

Schott, Heather

From: Rick Dwyer <rdwyer@hrmffa.org>
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To: Rick Dwyer
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief

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

Rick Dwyer
Executive Director
Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance
Office: 757-644-6324
Mobile: 850-499-1068



Executive Insight Brief

September 13, 2024

Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Economy - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities -
Homeland Security - Transportation & Infrastructure - Biotech & Healthcare - Climate & Development

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Notable Headlines

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- [Putin threatens war as Western allies near deal on missile strikes in Russia](#)
- [3 more counts are dismissed in the Trump case indictment in Georgia](#)
- [Blinken wraps up Ukraine-focused Europe trip in Poland with arms requests on the table](#)
- [New York City police commissioner resigns after his phone was seized in federal investigation](#)

Worth reading: [Where will Congress rank the nation's security on its priority list?](#)

View From The Hill



Congress returned from a six-week recess without any clear path for enacting a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the federal government beyond the end of the current fiscal year, which ends on September 30th. Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) was [forced](#) to delay possible consideration of his planned six-month CR after it became clear he lacked the votes to pass the measure. The Speaker is in a delicate position trying to balance the demands of various factions of his party, with some Members wanting a longer CR to curb spending, some preferring a shorter-term CR, and an even smaller handful who refuse to

vote for anything other than full year appropriations bills. Democrats and most Senators are calling for a clean CR that gets funding through the election into early December when the lame-duck session can deal with the fight. Ultimately, this will be the most likely outcome, as neither party is itching for what would be a politically disastrous government shutdown just before the election. Notably, the chairman of the powerful House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), is vocally opposed to the longer CR proposal over concerns it negatively impacts the Department of Defense.

Apart from the funding debacle, Members of Congress were quick to react to the first and possibly only presidential debate of the 2024 election cycle, with Democrats taking victory laps around Vice President Kamala Harris's strong showing and GOP Senators, who are eager to retake control of the upper chamber, [bemoaning](#) former President Trump's poor performance. Despite this, many in the GOP remain optimistic that the brutal election year map for Senate Democrats has them poised to flip the needed number of seats to enter the majority in 2025, with a number of races [trending](#) in the GOP's direction in recent polling. When Republicans can maintain their majority in the House is much less clear, with several races in toss-up territory and the impact of the Democrats' switch at the top of the ticket still distilling. Democrats have been outraising their GOP counterparts across the board, indicating a boost by Vice President Harris's entrance into the race.

Aerospace & Defense

[NATO shepherds 10 firms whose tech could help the alliance \(DefenseNews\)](#)

On Tuesday, NATO's defense technology accelerator announced it picked 10 companies to transition to the second phase of competition. The second phase brings additional funding, and more tailored support as these groups look to break into the national security sector. The companies participated in a competition series "that took place across five cities: Tallinn, Estonia; Turin Italy; Copenhagen, Denmark; Boston; and Seattle." At the events, the companies used emerging technology to solve real-world defense challenges. According to NATO, in order for companies to move into Phase II "innovators had to demonstrate progress in their commercial and defense market potential, the technical viability and novelty of their solutions, and their investment readiness." The companies moving onto Phase II are: Aquark Technologies, a quantum firm based in the UK; Astrolight, a laser communications company in Lithuania; Dolphin Labs, an ocean-observation company in the US; Ephos, a computing firm based in Italy; Goldilock, a UK-based privacy firm; IONATE, a UK firm specializing in smart energy platforms; Lobster Robotics, a mapping company based in the Netherlands; Phantom Photonics, a quantum

sensing company; Revobeam, a Polish antenna firm; and Secqai, a computing company in the UK.

[Air-taxi maker Vertical completes phase one testing of prototype](#)

[Democrats, Republicans want Biden to ease Ukraine weapons restrictions \(Reuters\)](#)

