

**From:** Craig Quigley <cquigley@hrmffa.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 14, 2019 3:20 PM  
**To:** Craig Quigley  
**Subject:** EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | JULY 12, 2019

**Ladies & Gentlemen, below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.**

**Craig R. Quigley**  
**Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)**  
**Executive Director**  
**Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance**  
**757-644-6324 (Office)**  
**757-419-1164 (Mobile)**



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**EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | JULY 12, 2019**  
**TOP STORIES**

**Iran Update**

***Harassment of British Tanker***

British and American authorities reported a [July 10th confrontation in the](#)

[Persian Gulf](#) between a British oil tanker and suspected Iranian Revolutionary Guard vessels. The tanker, BP-owned *British Heritage*, was sailing near the disputed island of Abu Musa heading toward the Strait of Hormuz when multiple vessels intercepted it. Luckily for the *Heritage*, a British Royal Navy frigate, H.M.S. *Montrose*, was shadowing it in the distance in order to respond to exactly such an event. Sources dispute the exact number of approaching vessels but at least three approached the tanker before the *Montrose* came to the tanker's aid and ordered the intercepting vessels to back off.

The incident occurred in international waters and was resolved without violence. Many sources speculate that the harassment was a response to the [seizure of an Iranian tanker in Gibraltar](#) by British authorities last week, especially because Iranian authorities indicated they would support a reciprocal seizure.

### ***Uranium Enrichment Uptick***

Iran announced that it will increase its level of uranium enrichment to “whatever it needs to be” beyond the 3.67% cap set in the 2015 nuclear deal. Iran's President, Hassan Rouhani, indicated that if the remaining signatories of the nuclear deal do not honor the terms of the agreement, Tehran will return to its pre-2015 enrichment policies. The Trump Administration pulled the United States out of the 2015 deal, an act that Tehran and many international observers see as the root cause of Iran's recent provocative behavior.

### ***U.S. to Not Provide Escorts in Hormuz Strait***

Despite recent aggression by Iranian naval forces in the Strait of Hormuz, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford announced that the [U.S. Navy would not provide escorts](#) to shipping vessels in the region. Gen. Dunford said in a statement that “Escorting... would be performed by countries

of the same flag.”

The United States will continue to provide surveillance and organizational support, as the security of the Strait of Hormuz is paramount for global trade and the hydrocarbon market. Gen. Dunford did acknowledge efforts by him and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to form a coalition of countries to ensure the freedom of passage through the waters.

### **U.S. Arms Deal with Taiwan on Track**

Despite significant Chinese objection, the U.S. State Department approved an arms [deal with Taiwan worth more than \\$2 billion](#) on Monday. The deal, which has been in the works for some months, would see the United States provide Taiwan with 108 M1A2T Abrams battle tanks, 250 Stinger missiles, and other modern armaments needed by the aging Republic of China Armed Forces. Congress now has 30 days to block the sale, but the deal is expected to move forward.

Mainland China has threatened to impose sanctions on the United States for the deal which Beijing views as foreign meddling in domestic affairs. Although little is expected to come of such threats in light of dozens of previous deals, [the risks of such sales](#) continue to increase every year as China's military strength and regional ambitions grow. Regardless, the United States is legally obligated to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself against invasion. Taiwan's President indicated gratitude for the deal and announced increased investment in domestic defense and related technologies.

## **UK Ambassador Darroch Resigns**

The [United Kingdom's ambassador](#) to the United States, Sir Kim Darroch, resigned on Wednesday following the leak of a diplomatic cable earlier in the week. The content of the cable focused on rifts and disputes within the White House and President Trump's staff, with Amb. Darroch calling President Trump 'inept' and his administration 'uniquely dysfunctional'. President Trump did not take kindly to the criticisms, rebuking the ambassador's comments by refusing to work with him in the future. Prime Minister Theresa May praised Darroch's service and lamented that his position had become untenable. The source of the leak is under investigation by the British government.

The [controversy comes at a contentious time](#) for both the United Kingdom and the U.S. Post-Brexit relations between the two countries have been rocky given the standards of previous administrations. The U.K. is expected to appoint a new prime minister in the coming months following the ongoing Brexit debacle that effectively ousted Theresa May. The new prime minister will have a significant impact on U.K.-U.S. relations, as President Trump has enjoyed a warm rapport with front-runner Boris Johnson. Mr. Johnson has received strong criticism in the U.K. for not strongly supporting Amb. Darroch.

## **Milley Senate Confirmation Hearing**

The Senate began hearings this week on the [confirmation of Gen. Mark Milley](#) as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The current Army Chief of Staff experienced bipartisan support in preliminary hearings, with several senators publicly expressing their desire to vote in favor of the confirmation. Gen. Milley would be replacing Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr., who has served in the role since 2015. Gen. Milley will be the 20th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff if

confirmed.

[During the hearing](#), Gen. Milley was asked about his position on many important topics, including the U.S.'s nuclear capabilities, China, and the Space Force. Although the subject of low-yield nuclear weapons has been controversial in proceedings in both chambers of Congress, Gen. Milley faced little backlash when he stated the weapons are an “important capability to have in our arsenal.” Gen. Milley also established his belief that China poses the greatest threat to American hegemony in the world, therefore advocating for the deployment of conventional intermediate-range missiles to the Indo-Pacific region.

