in Afghanistan in 2019; response coordinated with DMDC.

-- ATSD(PA) Hoffman and CJCS Spokesman USAF Col. Pat Ryder conducted an on-camera press briefing today. Topics of questions from the press included the attacks on Saudi Arabia oil fields, Iran tensions, southwest border support and use of 2808 and 284 funds, continuing resolution, Gen. Hyten (as prospective VCJCS), and troop strength in AFRICOM AOR.

Best,
Kim

Kim Joiner
Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Strategic Engagement
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs

(b)(6)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DeptofDefense>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DoDO Outreach>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/deptofdefense>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DeptofDefense>
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/united-states-department-of-defense>
Join the conversation: #KnowYourMil

THREE DAY FORECAST

Friday, Sept. 20

- CJCS off-the-record editors roundtable @ NPR - [8:30 a.m.](#)
- DASD(Cyber Policy) Wilson speaks @ Defense Strategies Institute (Leveraging Updated Cyberspace Policy and Strategy to Ensure National Security), Alexandria, VA - [9 a.m.](#) (closed press)
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray keynote speaker @ the 2019 Symposium on Modern Warfare, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock, TX - [12 p.m. \(CDT\)](#)
- SD hosts enhanced honor cordon and meeting (pooled press topper) iho Australia PM Scott Morrison, Pentagon River Entrance - [2:50 p.m.](#)
- DSD hosts POW/MIA Recognition Day, River Terrace Parade Field - [4 p.m.](#)

Monday, Sept. 23

- DARPA Dir. Walker keynote discussion ([10:15 a.m.](#)), DUSD(R&E) Porter on panel ([11:30 a.m.](#)) @ CSIS 21st Century National Security Innovation Partnership Conference, Washington, D.C.
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- CENTCOM Gen. McKenzie off the record dinner w/PPC, Army/Navy Country Club, Arlington, VA - [6 p.m.](#)
- Army Futures Command Gen. Murray interview w/Defense News (Jen Judson), Austin, TX

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- * Privatized Housing. Haley Britzky, Task and Purpose, asked for details on DOD's input on a letter from OMB to Congress on the NDAA. Declined to provide specific details on DOD's input, and provided standing talking points on what DOD is doing to address concerns raised about privatized housing.
- * Refueling Reimbursement. Joe Gould, Defense News, asked whether Saudi Arabia and UAE have provided the refueling reimbursement, and if not, the percentage that has been paid. Coordinated response with OSD(Policy) and provided: "The process of reimbursement is continuing and we continue to expect full reimbursement of refueling expenses. I am not going to be able to provide specifics on the reimbursement process."
- * 5G Spectrum Allocation. John Hendel, Politico, queried about provisions in the Senate version of the FY20 NDAA related to 5G spectrum use. Responded that DOD does not comment on pending legislation.
- * JAIC. The Joint Artificial Intelligence Center provided GSA a quote from Lt. Gen. Shanahan for inclusion in a GSA press release about the GSA and JAIC partnership for a discovery sprint as part of GSA's Centers of Excellence initiative. Expect the press release to be sent [on Sept. 25.](#)
- * IMSC. Coordinated a statement with OSD(Policy) and CENTCOM welcoming UAE to the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC). Posted to centcom.mil and disseminated on social media.

* Billingslea. Coordinated response for Washington Post query requesting DOD comment on "allegations from "some members" of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who say DOD is withholding potentially relevant materials regarding Mr. Billingslea and his work on interrogation/torture." Provided statement to reporter, coordinated with OUSD(I): "We continuously work with Congress and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to provide information they request. We don't have any details at this time on allegations that the DOD is withholding information regarding Mr. Billingslea."

* Universal Postal Union. Received queries from Hearst and Federal News Network about the Universal Postal Union. Responded with the following statement: "The United States Postal Service, Department of Defense and State Department are developing operational plans to support the ability of our military and overseas Americans to cast their absentee ballots. At this time, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is communicating through its network of key stakeholders to encourage our overseas military, their families residing overseas and American citizens residing overseas to complete an updated Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to request balloting materials electronically and furnish an alternative physical address. Various methods will be employed to inform affected voters on how to take action and operational procedures will be provided to the states to share with local election officials."

* Trump Properties. Received multiple queries on the recent letter from the House Oversight and Reform Committee about service members staying in Trump properties. Working a statement with Personnel & Readiness.

* Defense Security Cooperation University. Coordinated with DSCA on a media invite to the DSCU ribbon cutting and media availability [on Sept. 25](#). Event will include USD(P) Rood, DSCA Director, LTG Hooper, and DSCU Commandant Ms. Cara Abercrombie. Invite was sent by DSCA today.