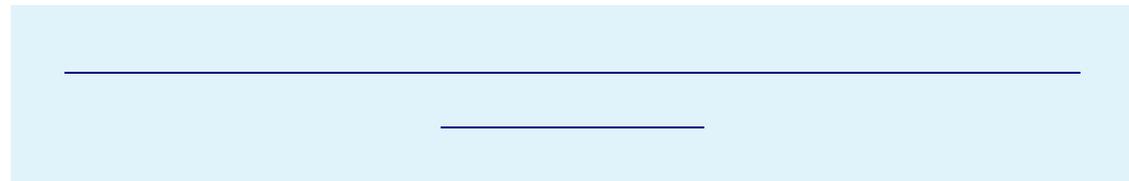
President Biden's administration is facing increasing pressure, from both sides of the aisle, to ease restrictions on how Ukraine can use weapons provided by the United States in its war against Russia. Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, "it's time to allow Ukraine to be able to defend itself against these air attacks in a more effective way, and the United States needs to be the leader in that regard." Despite continuous pleas from Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian defense officials, Biden has been reluctant fearing it would escalate the conflict. Republicans have called for the restrictions to be eased since Russia's initial invasion two years ago, but influential congressional Democrats have more recently been "urging the policy shift." Rep. Bill Keating (D-MA), ranking member on the House Subcommittee on Europe sent a letter to Biden's national security advisor Jake Sullivan "urging the administration to allow the use of American-made weapons against military targets in Russian territory." A group of Congressional Republicans, including the chairs of the Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence committees also called for an end to the restrictions.

Budget & Economy

[US Latino economic output grows to \\$3.6 trillion, new report finds \(CNBC\)](#)

According to a new report from the economic think tank Latino Donor Collaborative and Wells Fargo, the US Latino economy "grew by 13% from \$3.2 trillion in 2021 to \$3.6 trillion in 2022." These numbers would make the cohort the "fifth-largest economy in the world – surpassing the annual output of India, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada." Sol Trujillo, Chairman of the Latino Donor Collaborative said in the report, "there is no doubt that the US Latino economy is a formidable force, characterized by strong GDP growth, significant population expansion, high workforce participation, and increased educational achievements." The report is based on data from 2022, which is the most recent year for which information is publicly available. Data was pulled from the US Census Bureau, the

Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Between 2017 and 2022, Latinos would be the second fastest growing economy with a 4.6% annual average real growth rate, behind China at 5.3%. The growth rate of the US Latino GDP is also “2.6 times faster than the rest of the US economy.” Industry strength for Latinos remained steady in manufacturing, public administration, accommodations and food services, construction, and transportation.



[Wholesale prices rose 0.2% in August, in line with expectations \(CNBC\)](#)

Wholesale prices rose in August about in line with expectations, the final inflation data point as the Federal Reserve gets set to lower interest rates. The producer price index, a measure of final demand goods and services costs that producers receive, increased 0.2% on the month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said on Thursday. The increase matched the Dow Jones consensus estimate. The PPI “increased 0.3%, slightly hotter than the 0.2% consensus estimate, when excluding food and energy.” Looking at a 12-month basis, headline PPI rose 1.7%. When excluding food, energy, and trade, the annual rate was 3.3%. The Labor Department also reported “initial filings for unemployment benefits totaled 230,000 for the week ending September 7, up 2,000 from the previous period and higher than the 225,000 estimate.” Neither the report on PPI or unemployment filings is “expected to keep the Fed from lowering benchmark interest rates by a quarter percentage point when its two-day policy meeting concludes Wednesday.”

Advanced Technologies

[SpaceX employee, billionaire conduct first private spacewalk in Polaris mission \(Reuters\)](#)

Two astronauts from a SpaceX capsule in Earth’s orbit carried out the world’s first private spacewalk on Thursday, tethered to the Crew Dragon spacecraft. Billionaire Jared Isaacman and SpaceX engineer Sarah Gillis became the “first two non-government individuals to conduct such an excursion in space.” The mission appeared to “successfully test trailblazing equipment, including slim spacesuits, and a process to fully depressurize the Crew Dragon cabin – technology that could be used in future private space missions.”

It was one of the riskiest treks yet for Elon Musk's space company, the only private firm capable of routinely sending humans to and from Earth's orbit. Before the spacewalk began, "the capsule was completely depressurized, with the whole crew relying on their slim, SpaceX-developed spacesuits for oxygen, provided via an umbilical connection to Crew Dragon." The spacewalk was scheduled for 30 minutes, but preparations lasted about an hour and 46 minutes. This mission was marked as a risky test of the new spacesuit designs and procedures for the capsules. The mission ultimately was "meant to push the boundaries of what private companies can do in Earth's orbit."