Gen. Milley was repeatedly asked about the [turnover of officials](#) at the Pentagon and its effect on civilian control of the military. He stressed the importance of filling those positions quickly to restore the valued civilian oversight offered by these positions in the Pentagon. Currently, there are 18 senior political positions within the Pentagon with unconfirmed officials serving in an acting role, among those are the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and secretaries for both the Air Force and Army.

## **China**

### ***Trade War Update***

U.S. and China trade negotiations [encountered a hiccup this week after initial progress](#) following President Xi and President Trump's meeting at the G20 Summit. Both Presidents agreed to enact no new tariffs, despite recent threats by both sides to do so. However, progress at the summit stalled as President Trump expressed disappointment in the Chinese government for not buying

U.S. agricultural products. The administration stated that the Chinese government promised to increase purchasing of U.S. farm products—but no such increase has occurred. President Xi claimed that he agreed to no such deal.

Analysts believe this issue, along with the U.S.'s blacklisting of Huawei, could hinder attempts to [finalize a trade deal](#). Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow estimated that the trade deal is roughly 90% finished, but Kudlow remarked that the last 10% of the talks will be “tough.” The two sides will continue negotiations over the next few weeks to resolve the remaining points of contention. Both sides noted that they have no set deadline for a deal.

### ***Huawei Cyber Backdoors Discovered***

Tech giant Huawei has come under fire in recent weeks after the release of an [explosive report](#) scrutinizing the prevalence of vulnerabilities in Huawei's products and the existence of “backdoors” in Huawei firmware. Much of Huawei's products are backed up by firmware, which is loaded onto the device when it is built and runs in the background, hidden from the user, and can only be updated by the original manufacturer. Cybersecurity firm Finite State recently conducted a search of 1.5 million Huawei firmware files across 558 Huawei enterprise networking products.

Finite State released a report detailing that the average Huawei device contained 102 vulnerabilities, 25% of which were severe enough to allow a hacker to get full access to the system relatively easily. Finite State indicated that Huawei's products are far more vulnerable to attacks in comparison to Western products. The founder, Matt Wyckhouse, called Huawei's products “some of the worst devices we've ever tested.”

The report marks a step back in Huawei's relationship with the United States. The U.S. blacklisted Huawei in May of this year, citing national security concerns. The U.S. argues that Huawei may be purposefully coding in vulnerabilities in their firmware to allow Chinese hackers to have a backdoor into their products with which they can steal information and hack American systems.

Wyckhouse declined to comment on the intentionality of the vulnerabilities found in Huawei's firmware. Meanwhile, Huawei called into question the objectiveness of the report and stated that "Huawei takes cyber security very seriously and has made it our top priority." The tech giant said that they welcome communication with Finite State. This statement was made in response to [other tech giants like Nokia shaming them](#) for their lackluster security.

## **Military Technology Update**

### ***Qatar's Raytheon Defense Purchase***

Raytheon announced it was awarded two direct commercial sales contracts from the State of Qatar for supplemental integrated air and missile defense capability. [The contracts are worth about \\$2.2 billion](#) and include the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NAMSAMS), the final certification of the AMRAAM-Extended Range missile, with an unknown quantity of Patriot fire units.

[Qatar is the first country to acquire AMRAAM-ER](#), the surface-to-air extended-range variant of the tested AMRAAM air-to-air missile. Moreover, Qatar is the

11th country to acquire the NASAMS, which is a medium range air defense solution created by Raytheon and Kongsberg Defense & Aerospace AS. NASAMS uses the Raytheon Sentinel radar and fires various interceptors including AMRAAM-ER.

### ***Japan 6<sup>th</sup> Gen Fighter the Mitsubishi F-3 Stealth Fighter***

After years of hesitation, Tokyo's Mid-Term Defense review announced that they are going to press ahead with the development of the 6th generation fighter jet, the [Mitsubishi F-3 air-superiority stealth fighter](#). This decision represents an alternative to purchasing additional foreign stealth fighters needed to supplement Japan's already growing fleet of American F-35's. The production of the F-3 would help Japan reduce its reliance on American defense companies.

Analysts predicted that the production of the F-3 was indefinitely on hold after Japan announced its intent to purchase 105 more F-35A and F-35B Lightning stealth jets in conjunction with the 42 aircraft it had already ordered. Tokyo has previously studied converting the F-3's airframe skin into a 'conformal' radar antenna using composite smart-skin sensors, and an electromagnetic ESM sensor that helps detect enemies and minimizes the fighter's own radio-frequency for self-defense.

Technologies that appeared in the test X-2 model like EMP resistant fiber-optic fly-by-wire avionics, and 'self-repairing' services that automatically compensate for damages that affect the aircraft's control system are likely to be implemented in the F-3.

### ***New Army Compact Sniper Rifle***

The Army is currently testing a new type of compact sniper rifle known as the Compact Semi-Automatic Sniper System or [CSASS](#). The new firearm was designed specifically for airborne operations through direct consultation with current soldiers to ensure optimization for the ultimate user. The result is not only a more practical and compact weapon but a lighter and more functional one as well.