* UAPs. Continued to coordinate with Navy, OUSD(I), DIA, DOPSR and now USAF, on continuing multiple queries from multiple outlets about military aircraft videos depicting unidentified aerial phenomena that were highlighted in a summer program on the History Channel, the old AATIP program, the review and release procedures and investigations, and related matters.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Saturday, July 18, 2020 5:00 AM
Subject: MNON with Highlighted Quotes 18 July 2020
Attachments: MNON with Highlighted Quotes 18 July 2020.pdf
Signed By: (b)(6)

MORNING NEWS OF NOTE
As of 0430 Hours, July 18

Tweets of Note

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) tweeted: "The National Defense Strategy says that the Indo-Pacific needs to be our priority, especially as China expands its reach and influence. The National Defense Authorization Act better positions us to defend our interests and support our allies in this key theater. #FY21NDAA." On COVID-19, Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ) wrote: "Today, I spoke with the new @yppg_az commander Col. Ben Patrick McFall III about precautions the base is taking to keep our soldiers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and how we can support the @USArmy's testing mission in Yuma." And Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA) said: "Secretary Esper's decision to effectively ban the public display of the Confederate flag – a divisive symbol of hate and oppression – is a good first step in the right direction as our government and our military grapple with our shared history of racism."

Table of Contents

TOP NEWS

1. Bases no longer allowed to fly Confederate flag
Washington Post, July 18 (0115), Pg. A3 | Dan Lamothe
Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper effectively banned displays of the Confederate battle flag on U.S. military installations, saying in a memo released Friday that the American flag is the "principal flag we are authorized and encouraged to display."
2. U.S. Eyes Cutting Troops In Korea
Wall Street Journal, July 18 (0200), Pg. A1 | Michael R. Gordon and Gordon Lubold
The Pentagon has presented the White House with options to reduce the American military presence in South Korea as the two countries remain at odds over President Trump's demand that Seoul greatly increase how much it pays for the U.S. troops stationed in the country, U.S. officials said.
3. Navy chief: U.S. warship's fate uncertain; damage extensive
Associated Press, July 17 (1821) | Julie Watson
The USS Bonhomme Richard has extensive structural, electrical and mechanical damage, a top naval chief said Friday after walking into the bowels of the charred warship that burned for more than four days off San Diego.

LETHALITY

4. Coronavirus Pandemic Proves the Need for a Bigger Force, SecArmy Says

Military.com, July 17 (0946) | Gina Harkins

As soldiers are once again called on to respond to the coronavirus crisis, the Army's top civilian leader said the pandemic proves the need for a bigger force.

5. JAIC Says First Cohort of 'Responsible AI Champions' Completes Pilot

Meritalk.com, July 17 (1120) | Dwight Weingarten

The first group of "Responsible AI Champions" in the Department of Defense (DoD) has completed a nine-week program led by Alka Patel, head of AI ethics policy at the department's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC).

ALLIANCES/PARTNERSHIPS

6. Japan's defense minister wants U.S. troops tested for coronavirus before leaving the States

Stars and Stripes Online, July 17 (0525) | Aya Ichihashi

Four days after a U.S. military family in Japan tested positive for the coronavirus, the country's defense minister on Friday called on the U.S. military to test all its personnel before they leave the United States.

REFORM

7. DoD Needs Supply Chain Strategy To Survive Future Crises -- Roper

BreakingDefense.com, July 17 (1638) | Theresa Hitchens

Air Force acquisition head Will Roper says DoD needs to develop a new supply chain strategy that incentivizes industry to build a more diverse, responsive and resilient supply chain.

PERSONNEL

8. Pentagon to Consider Stripping Names, Gender Pronouns from Selection Boards

Military.com, July 17 (1627) | Patricia Kime

The Defense Department's Personnel and Readiness directorate is weighing whether to strip names and gender pronouns from promotion boards, according to Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE

9. Trump skirting Congress to install loyalists in the Pentagon

Politico Online, July 17 (1420) | Lara Seligman

The White House is taking advantage of a loophole to install loyalists to President Donald Trump in acting senior roles at the Pentagon, effectively skirting the Senate confirmation process.

10. Trump vets Afghan war skeptic for ambassador job

Politico Online, July 17 (1727) | Daniel Lippman

President Donald Trump is considering nominating Will Ruger, a Koch-affiliated foreign policy expert who wants to pull all American troops out of Afghanistan, to be the U.S. ambassador to that war-torn country, according to a person with direct knowledge of the matter.

11. 'National security risk': Rubio seeks declassification of UFO secrets

Washington Examiner Online, July 17 (1332) | Jerry Dunleavy

The Republican chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee is leading the charge to declassify and make public what the intelligence community knows about "unidentified aerial phenomena."

GREAT POWER COMPETITION

12. Foggo: Russia Seeking More Control of Black Sea, Mediterranean, Arctic

U.S. Naval Institute News, July 17 (1809) | Megan Eckstein

A retiring admiral who has spent a lifetime supporting NATO is warning that the U.S. Navy and the alliance need to do more to push back against Russia, or else waters in the Euro-Atlantic region may be lost to Russian anti-access tactics and weapons.