[OpenAI launches new series of AI models with 'reasoning' abilities](#)

[Duct fans fly again—in drone form \(Defense One\)](#)

Could a one-minute test flight of a half-century-old propulsion concept lead to the next big thing in logistics? On Tuesday, Piasecki Aircraft Corporation announced that a drone had executed a pair of hovering tests on Sept. 6 at its facility in Essington, Pennsylvania, using tilt-duct rotors designed to take off like a helicopter but fly with the efficiency of a conventional jet. The drone "achieved a sustained hover for a duration of approximately one minute before descending," Piasecki said in a statement. A second one-minute flight with a U.S. Army Mobile Multiple Mission Module demonstrated "the ability of its triplex fly-by-wire flight control system to sustain a stable hover in multiple configurations and a dynamic ground environment," the statement said. The idea of tilt-duct rotorcraft goes back to the late 1950s, but its time may finally have come. Advances in materials and power have greatly increased the efficiency of such craft. Better virtual models have made them more stable in flight. And autonomic systems have made drones more useful in more situations, particularly where commanders might be reluctant to place a human pilot. The effort emerged from DARPA's decade-old Aerial Reconfigurable Embedded System, or ARES, project, which sought to produce a drone or optionally manned aircraft that could carry 3,000 pounds, or "more than 40 percent of the takeoff gross weight of the aircraft."

Military Installations & Communities

[Air Force looks to add telescopes on sacred Hawaii volcano as outrage continues over fuel spill \(Military.com\)](#)

A year and seven months after 700 gallons of fuel spilled at a Space Force observatory located atop a sacred Hawaiian volcano on Maui, officials are still finalizing a plan to remediate the site, and the delay is angering local government officials. Back on January 29, 2023, a diesel fuel pump for a backup generator at the Maui Space Surveillance Complex “nestled atop the more than 10,000 foot summit of Haleakalā malfunctioned after a lightning strike, spilling the fuel onto what native Hawaiians believe to be sacred ground.” Since then, Department of the Air Force officials “have not yet finalized a plan to clean up the rest of the contaminated fuel and to return the soil back to the dormant volcano.” While the contamination is still being cleaned up, the Air Force is pushing plans for a new project that would “add seven more telescopes to Haleakalā that received fierce condemnation from the Maui County Council.” A resolution from the council earlier this year expressing their opposition to the new project said, “erecting even more telescopes on Haleakalā - when the military has yet to complete cleanup and soil-remediation efforts within the same footprint - would be insulting.”

[Vets with rare lung disease could get benefits more easily under proposed changes, VA says](#)

[Dutch adopt US war graves to harbor memories of the country's liberation 80 years ago \(Military.com\)](#)

80 years ago American and allied forces began the liberation of the Netherlands. In the hills of the southern Netherlands, locals have vowed to never forget those who gave their lives in the fight to liberate towns and villages from Nazi occupation in World War II. Nowhere is the “deep-rooted gratitude of the post-war generations more clear than in the 65.5 acres of manicured lawns and white marble headstones of the Netherlands American Cemetery” just outside the village of Margraten. Hundreds of people have chosen to “adopt” one of the 8,288 Americans who are buried there. It is an act of gratitude and remembrance that started almost as soon as the war ended and endures to this day. People who adopt a grave visit it regularly and leave flowers on the fallen soldier’s birthday, the day they died, at Christmas, on Memorial Day or whenever else they see fit. Some reach out to families of the dead in the US, forming lasting transatlantic friendships. Ton Hermes, one of the adopters who visited the cemetery on 9/11 said the timing was a reminder of why people should keep alive the memories of those who gave their lives for Dutch freedom from tyranny. Hermes said, “it’s a day which shows that democracy and liberty is very fragile...so that is why I think it’s important to adopt the grave and to think about what he did for our liberty. That democracy is vulnerable.”

Homeland Security

[Chinese Cargo Cranes at U.S. Ports Pose Espionage Risk, Probe Finds \(WSJ\)](#)

Chinese cargo cranes used at U.S. seaports around the country have embedded technology that could allow Beijing to covertly gain access to the machines, making them vulnerable to espionage and disruption, according to a yearlong congressional investigation. The probe, conducted jointly by the Republican majorities of the House Homeland Security Committee and Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, found that the China-based manufacturer of the cranes, ZPMC, had at times pressured port operators to allow the company to maintain remote access. “Some ports insist on securing their assets, but many cave to the pressure,” the report said, adding that ZPMC had shown particular interest in requesting remote access to its cranes located on the West Coast. Pushing back on ZPMC’s requests, it said, is “difficult for customers who are looking to get the lowest price or guarantee a robust warranty policy.” Though ostensibly done for diagnostic and maintenance purposes, the committees said the cellular modems built into the cranes could potentially allow access by the Chinese government due to the country’s national-security laws that mandate companies cooperate with state intelligence agencies. In some cases, the investigation uncovered instances where cranes came with cellular modems installed without the knowledge of port authorities and done so beyond the scope of contracts with ZPMC.