By providing a rifle with a shorter barrel, adjustable stock, and smaller scope, the new rifle overcomes many of the issues previously faced by airborne troops when loading onto and deploying from airplanes with more cumbersome rifles. The weapon weighs roughly 10 pounds and uses a TANGO6 1x6 power scope, which is accurate up to 600 meters. Army leadership indicated that this rifle is a step toward being able to equip all combat squads with long range abilities.

## Quick Hits

### ***The New USMC Commandant***

[Lt. General David Berger was confirmed](#) by the Senate on Wednesday as the next Marine Commandant. His tenure as the nation's top Marine will begin as soon as his predecessor, Robert Neller, the 37th Marine Commandant steps down at the end of his term. Neller announced at an awards dinner in May that his tenure would end on July 11th. Berger currently serves as the commander of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, where he oversees the latest tech and training to prepare the Corps for the future battlefield.

### ***Russian Ship Violates Ukrainian-U.S. Training***

The [Ukrainian Navy accused a Russian](#) warship of entering restricted waters in the Black Sea that were designated for live-fire exercises by Ukrainian and U.S.

forces. The Russian Kashin-class guided-missile destroyer spent about eight hours in the area and while the Ukrainian Navy said it created “a dangerous situation,” the U.S. Navy maintained the incursion had “no impact on the exercise.”

The most recent provocation from Russia comes as the U.S., Ukraine and other states conduct the annual Sea Breeze exercises in Ukrainian waters. The 19th edition of the exercise assembled a large force of military personnel and equipment, including 33 ships, 26 aircraft and more than 3,000 troops.

### ***Adm Moran out as CNO***

[Admiral William Moran turned down the nomination to Chief of Naval Operations](#) and is set to retire after an e-mail probe cast doubt on the Admiral’s judgement. Moran is currently serving as Vice Chief of Naval Operations and was set to take over the Navy’s top job before an investigation into his e-mails revealed correspondence between him and former naval officer Chris Servello, who retired under fire after displaying inappropriate behavior at a Pentagon Christmas party in 2016.

The Pentagon came under fire in 2017 after Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and others heavily scrutinized the handling of the initial investigation into Servello’s conduct, resulting in a second investigation by the Inspector General in late 2017. The Inspector General’s investigation eventually led to the uncovering of Admiral Moran’s continued e-mail correspondence with the dishonored Servello.

Navy Secretary Spencer commented on Moran’s actions, saying the continued professional relationship “with an individual who was held accountable and counseled for failing to meet the values and standards of the naval profession”

called Moran's judgment into question. Moran retires after 39 years of service in the Navy.

### **This Day in History**

*0100 BC*

Julius [Caesar](#) is born.

*1096*

Crusaders under [Peter the Hermit](#) reach Sofia in Hungary.

*1691*

William III defeats the allied Irish and French armies at the [Battle of Aughrim](#), Ireland.

*1794*

British [Admiral Lord Nelson](#) loses his right eye at the [siege of Calvi](#), in Corsica.

*1861*

Wild Bill Hickok gets into his [first gunfight](#), where he shoots 3 men in a shootout in Nebraska.

*1861*

Special commissioner Albert Pike completes [treaties](#) with the members of the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes, giving the new Confederate States of America several allies in Indian Territory. Some members of the tribes also fought for the Confederacy.

1943

Russians halt German [advance](#) in a decisive battle at Kursk, during the [battle of Prokhorovka](#).

1954

Vice President Richard Nixon unveils President Dwight D. Eisenhower's [proposal](#) for a federal highway modernization program, with costs to be shared by federal and state governments, at a Governor's Conference in Lake George. Eisenhower was unable to attend and reveal the pitch himself because of a death in the family.

1974

G. Gordon Liddy, John Ehrlichman and two others [are convicted](#) of conspiracy and perjury in connection with the Watergate scandal.

1990

2 days following [Mikhail Gorbachev's](#) re-election as head of the Communist Party, [Boris Yeltsin](#), president of Russia, announces his resignation from the Party.

See more at [Historynet.com](#) and [History.com](#).

**Look Ahead**

***Saturday, July 13***

12:30 PM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee  
Topic: California Criminal Justice Reform  
Location: Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Building, Historic Auditorium,  
1999 West, Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, Calif.

***Monday, July 15***

8:30 AM EDT

Forum: The National Defense Industrial Association Greater Hampton Roads  
Chapter

Topic: Defense

Location: Christopher Newport University, 1 Avenue of the Arts, Newport News,  
Va.

12:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Atlantic Council

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

2:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Topic: Defense

Location: CEIP, 1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW

5:30 PM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee

Topic: CBP Facility Crowding/Prolonged Detention

Location: 2141 Rayburn House Office Building

6:45 PM EDT

Book Discussion: The Smithsonian Associates

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Drive SW

***Tuesday, July 16***

9:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Atlantic Council and the U.S. Institute of Peace

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

10:00 AM EDT

Markup: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Topic: Pending Legislation

Location: 366 Dirksen Senate Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee

Topic: Women/Girls in the Criminal Justice System

Location: 2141 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

Topic: Pending Nominations

Location: 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Oversight and Reform Committee

Topic: Hurricane Response in Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands

Location: 2154 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Heritage Foundation

Topic: Religion

Location: Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Lehrman  
Auditorium

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: The Legacy of Apollo

Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

12:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee

Topic: Citizenship and Immigration Policy Changes/Processing Delays

Location: 2237 Rayburn House Office Building

12:00 PM EDT

Book Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

1:00 PM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: Veterans Mental Health Complementary Medicine Treatments

2:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: EPA Advisory Committees Decisions

Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

2:30 PM EDT

Hearing: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

Topic: Census Outlook

Location: 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

2:30 PM EDT

Hearing: Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Topic: U.S Policy in Iraq

Location: 419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

4:00 PM EDT

Conference: The Atlantic Council and GLOBSEC

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

6:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Family Research Council and Law and Liberty International

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: FRC, 801 G St. NW

6:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Women's Foreign Policy Group

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: International Student House, 1825 R St. NW

***Wednesday, July 17***

8:00 AM EDT

Symposium: The Woodrow Wilson Center's Polar Institute

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: WWC, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300  
Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Amphitheater

9:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee

Topic: Mueller Report

Location: 2141 Rayburn House Office Building

9:00 AM EDT

Conference: The Atlantic Council and GLOBSEC

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Topic: Pending Legislation

Location: HVC-210 U.S. Capitol

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: Scientific Integrity in Federal Agencies  
Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee  
Topic: Electric Grid Modernization/Security  
Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Webinar: The American Security Project and the Environmental Defense Fund  
Topic: Environment

TBD

Symposium: Wilson Center's Polar Institute, Day 1  
Topic: Environment, Defense  
Location: Ronald Reagan Building Amphitheater, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue  
NW

TBD

Hearing: House (Select) Intelligence Committee  
Topic: Mueller Report  
Location: HVC-304 U.S. Capitol

TBD

Discussion: Meridian International Center  
Topic: Security Relations in the Indo-Pacific  
Location: Meridian House, 1630 Crescent PI NW

***Thursday, July 18***

8:00 AM EDT

Symposium: The Woodrow Wilson Center's Polar Institute

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: WWC, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300  
Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Amphitheater

9:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

10:00 AM EDT

Meeting: National Archives and Records Administration; Information Security  
Oversight office

Topic: National Archives Industrial Information Security

Location: National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania  
Avenue NW, McGowan Theater

***Friday, July 19***

8:00 AM EDT

Seminar: The Air Force Association's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies

Topic: Defense

Location: Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St. SE

9:00 AM EDT

Meeting: Defense Department; General Services Administration; National  
Aeronautics and Space Administration

Topic: Defense Department Telecommunications Services

Location: Interior Department, 1849 C St. NW, Auditorium

1:00 PM EDT

Meeting: Federal Communications Commission

Topic: Communications Security and Interoperability

Location: FCC, 445 12th St. SW, Room TW-C305

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**EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | JULY 19, 2019**  
**TOP STORIES**

### **Mark Esper Confirmation Hearing**

The Senate House Armed Services Committee [held a confirmation hearing](#) on Tuesday for Acting Secretary of Defense Mark Esper. Esper talked about the

growing threats China and Russia pose to the current international order and how the DoD must invest in modernizing our forces and “capitalize on rapid technological advancements in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, directed energy and hypersonics” to counteract these threats.

[Esper sailed](#) somewhat smoothly through the hearing with most Democrats and Republicans praising Esper’s qualifications. Esper was confirmed as Army Secretary by a vote of 89 to 6 in 2017, and with bipartisan support in the Senate, Esper is expected to pass through the Senate without controversy.

However, [Esper did receive push back](#) in the hearing from Senator Elizabeth Warren. Warren mainly criticized Esper’s ties to Raytheon, his former employer, where he served as the top lobbyist. Warren persistently asked Esper if he would recuse himself from all matters involving Raytheon and if he would commit to not seeking pay from any defense contractor for 4 years after his government service. Esper assured Warren he will listen to the advice of the Ethics Board and that his commitment to public service and “living an ethical life” was genuine. Several Senators criticized Warren for this line of questioning believing it was unwarranted and unfair, strictly to put on a show because of her current presidential election campaign.

## **China Stokes International Flames**

### ***Violent Hong Kong Protests***

Pro-democracy [protests in Hong Kong](#), initially instigated by a proposed extradition bill between the autonomous city and mainland China, have morphed into a much larger movement in recent weeks. Despite Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, announcing the indefinite suspension of the bill,

the bill is yet to be fully withdrawn, a baseline demand from protestors. Rather than subsiding in recent weeks after the bill's suspension, protests have actually grown in number and in size, even including a "silver haired" march on Wednesday featuring thousands of seniors passionate about protecting the rule of law.

There is no longer a single, central issue on which the civil unrest revolves. Instead, the protests are now fueled by dissatisfaction with the gradual conquest of Hong Kong by Beijing and general dissatisfaction with the performance of the elected government. The protests are the largest since the 90's and have paralyzed much of the financial and commercial interests of the city. Overall commerce has declined but [luxury brands and hotels in particular have been hit hard](#). Many expect the protests to continue off-and-on until at least the end of the summer, if not November, when Hong Kong general elections will be held.

