



# CHINFO NEWS CLIPS

## Navy and Marine Corps Daily Media Report

Monday, May 10, 2021

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### ***This Day in Navy and Marine Corps History:***

*1775 - American forces under Gen. Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen cross Lake Champlain and capture the British fort at Ticonderoga, New York. The US Navy has honored this action by naming five ships after the battle.*

### **Executive Summary:**

- National and international news reported on USS Monterey's seizure of weapons in the Arabian Sea.
- Trade press continued coverage of CNO Adm. Mike Gilday's remarks at the Navy Memorial SITREP event.
- Local San Diego media reported about the commissioning of USS Miguel Keith.

### **CNO:**

#### **1. CNO Says Navy Department Has Strong Case For Getting Bigger Slice Of Defense Budget**

(*MILITARY.COM 07 MAY 21*) ... Gina Harkins

As the Biden administration finalizes its first budget plan, the Navy's top officer said competition for funding is high among the military's top leaders.

#### **2. CNO Says LCS Will Still Have a Role After Propulsion Issue is Fixed**

(*SEAPOWERS MAGAZINE 07 MAY 21*) ... John M. Doyle

ARLINGTON, Va. — Despite serious propulsion problems with the newest Freedom-class littoral combat ships (LCS), Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday says he is "very bullish" about the small surface combatant.

### **GREAT POWER COMPETITION:**

#### **3. Putin Reviews Russian Military Might As Tensions With West Soar**

(*REUTERS 09 MAY 21*)

President Vladimir Putin reviewed Russia's traditional World War Two victory parade on Sunday, a patriotic display of raw military power that this year coincides with soaring tensions with the West.

#### **4. U.S. General Warns China Is Actively Seeking To Set Up An Atlantic Naval Base**

(*THE HILL 07 MAY 21*) ... Celine Castronuovo

A top U.S. general is warning that China may be looking to extend its influence beyond the Pacific with the potential construction of a large Atlantic naval base on the western coast of Africa.

#### **5. China Pushes Its News, Reshaping Global View**

*The government has been using its money and power to create an alternative to a global news media dominated by outlets like the BBC and CNN*

(*NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21*) ... Ben Smith

In the fall of 2019, just before global borders closed, an international journalists' association decided to canvass its members about a subject that kept coming up in informal conversations: What is China doing?

#### **6. China Says Its Rocket Debris Landed In The Indian Ocean**

(*CNBC NEWS 09 MAY 21*) ... Matt Clinch

Debris from a large Chinese rocket landed in the Indian Ocean on Sunday, according to the China Manned Space Engineering Office, which said most parts had burned up on reentry.

## **7. New U.S. Indo-Pacific Chief To Visit Japan In Second Half Of May**

(KYODO 09 MAY 21)

Adm. John Aquilino, the new commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, will visit Japan in the latter half of May for talks with defense leaders about China's growing military pressure on Taiwan and Beijing's assertive behavior in the broader Indo-Pacific, according to Japanese and U.S. government sources.

## **FLEET READINESS:**

### **8. U.S. Navy Seizes Weapons In Arabian Sea Likely Bound For Yemen**

*The U.S. Navy says it has seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea*

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 09 MAY 21) ... Jon Gambrell

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- The U.S. Navy announced Sunday it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels.

### **9. The Weapons Seizure So Big It Covered The Rear Deck Of A 567-Foot US Warship**

(CNN 10 MAY 21) ... Brad Lendon

A joint US Navy and Coast Guard team seized thousands of illicit weapons last week after stopping a small ship in the North Arabian Sea, the Navy said in a statement.

### **10. Navy Commissions \$525M Warship In San Diego**

*The expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith is expected to launch sometime this summer*

(UNION-TRIBUNE 08 MAY 21) ... Phillip Molnar

CORONADO — The U.S. Navy officially commissioned its new \$525 million, 785-foot warship Saturday at a ceremony ahead of its departure for the western Pacific sometime this summer.

### **11. NAVWAR Commander: Overmatch Is ‘Imposing Risk Over A Wider Expanse’**

(SEAPOWERS MAGAZINE 07 MAY 21) ... Richard R. Burgess

ARLINGTON, Va. — The admiral in charge of Project Overmatch said the Naval Operational Architecture (NOA) being developed by the Navy is necessary to preserve free access to the seas and hold adversaries at risk with fully netted, distributed force.

### **12. Forging A Team: Sailors Of The USS Oscar Austin Go Through The ‘Crucible’**

(DAILY PRESS 08 MAY 21) ... Dave Ress

When Chief Petty Officer Andrew Blalock reported to the USS Oscar Austin, where he was to be the leading chief petty officer for the engineering department, he could tell right away there was something different about his third ship.

### **13. Aircraft Carrier USS John C. Stennis Heads Home for Refueling and Overhaul**

(DAILY PRESS 07 MAY 21) ... Dave Ress

Nudged by a team of tugs from its pier at Naval Station Norfolk, past the Monitor-Merrimack Bridge Tunnel and the mouth of the James River, the carrier USS John C. Stennis moved Thursday to Newport News Shipbuilding, where it'll bring work for more than 4,000 of the shipyard's 25,000 employees over the next four years.

## **SECURITY ENVIRONMENT:**

### **14. Two Nations Divided By a Common Goal**

*After five weeks of diplomatic shadow boxing, it is clear that the old agreement no longer works for Tehran or Washington, except as a steppingstone.*

(NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21) ... Steven Erlanger and David E. Sanger

President Biden and Iran's leaders say they share a common goal: They both want to re-enter the nuclear deal that President Donald J. Trump scrapped three years ago, restoring the bargain that Iran would keep sharp limits on its production of nuclear fuel in return for a lifting of sanctions that have choked its economy.

