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Executive Insight Brief

March 14, 2025

Notable Headlines



- [A 2nd judge orders thousands of fired federal employees temporarily reinstated](#)
- [Putin sets out conditions for Ukraine ceasefireGreenland's prime minister summons party leaders after Trump doubles down on annexation](#)
- ['Deep sense of outrage and betrayal': House Democrats react to Schumer announcement](#)
- [NATO secretary-general tells Trump he's motivating alliance members to spend more on defense](#)
- [NATO secretary-general tells Trump he's motivating alliance members to spend more on defense](#)

View From The Hill



Congress was heavily focused on passing federal spending this week, with a looming lapse in appropriations when the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires tonight at midnight. The House **passed** what was technically a bipartisan bill, with **one** democrat voting in support, to fund the government on a CR through the remainder of the fiscal year, ending September 30th. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) immediately moved to adjourn the chamber, sending representatives home for a week-and-a-half long recess and essentially jamming the Senate.

Democrats in the Senate, led by Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) have been left with few options. They face a progressive base that is furious over cuts to the federal workforce eager to see them push back hard on President Trump and Elon Musk. At the same time, however, they risk taking blame for a painful government shutdown ahead of what is expected to be a challenging election cycle in 2026. At least eight democratic votes are needed to invoke cloture at the required sixty-vote threshold and advance the CR towards a final vote. Finally, **last night**, Schumer announced his opposition to allowing a shutdown, indicating he and his caucus would provide at least enough votes to move towards final passage. We will see today if that plan holds up and just how much democratic support can be mustered.

President Trump **moved** forward with the nomination of Dan “Razin” Caine to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff this week, formally submitting the nomination to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Trump also **withdrew** his nominee to lead the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, David Weldon, on Thursday, just minutes before Weldon was set to begin his confirmation hearing in the Senate. Weldon, a vaccine skeptic, was severely struggling to wrangle enough support for confirmation.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) **dealt** another blow to democrats’ 2026 electoral map Wednesday, when she announced she would not seek reelection after her current term in office. This comes at the same time that former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-MI) **announced** his intention to run for the open seat in Michigan being vacated by retiring Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI), while former Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg **announced** he would not be running for the seat.

Seeking their way back from the political wilderness, House Democrats **huddled** at their annual policy retreat in Leesburg, VA at the Lansdowne Resort. The retreat comes as democrats work to coalesce around messaging and strategy to oppose the Trump administration’s furious pace of executive action. Democrats are in a tough position, being in the minority in both chambers of congress and out of power in the White House, and they have struggled to strike a balance between hot-button culture war issues and kitchen table economic messaging. It is within this context that a House subcommittee hearing **went** off the rails on Wednesday, when Rep. Keith Self (R-TX), chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, referred to transgender Rep. Sarah McBride (D-DE) as the “the representative from Delaware, Mr. McBride.” In response, McBride, referred to Self as “Madam Chair” before the panel’s top democrat, Rep. Bill Keating (D-MA) angrily interjected in opposition to Rep. Self, who promptly adjourned the hearing.

In solemn news, [Rep. Raúl Grijalva](#) (D-AZ), a 12-term congressman from Arizona passed away Thursday at the age of 77. Grijalva had fought a long battle with lung cancer which led him to step aside as the top democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee. He was set to retire at the end of 119th Congress. Condolences were offered to his wife and three daughters by officials on both sides of the aisle.

Pentagon News



With the ongoing budget deadlock, military readiness might be at risk, and top service leaders are [warning](#) that without funding flexibility, critical operations and modernization efforts will stall. The vice chiefs of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force told lawmakers that the inability to shift money under the continuing resolution prevents new contracts for weapons, housing, and infrastructure upgrades. Army Vice Chief of Staff [Gen. James Minguo](#) told the Senate Armed Services readiness subcommittee that budget restraints force the Army to prioritize meaning it can be large, ready, or modern—but not all three at once. Meanwhile Navy and Marine leaders cautioned that shipbuilding delays would further weaken maritime capabilities, with just 13 of 32 amphibious ships available for Marine deployments. And lastly, an [Air Force official](#) testified that the new budget deal projects a shortfall in combat readiness ranging from \$4 billion to as much as \$14 billion. Senators acknowledged these challenges but provided no clear solution as the spending bill moves forward. Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) noted that while the resolution presents obstacles, a government shutdown would be even more damaging. With no immediate resolution in sight, the military faces tough choices on prioritizing readiness, modernization, and force size.

[Navy leaders](#) echoed concerns about the budget deadlock's impact on military readiness, particularly in shipbuilding. Deputy Assistant Secretary Brett A. Seidle testified to the House Armed Services Committee this week that efforts to accelerate shipbuilding are being hampered by rising costs, production delays, and supply chain disruptions. These setbacks have already resulted in some ships arriving up to three years late, further straining maritime capabilities. Seidle pointed to factors such as shrinking competition, workforce shortages, shifting Navy requirements, and outdated acquisition processes as key obstacles.

Despite these challenges, Seidle emphasized that U.S. shipbuilders continue to deliver the world's most advanced and highest-quality warships. He urged lawmakers to support efforts to streamline production, boost efficiency, and revitalize the manufacturing sector, stressing that delays and cost overruns must not become the norm. With growing global threats, he argued, the Navy must build faster and more effectively to ensure the fleet remains ready for the challenges ahead.

As the Trump administration begins to stand up their cybersecurity policies the Department of Defense is looking to fill the [capability gap](#) in that space. As China continues cyber hacks of US critical infrastructure, the "civilian and military

professionals responsible for protecting these assets receive inadequate training in recognizing, defending against, and recovering from malicious state-sponsored cyber activity.” There are 800 installations maintained by the US military, but public and private utilities own and operate the power lines, water pipes, and fiber optic cables that supply the bases. However, once the systems cross the fence the military is then responsible for “ensuring their safe and reliable operation and restoration during an attack.” The issue at hand is many professionals tasked with the maintenance of these systems are not receiving specialized training to recognize a cyberattack.

The US Army Corps of Engineers provide training for professionals who maintain civilian and military critical infrastructure, however in a vast majority of these programs, there is no basic cybersecurity curriculum. In order for the individuals responsible for the maintenance of these systems an in-depth understanding of cybersecurity is vital. The cyber threat posed by China is real and they are prepared to carry out more state-sponsored attacks. With cyberattacks the protections of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans can no longer guarantee the security of the homeland. As cybersecurity needs rise, DoD will need to determine a path forward on collaboration between military engineers, network defenders, and those in the private sector to secure our critical infrastructure.

Next Week's Hearings



Armed Services Committee:

House: NONE

Senate: NONE

Appropriations Committee:

House: NONE

Senate: NONE

Homeland Security Committee:

House: NONE

Senate: NONE



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