### ***Vietnam vs. China dispute***

A weeks-long [standoff between Vietnamese and Chinese naval forces](#) came to an end early this week as a Chinese survey vessel completed an intrusive 12-day survey of internationally recognized Vietnamese territorial waters that China claims sovereignty over. The Chinese vessel, the Haiyang Dizhi 8, covered a vast swath of territory, including Vietnamese oil fields licensed to Spanish energy firm Repsol, which has been forced by China to cease operations numerous times in recent years. The Haiyang Dizhi 8 was escorted by three Chinese Coast Guard vessels and closely shadowed by nine Vietnamese ships.

A separate incident reported by the U.S.-based Center for Strategic and

International Studies (CSIS) saw a [Chinese Coast Guard vessel maneuver threateningly](#) toward Vietnamese vessels servicing a Japanese owned, Rosneft-operated oil platform, further heightening tensions. Vietnamese authorities responded to the incidents highlighting that all Chinese actions in Vietnamese waters are violations of international law while Chinese sources claim to be protecting their sovereignty.

### ***Chinese Hold Drills in Controversial Area***

In the midst of rising tensions between the U.S. and China over increased aid to Taiwan, the Chinese [People's Liberation Army conducted sea and air-based military exercises](#) in the Taiwan Strait. Chinese officials were coy with details and downplayed the events, saying that they were part of previously scheduled plans and not an implicit response to U.S. aid. However, Chinese aggression in the area spiked in the past year, especially following Chinese fighter jets crossing the maritime border between the countries in April. While incursions of that type have been rare in the past, Chinese President Xi Jinping has increased his calls for reunification in recent months and would not rule out using force to do so.

The timing of the PLA's drills in the region is suspicious, despite rhetoric from both Beijing and Taipei that signal otherwise. On July 8th, the [State Department approved a \\$2.2 billion aid](#) package to Taiwan, including 108 M1A2T Abrams tanks and Stinger missiles. Chinese officials threatened sanctions for the U.S. firms selling arms to Taiwan, claiming the deal violated China's sovereignty and national security. Among those companies that could be affected are Raytheon Missile Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems. Stoking Chinese uncertainty, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen is in the midst of a visit to several Caribbean countries that will conclude with a dinner in Denver.

## Iran Update

### *Iran Seizes Oil Tanker*

Tehran announced that its [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy seized a foreign flagged oil tanker](#) in the Persian Gulf under the pretext that the ship was smuggling 1 million liters (264,000 gallons) of fuel. Iranian state media outlets report the tanker had a crew of 12 men. The vessel was seized south of Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz (the island is 20 miles off Iranian mainland). The Iranian military issued a statement claiming the tanker was en route "to deliver the smuggled fuel received from the Iranian dhows to foraging ship in farther areas but it failed thanks to the IRGC Naval forces' vigilance."

While Iran has not named the vessel, [U.S media outlets](#) as well as maritime news sites identify the ship as the MT Riah, a small Panamanian flagged tanker that went missing in the Strait of Hormuz around midnight Saturday, according to ship tracking data. This seizure adds another layer of complexity to tension between Iran and its Western counterparts in the United States and Europe. In recent weeks, British marine forces announced they foiled an Iranian plot to seize British oil tankers in the region. (Iran denies being involved in such a plot) [Oil prices increased drastically](#) due to the tension of Iran's actions against tankers in and around their borders.

### *U.S. Deploying 500 Troops to Saudi Arabia*

Two U.S. Defense officials said Washington is set to deploy [500 troops to Prince Sultan Air Base](#), which the U.S. has seen as an optimal spot to increase its presence. This specific location was chosen in accordance with intelligence indicating the remote desert outpost would prove difficult for Iranian missiles to strike. This new influx of troops will supplement the small number of U.S. troops

and support personnel already in Saudi Arabia readying a [Patriot missile defense](#) battery and an improved runway. This troop increase is a part of a broader initiative from the Pentagon to increase troop presence in the Middle East amongst building tensions with Iran. The Pentagon did not disclose details of the plan and said there was no official announcement yet.

### ***USS Boxer Downs Iranian Drone***

On Thursday, President Trump announced that the USS Boxer, an amphibious assault vessel, had [downed an Iranian drone](#) that came within 1,000 yards of the Navy ship. According to a DoD official, the drone was destroyed using electronic jamming, showing the capacity to down Iranian drones without the use of conventional weapons. The drone ignored “multiple calls to stand down” and was followed by a flurry of confrontations with other Iranian military equipment. An unarmed Iranian Navy Bell 212 helicopter harassed the Boxer by flying close to its deck while Iranian speed boats and a larger vessel encroached to within 500 yards of the U.S. ship. This is the latest in a series of provocations from Iran, heightening tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and straining relationships between Iran and the West.

The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, [denied allegations of the downing](#), telling press at the United Nations that he had “no information about losing a drone.” The denials continued from other high-ranking officials, with Tehran’s top spokesman calling President Trump “delusional.” The Pentagon released a statement confirming President Trump’s claim, saying they “assess the UAS (unmanned aerial system) to be Iranian.” No footage or actual evidence has surfaced yet to support either the U.S. or Iran’s rhetoric.