[Jan. 6, 2025, certification designated for Secret Service protection](#)

[Pentagon’s first cyber policy chief targets better metrics for cybersecurity progress \(Federal News Network\)](#)

Michael Sulmeyer, the first-ever assistant secretary of defense for cyber policy, plans to spend the “weeks and months ahead” focusing on developing better ways to measure cybersecurity progress across the Defense Department. Sulmeyer, who’s been in this role for four weeks, said while the number of cyber operations conducted by the Defense Department provides some insight into DoD’s cybersecurity progress, the department, along with the rest of the federal government and private sector, needs to focus on return on investment to measure cybersecurity success. “One of the things I’ve been talking with my team about and trying to talk with other partners across the government about is, ‘How do we keep score of ourselves?’” Sulmeyer said last week during the annual Billington CyberSecurity Summit. “It’s one thing to count the number of operations or to count the

number of hunt-forwards. There is power in quantity, but increasingly, how we talk about our return on the nation's investment, not just DoD, but the cyber community, more broadly, private and public sector, I think, is an area I'm looking to try to work on."

Transportation & Infrastructure

[Aerospace organization outlines legislative priorities \(Transportation Today\)](#)

Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) President and CEO Eric Fanning recently sent a letter to congressional leaders, urging certain legislative priorities for the remainder of 2024. The letter emphasized four priorities, Passage of all 12 regular appropriations bills in order to fund the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and other federal agencies. The House of Representatives to provide additional funds for both defense and non-defense programs in the final appropriations bills. Passage of the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act Restoration of the single-year deductibility of research and development expenses. Conversely, AIA urges Congress not to support any continuing resolutions extending beyond 2024. "On behalf of the American aerospace and defense industry, which employs millions of Americans and contributes billions to the American economy, the Aerospace Industries Association encourages you to act urgently and jointly to address key priorities when Congress returns from its August district work period," Fanning said. "Enacting these critical bills will not only protect the health of our industry, which is essential to the economic and national security of the United States, but will also reinforce our country's resilience and well-being."

[FMC Chairman Breaks Down Post-Pandemic Supply Chain](#)

[FAA announces more than \\$2B in grants for airport infrastructure improvements \(Transportation Today\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced it had awarded more than \$2 billion in grants for airports across the country to help with infrastructure improvements. The FAA announced some 519 grants, part of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), in 48 states, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands totaling up to \$1.9 billion for airport improvements. Additionally, the agency announced another \$269 million would be

provided under the Supplemental Discretionary Grant program for 62 projects at 56 airports. “The Biden-Harris Administration is funding projects across the country that are making airports safer and more efficient for the passengers who travel through them and for the airport and airline employees who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make these complex systems run as smoothly as possible,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said. “The grants we’re announcing today will improve airfield operations for dozens of airports and help ensure the U.S. retains its global leadership in aviation.”

Biotechnology & Healthcare

[Millions At Risk Of 'Silent Killer', A Condition That Can Cause Stroke Or Sudden Death \(NDTV World\)](#)

New research from the University of California San Francisco has revealed that atrial fibrillation (A-Fib), a potentially life-threatening heart condition characterised by a rapid and irregular heartbeat, affects a staggering 10.5 million adults in the US, approximately 5% of the population. The rising prevalence of A-Fib is attributed to the ageing population and growing rates of hypertension, diabetes, and obesity. The condition can lead to stroke or sudden death, the study noted. "Atrial fibrillation doubles the risk of mortality, is one of the most common causes of stroke, increases risks of heart failure, myocardial infarction, chronic kidney disease and dementia, and results in lower quality of life," said first author Jean Jacques Noubiap, MD, PhD, a postdoctoral scholar at UCSF with a speciality in global cardiovascular health. "Fortunately, atrial fibrillation is preventable, and early detection and appropriate treatment can substantially reduce its adverse outcomes," he added. The current analysis is based on medical records and diagnoses, but digital technologies such as wearable devices, mobile apps, and electronic health records may uncover even more cases of atrial fibrillation (A-Fib).