13. China and India Locked in High-Altitude Arms Race

Wall Street Journal, July 18 (0200), Pg. A7 | Bill Spindle and Rajesh Roy

Battle lines are hardening along the remote Himalayan frontier that separates China and India, where the two Asian giants have been engaged in a competitive military construction spree, expanding bases and building airfields to accommodate bigger and more heavily armed forces.

14. China says it's not trying to replace U.S., won't be bullied

Associated Press, July 17 (1109) | Not Attributed

China isn't seeking to confront or replace the United States as the world's top technological power, but will fight back against "malicious slander" and attacks from Washington, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Friday, responding to a litany of recent accusations from the Trump administration.

15. B-1 bombers deploy to Guam as Navy carriers continue readiness training in South China Sea

Stars and Stripes Online, July 17 (2037) | Wyatt Olson

The Air Force on Friday deployed two B-1B bombers to Guam as the Navy continued its dual-aircraft carrier operations in the contested South China Sea.

16. State Dept. releases cable related to Wuhan lab

Washington Post, July 18 (0115), Pg. A2 | John Hudson and Nate Jones

The State Department has released an internal cable from 2018 detailing the concerns of U.S. Embassy officials in China about a lack of adequately trained personnel at a virology lab in Wuhan, the city that later became the epicenter of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

17. U.S. General Discusses Status Of U.S. Troops In Afghanistan

NPR News (Morning Edition), July 17 (0500) | Steve Inskeep

Steve Inskeep speaks with Gen. Frank McKenzie, commander of U.S. Central Command, about the security of American troops in Afghanistan.

18. Taliban make big changes ahead of expected talks with Kabul

Associated Press, July 17 (0757) | Kathy Gannon

The Taliban have put the son of the movement's feared founder in charge of their military wing and added several powerful figures to their negotiating team, Taliban officials said. The shake-up, one of the most significant in years, comes ahead of expected talks with Kabul aimed at ending decades of war in Afghanistan.

19. Pentagon report: Turkey sent up to 3,800 fighters to Libya

Associated Press, July 17 (1925) | Isabel Debre

Turkey sent between 3,500 and 3,800 paid Syrian fighters to Libya over the first three months of the year, the U.S. Defense Department's inspector general concluded in a new report, its first to detail Turkish deployments that helped change the course of Libya's war.

20. U.S. remains on the sidelines in Libya's conflict as Russia extends its reach

Washington Post Online, July 17 (1007) | Missy Ryan and Sudarsan Raghavan

An absence of U.S. leadership in Libya has allowed a dangerous international confrontation to deepen, analysts say, as a spiraling proxy war stokes threats to American economic and security interests and provides Russia a platform to expand its clout in the Mediterranean.

21. Richardson fails to win freedom for eight held by Venezuela

Washington Post, July 18 (0115), Pg. A12 | Anthony Faiola

Former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson concluded a four-day special mission to Venezuela on Friday, succeeding in opening a direct channel with President Nicolás Maduro but failing in his immediate objective: the release of eight high-profile prisoners being held in Caracas, including seven Americans.

22. Tens of thousands clog Mali's capital demanding the president's resignation

Washington Post, July 18 (0115), Pg. A13 | Danielle Paquette and Mamadou Tapily

Tens of thousands of protesters have flooded the capital of Mali in recent days, demanding the president's exit as the West African nation confronts a coronavirus outbreak, a failing economy and the world's fastest-growing Islamist insurgency.

NOTABLE COMMENTARY

23. The Navy's Cultural Ship Is Listing

Wall Street Journal, July 18 (0200), Pg. A13 | Kate Bachelder Odell

In the U.S. Navy, "shock trials" involve taking a warship to sea and conducting drills to see how well she might absorb the stress of combat. The Navy has lately experienced institutional shock trials: bribery scandals, collisions and sundry other public-relations nightmares. This week in San Diego the USS Bonhomme Richard, a \$750 million amphibious assault ship, caught fire and burned for days. Earlier this year, Capt. Brett Crozier was relieved of command of the USS Theodore Roosevelt after writing a letter saying he needed to move his sailors off the aircraft carrier to arrest an outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

24. A Trump Retreat From Korea?

Wall Street Journal Online, July 17 (1912) | Editorial

A couple of months ago we heard that President Trump was pushing the Pentagon to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Germany and South Korea. We started calling around and were told to focus on Afghanistan, as the other two deployments were safe in an election year.

25. The Iran-China Axis

Wall Street Journal Online, July 17 (1903) | Editorial

Iran's revolutionary slogan "Neither West, nor East" signified the country's antagonism to the U.S. and the Soviet Union. But as China rises—and Iranian rulers focus on survival under U.S. pressure—the Islamic Republic is taking a side.

TWEETS OF NOTE

Twitter, July 17