## **North Korea Update**

### ***Tension on the Korean Peninsula***

[South Korea's purchase of American F-35 stealth fighters](#) has alarmed their neighbor to the north, as North Korean state media condemned the acquisition earlier this week. The North Korean state news agency KCNA called South Korean authorities “impudent and pitiful” and vowed to develop “special armaments” to combat the new technology.

The first two F-35's were delivered to South Korean air bases in March, with a total of 40 aircraft scheduled to be delivered by 2021. The arrival of the F-35's comes as inter-Korean relations have frozen over once again, as South Korean President Moon Jae-in was left out of June's meeting between Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump.

### ***DPRK Missile Test Threats***

On Tuesday, [North Korea threatened to end diplomatic negotiations](#) with the U.S. and resume nuclear and missile tests if the U.S. and South Korea move forward with planned joint military exercises. The drills, called Dong Maeng, are scheduled to occur in August. North Korean officials accused the U.S. of “unilaterally reneging on its commitments” and pointed out the current pledges did not consist of a legal document, only verbal agreements.

These agreements follow the historic meeting between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un in June, however no further progress has been made in denuclearization, missile test, or inter-Korean reconciliation. Although North Korea is suspected to have tested short-range missiles in May, there have been no intercontinental ballistic missile tests since 2017.

## **Military Technology Updates**

### ***French Launch New Submarine***

Last week, the [French Navy launched](#) the first in a series of nuclear-powered attack submarines in Cherbourg, France. Produced by the French shipbuilder Naval Group, the Barracuda-class submarines are smaller than their Triomphant-class ballistic sub counterparts.

Naval Group is expected to build five more of the model type, which are planned to be launched before 2025. This comes after French President Emanuel Macron promised to keep future military budgets high, as the French military undergoes significant modernization projects.

Although this substantially increases the French Navy's global reach, the new Barracuda-class subs will not possess nuclear capabilities. The sub, named the Suffren, is expected to be ready for sea trials early next year.

### ***Army's New Marksman Rifle***

The arms manufacturer Heckler & Koch Defense Inc. announced that it will [deliver thousands of 7.62mm squad-designated marksman rifles](#) to the U.S. Army. The variant of the G28 rifle is likely to give close-combat units a higher likelihood of penetrating enemy body armor.

The German-made rifle will begin to arrive at the H&K-USA facility in Georgia as early as January of 2020. As part of the DoD's deal with H&K, the workers in the U.S. plant will finish assembly of the G28's, installing scopes and mounts on the rifles. The new rifle will weigh about 11 pounds, which is four pounds lighter than the EBR 14 rifle used currently. The weapon is expected to be

fielded to units beginning in late 2020.

### ***Lithuania's Boxer Combat Vehicle***

Lithuania received its [first shipment of the new Boxer infantry fighting vehicle](#) last month. The German-manufactured Boxer is currently also used by the armed forces of Australia and Germany, but only the Lithuanian variant is armed with both Israeli-made anti-tank guided missiles and American-made Bushmaster 30mm cannons, making it a markedly more lethal platform.

As the Lithuanian military does not possess any tanks, the Boxer is the most advanced and powerful piece of mechanized armor in its arsenal. The country purchased 88 Boxers in 2015 to replace an aging fleet of M113s and to fully mechanize the Iron Wolf Brigade—one of only two brigades in the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The Boxer deal represents the single largest military investment in Lithuania since it regained independence in 1990; and is part of larger Baltic defense modernization efforts underway since the Russian Annexation of Crimea in 2014.

### **NDAAs update**

The House of Representatives passed their version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 last Friday [on strict party lines](#). The \$733 billion dollar deal passed 220 to 197 without a [single Republican vote](#). The defense policy bill traditionally passes with support from both sides of the aisle, but for the first time in history, the vote took a markedly partisan divide. Rick Berger, of the American Enterprise Institute, has been studying the NDAA for

30 years and stated that this year's House vote "is the lowest bill vote tally we've ever had. We never even got close to that." Many Democratic lawmakers have criticized Republicans for the vote, claiming that whenever the Republicans controlled the House, Democrats were willing to begrudgingly vote for a bill that they disagreed with.

Congress is expected to face an uphill battle in ironing out a [final NDAA bill](#) to present to the President. A majority Democratic House and a majority Republican Senate are set to square off on several issues (funding for a border wall, nuclear weapons, the war powers resolution, climate change, war with Iran, etc.) when the two chambers come together in conference committee to reconcile their separate versions of the NDAA. The Senate version of the bill passed 86-8 in late June, authorizing \$750 billion dollars—the full amount requested by the executive branch. The House version, on the other hand, authorizes just \$733 billion. The President [threatened to veto](#) the NDAA if the House version of the bill reaches his desk.

## Quick Hits

### ***2<sup>nd</sup> DNC Debate Lineup***

CNN, who will televise the [second in a series of debates](#) for the Democratic Presidential Candidates, hosted a live draw for the upcoming debate lineup in Detroit, MI. Due to the number of candidates (20 qualified for this round), the debate will be split between two nights, with ten candidates appearing per night.

Highlighting the first session is Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, and Elizabeth Warren. Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and Cory Booker are headlining the second

night. Get your popcorn ready.