[Senators to pursue contempt charges against Steward Health CEO](#)

[FDA greenlights over-the-counter hearing aid features for Apple's AirPods \(FierceBiotech\)](#)

After Apple previewed the technology earlier this week, the FDA has now given the green light to the hearing aid features of its premium AirPods. The agency's de novo clearance marks its first for a piece of over-the-counter hearing aid software—and hails the long-awaited entry of the consumer tech giant to a sector that has anticipated its arrival since

the FDA officially opened the door to prescription-free hearing aid technology, back in 2022. “Hearing loss is a significant public health issue impacting millions of Americans,” Michelle Tarver, acting director of the FDA’s device center, said in an agency statement. “Today’s marketing authorization of an over-the-counter hearing aid software on a widely used consumer audio product is another step that advances the availability, accessibility and acceptability of hearing support for adults with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss,” Tarver said. Earlier this week—alongside the reveal of upcoming sleep apnea detection for its Apple Watch—Apple described the hearing aid feature coming to its AirPods Pro 2 earbuds as “clinical-grade,” alongside a self-administered, five-minute hearing test to help program the devices.

Climate & Development

[Bill Gates-backed startup says a global gold rush for buried hydrogen is picking up momentum \(CNBC News\)](#)

Koloma, a U.S.-based clean fuel startup backed by Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, says it wants to use expertise that has traditionally served the hydrocarbon industry to power a global gold rush for buried hydrogen. It comes as buzz continues to build over the clean energy potential of geologic hydrogen, a long-overlooked resource that advocates say could play a pivotal role in the shift away from fossil fuels. Geologic hydrogen — sometimes known as white, gold or natural hydrogen — refers to hydrogen gas that is found in its natural form beneath Earth’s surface. It is thought to be produced by high-temperature reactions between water and iron-rich minerals. Pete Johnson, CEO and co-founder of Koloma, told CNBC that geologic hydrogen is fundamentally an exploration and production business. “We can use expertise and service providers that have traditionally served the oil, gas, and mining industries and quickly put them to work in driving the discovery of carbon free-resources. Leveraging and modifying what already exists will allow us to mature the industry faster,” he said. Based in Denver, Colorado, Koloma has raised more than \$305 million since it was founded just a few years ago, the company told CNBC.

[What to know about fracking, false claims and other climate issues mentioned during the debate](#)

[Canada's wildfire season ranks among worst but less severe than feared \(Reuters\)](#)

With summer drawing to a close in Canada, the 2024 wildfire season is shaping up as one of the most destructive on record, largely due to the devastation caused by a blaze that ripped through a tourist town in the Canadian Rockies. Based on total area scorched, the season ranks among the top six over the last half century. Even so, 2024 is turning out to be much less severe than last year - the worst on record - and not as bad as many had feared. The total cost of wildfire damage this year surged in July when a third of the popular tourist town of Jasper, Alberta, was destroyed by a blaze. The fire caused an estimated C\$880 million (\$646.73 million) in insured damages, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada. In total, 5.3 million hectares (13.1 million acres) have burned to date in 2024, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, and more than 600 fires are still raging across the country, mainly in British Columbia. That makes 2024 the worst season since 1995, with the exception of last year, when a record-breaking 17 million hectares burned and released more carbon than some of the world's largest-carbon emitting countries. Wildfire season in Canada typically runs from April, when the snow melts, until September or October, with activity peaking in July and August. Climate scientists say average temperatures will rise in Canada as the world warms, leading to longer and more destructive wildfire seasons.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Service Committee:

House:

- Monday, September 16th, 9:00 AM - [Fielding Technology and Innovation: Industry Views on Department of Defense Acquisition](#)
- Tuesday, September 17th, 10:00 AM - [The Findings and Recommendations of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy](#)

Senate: NONE

Appropriations Committee:

House:

- Wednesday, September 18th, 10:00 AM - [Inspectors General HUD, DOT, and Amtrak](#)

Senate: NONE

Homeland Security Committee:

House:

- Wednesday, September 18th, 10:00 AM - [A Country Without Borders: How Biden-Harris' Open-Borders Policies Have Undermined Our Safety and Security](#)

Senate:

- Tuesday, September 17th, 10:00 AM - [Ensuring a Trustworthy Government: Examining the National Security Risks of Replacing Nonpartisan Civil Servants with Political Appointees](#)



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Our mailing address is:

200 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Suite 360, Washington DC 20001

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