### ***Justice Stevens***

On Tuesday night, [Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens](#) died at the age of 99 as a result of complications from a stroke suffered on July 15th. In a statement confirming his death, the Supreme Court lauded his service and commitment to the rule of law in America. A Bronze Star recipient in the Navy during World War II, Justice Stevens was the second-longest serving judge in Supreme Court history with 35 years of service.

Many asserted that [Justice Stevens was a 'judge's judge'](#) who was a holdover from a more cordial political climate. He will be remembered as a liberal stalwart on the Supreme Court despite his center-right alignment at the time of his nomination in 1975.

### ***Chief of Staff Goldfein Flies with Finnish Fighter Pilot***

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Dave Goldfein, [took part in Finnish Air Force training exercises](#) at the Kuopio Air Base in Finland on Monday. General Goldfein flew in the backseat of an F/A-18 Hornet, observing a Finnish pilot conducting an air defense training mission.

An Air Force General flying with a Finnish pilot is a rarity for high-ranking U.S. officials. While it is not uncommon for the Air Force's top general to take part in training exercises with the U.S.'s closest allies, Finland is not a part of NATO.

"When I fly with another country, there's actually a message there of mutual trust and confidence and really an opportunity to highlight the professionalism of their air force," Goldfein said after his July 15 flight.

As a response to the general flying with the Finnish pilot, Russia sent a heavy

bomber, fighter and airborne early warning control aircraft to points in international airspace around Finland. Finnish F/A-18's were scrambled to identify the Russian aircraft flying over the Gulf of Finland.

### ***New York City Power Outage***

[On the anniversary of a 1977 blackout that hit most of the city](#), a huge power outage shut down New York on July 14th, ending Broadway shows early and halting traffic in Manhattan. The sudden outage also left the subway in disarray, affecting 73,000 customers for hours.

The Con Edison CEO John McAvoy said a problem at a substation caused the power failure at [6:47 pm](#), which stretched 30 blocks spanning from Times Square to 72nd Street and spread to the Rockefeller Center. Electricity was restored to customers and businesses in Midtown Manhattan and the Upper West Side around midnight. McAvoy stated that the cause of the blackout will remain unclear until investigations are complete.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said no injuries were reported and praised emergency officials for their response to the blackout conditions, which he called "unacceptable."

### ***Turkey and S-400 Update***

Washington said on Wednesday that [Turkey can no longer participate](#) in the F-35 program due to Ankara's decision to buy the Russian-made S-400 air defense system.

Turkey [makes numerous important components](#) for the stealth aircraft, and the U.S. will have to find alternative suppliers. It is also currently unclear if the U.S. will impose supplementary economic sanctions on Turkey due to the decision

to purchase.

### **This Day in History**

*1525*

The Catholic princes of Germany form the Dessau League to fight against the Reformation.

*1545*

King Henry VIII of England watches his flagship, [Mary Rose](#), capsize as it leaves to battle the French.

*1553*

Lady Jane Grey [deposed](#) by Queen Mary.

*1779*

Massachusetts launches its ill-fated [Penobscot Expedition](#) to capture a British garrison in what is now Castine, Maine.

*1799*

The [Rosetta Stone](#) is found during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, by a French soldier.

*1848*

The first Women's Rights Convention convenes in [Seneca Falls](#), N.Y., organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

*1870*

France [declares war](#) on Prussia, beginning the war that marked the end of French hegemony in Europe and hastened the unification of the German states.

*1942*

German U-boats are withdrawn from positions off the U.S. Atlantic coast due to American anti-submarine countermeasures.

*1943*

More than 150 B-17 and 112 B-24 bombers [attack Rome](#) for the first time.

*1975*

Apollo and Soyuz spacecrafts [undock](#) in orbit, following docking two days earlier.

See more at [Historynet.com](http://Historynet.com) and [History.com](http://History.com)!

## **Look Ahead**

***Saturday, July 20***

9:30 AM EDT

Conference: The Friends of the National World War II Memorial

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: 1750 Independence Avenue SW

***Monday, July 22***

12:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Atlantic Council

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

3:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: Improving Hurricane Resiliency through Research

Location: Houston Community College, West Loop Campus, 5601 West Loop  
South, Auditorium, Houston, Texas

3:30 PM EDT

Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Homeland Security

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

7:00 PM EDT

Book Discussion: Politics and Prose Bookstore

Topic: Technology

Location: Politics and Prose, 5015 Connecticut Avenue NW

***Tuesday, July 23***

8:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

9:30 AM EDT

Markup: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Pending Military Nominations

Location: SVC-217 U.S. Capitol

10:00 AM EDT

Markup: Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Topic: Pending Legislation/Nominations

Location: S-116 U.S. Capitol

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Homeland Security Committee

Topic: Emergency Preparedness/Underserved Populations

Location: Saint Peter's University, MacMahon Student Center, 47 Glenwood  
Avenue, Jersey City, N.J.

1:00 PM EDT

Conference: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Topic: Commerce

Location: USCC, 1615 H St. NW

1:00 PM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: Veterans Education and Health Issues

4:00 PM EDT

Briefing: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Defense Cyber Operations

Location: SVC-217 U.S. Capitol

5:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Topic: Learning from VA Whistleblowers

Location: HVC-210 U.S. Capitol

5:30 PM EDT

Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

***Wednesday, July 24***

8:00 AM EDT

Event: The Navy League of the United States and the Shipbuilders Council of  
America

Topic: Defense

Location: 2044 Rayburn House Office Building

8:30 AM EDT

Forum: The National Defense Industrial Association, the Mitchell Institute for  
Aerospace Studies, the Air Force Association and the Reserve Officers  
Association

Topic: Defense

Location: Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St. SE

8:30 AM EDT

Hearing: House Judiciary Committee

Topic: Mueller Report

Location: 2141 Rayburn House Office Building

8:45 AM EDT

Workshop: The National Academy of Sciences

Topic: Health

Location: NAS, 500 Fifth St. NW, E St. Conference Room

9:00 AM EDT

Conference: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Topic: Commerce

Location: USCC, 1615 H St. NW

9:00 AM EDT

Conference: The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

9:30 AM EDT

Markup: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

Topic: Pending Nominations/Legislation

Location: 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Appropriations Committee

Topic: Unaccompanied Children Program Oversight

Location: 2358-C Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Topic: Assessing VA Healthcare Wait Times

Location: HVC-210 U.S. Capitol

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Norquist Nomination

Location: G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Meeting: National Archives and Records Administration; Information Security  
Oversight office

Topic: National Archives State and Tribal Policy Information Security

Location: NARA, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Jefferson Room

10:30 AM EDT

Book Discussion: The Woodrow Wilson Center's Middle East Program

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: WWC, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300  
Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Fifth Floor

12:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Hudson Institute

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: Hudson Institute, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 400

2:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Appropriations Committee  
Topic: Border Patrol Oversight  
Location: 2359 Rayburn House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Topic: State Department Counterterrorism Budget  
Location: 2172 Rayburn House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation  
Topic: Technology  
Location: ITIF, 1101 K St. NW, Suite 610

2:30 PM EDT

Hearing: Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Topic: Confronting Ebola  
Location: 419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

***Thursday, July 25***

8:30 AM EDT

Forum: The National Defense Industrial Association, the Mitchell Institute for  
Aerospace Studies, the Air Force Association and the Reserve Officers  
Association  
Topic: Foreign Affairs  
Location: Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St. SE

9:00 AM EDT

Briefing: The Center for a Secure Free Society

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Location: 485 Russell Senate Office Building

9:30 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

Topic: Enhancing School Safety Against Targeted Violence

Location: 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

9:30 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Pending Nominations

Location: SVC-217 U.S. Capitol

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: Innovations in Sustainable Chemistry

Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Topic: VA Electronic Health Records Transition

Location: HVC-210 U.S. Capitol

1:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Appropriations Committee

Topic: Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Location: 2359 Rayburn House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: The Commercial Space Landscape

Location: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

***Friday, July 26***

8:15 AM EDT

Discussion: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

Topic: Defense

Location: AEI, 1789 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Auditorium

**Last But Not Least**

Tomorrow marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Apollo 11 moon landing](#). More than a billion people back on Earth watched as Neil Armstrong uttered the famous 11 words that resonate with all Americans to this day as he became the first human to step foot on the Moon. This feat represented almost a decade of both failure and success at the hands of NASA and the United States. Apollo 11 came at a crucial juncture in American history—at the height of the Cold War—as it boosted America’s pride and showcased American ingenuity to our rivals the Soviet Union as well as the rest of the world.

Have an (inter)stellar weekend!

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Historic Triangle Collaborative

July 15, 2019

FRIDAY  
CORROS PONDW C/S  
PRENTICE

Overview:

- 65 Permanent Employees
- 20 Temporary Employees
  - Roughly 25% of positions vacant
- \$6.9 million annual base budget
- \$3.4 million average non-base revenue
  - Funded projects, fee revenue, leasing revenue, donations
- Approximately 3.2 million “visitors” a year
  - Roughly \$331.5 million generated annually in economic benefit to Triangle

Opportunities:

- Visioning for 2026 – 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence
- Strategic Plan drafted in 2019
  - Employee well-being
  - Key Stories
  - Park Identity
- What will 2026 mean for the Triangle and how do we work together to make ourselves collectively ready for the spotlight?

Projects:

- 2026
  - Yorktown VC Rehabilitation (inside and out)
  - Surrender Field Rehabilitation
  - Nelson House/Moore House Rehabilitation
  - Exhibitory, programming, and reenactments

- Yorktown Main Street Leasing initiative
- Parkway Rehabilitation and shoreline stabilization (York River, some James River)
- Rewriting regulations to allow launching of non-motorized vessels for recreation
- Improving/increasing academic partnerships
- Start a Friends group

#### Challenges:

- College Creek drownings
  - Working with VIMS on hydrologic modeling and alternatives
- Sea Level Rise
  - Jamestown Archaeology
  - Shoreline Erosion
- Hiring capacity
- Deferred Maintenance for the Park as a whole

How Does the National Park Service create a recognizable identity in the Historic Triangle?

Kym Hall, Superintendent

Colonial National Historical Park

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

(757) 898-2400 office

(520) 678-0668 cell