### **15. U.S. Considers Boost To Security Aid For Ukraine, Says Blinken**

(DEFENSE NEWS 07 MAY 21) ... Joe Gould

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Biden administration will consider Ukraine's expected request to buy American missile defense systems and other weaponry in the wake of a Russian military buildup on its border.

## **16. Afghan Taliban Declares Three-Day Ceasefire For Eid Celebration This Week -Spokesman**

(REUTERS 09 MAY 21)

Taliban insurgents said on Monday they would observe a three-day ceasefire in Afghanistan for the Muslim religious holiday of Eid, starting this week, after weeks of increasing violence that gripped the country.

## **MARINE CORPS:**

### **17. A Platoon Of Female Marines Made History By Graduating From This San Diego Boot Camp**

(CNN 07 MAY 21) ... Scottie Andrew

It takes 13 weeks to complete boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, where young recruits become hardened US Marines. The three-month course is considered one of the most difficult in any branch of the US military.

### **18. Marine Grunts Are Getting New Night Vision, Helmets, Vehicles, Tropical Uniforms And Boots**

(MARINE CORPS TIMES 07 MAY 21) ... Todd South

The core infantry gear upgrades are nearly complete across the force and new night vision, a high-cut helmet, new tropical uniforms and boots are soon to follow.

### **19. More Marines Will Test Lighter Polymer-Cased Ammunition as Experiments Expand to Fleet**

(MILITARY.COM 09 MAY 21) ... Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps has been testing the performance of a polymer-cased .50-caliber ammunition in a lab environment, and leathernecks soon will get a chance to see how the lighter rounds hold up in the field.

### **20. Growing Marine Corps Base On Guam Holds Its First Change-Of-Command Ceremony**

(STARS AND STRIPES 09 MAY 21) ... Seth Robson

A new commander has taken charge of a new Marine Corps base on Guam, where 5,000 members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force are set to move over the next five years from Okinawa.

## **ALLIES & PARTNERS:**

### **21. Britain's Royal Air Force Chief Talks F-35 Tally And Divesting Equipment**

(DEFENSE NEWS 09 MAY 21) ... Aaron Mehta

WASHINGTON -- On March 16, the United Kingdom rolled out its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, a document that will serve as the guidepost for its military going forward. Included in that document were both cuts to existing systems and investments in new technologies.

## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:**

### **22. How Bad Is DoD's Domestic Abuse Problem? Unclear, Thanks To Data Gaps, Auditors Say**

(MILITARY TIMES 07 MAY 21) ... Karen Jowers

Defense officials aren't able to get a full picture of the level of domestic abuse in the military, because they're not meeting all the requirements of the law in reporting the incidents, according to a new report from government auditors who conducted a sweeping, 21-month review.

### **23. Most Of Pentagon Billions Moved To Border Wall Not Recoverable**

(CQ ROLL CALL 08 MAY 21) ... John M. Donnelly

WASHINGTON — Most of the nearly \$10 billion that the Trump administration diverted from the armed services to build barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border will never be seen again, Pentagon and congressional officials confirmed Friday.

### **24. 'We Cut Too Deep': Air Force Reinstates Hundreds Of ROTC Cadets After Dismissals Spark Backlash**

(WASHINGTON POST 09 MAY 21) ... Alex Horton

The Air Force reversed its decision to dismiss hundreds of reserve officer training cadets and restored nearly 130 scholarships, officials said, after a lobbying effort assailed the decision as a punishment for many qualified cadets that would create catastrophic financial problems.

## **EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE:**

### **25. NAVSEA: Navy Could Accelerate Some Public, Private Shipyard Upgrades If Money Were Available**

(USNI NEWS 07 MAY 21) ... Megan Eckstein

Support is growing within the House Armed Services Committee to accelerate Navy efforts to improve ship repair capacity at both private and public shipyards, and for funding that either through ongoing talks about a massive federal infrastructure bill or other means, lawmakers made clear during a Thursday afternoon hearing.

## **26. Talk Grows Of Billions For Revamp Of Puget Sound, Nation's Shipyards**

(KITSAP SUN 09 MAY 21) ... Josh Farley

BREMERTON — On a recent tour of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor, and Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker stopped to chat at the concrete edge of one of its six dry docks. In around a decade, the bathtub-shaped dock, closest to the downtown Bremerton waterfront, could become useless to the Navy.

## **27. Biden To Join Eastern European NATO States Summit, Focus Seen On Ukraine**

(REUTERS 10 MAY 21)

BUCHAREST -- U.S. President Joe Biden will join a virtual summit of eastern European NATO states held in the Romanian capital Bucharest on Monday, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said, with a focus on security in the Black Sea region and Ukraine.

## **28. Executive Order Would Ramp Up Cyber Defense, But Will It Be Enough?**

*A hack of a major pipeline, the latest evidence of the nation's vulnerabilities to cyberattacks, prompted questions about whether the administration should go further.*

(NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21) ... David E. Sanger, Nicole Perlroth and Julian E. Barnes

WASHINGTON — A pipeline that provides the East Coast with nearly half its gasoline and jet fuel remained shuttered on Sunday after yet another ransomware attack, prompting emergency White House meetings and new questions about whether an executive order strengthening cybersecurity for federal agencies and contractors goes far enough even as President Biden prepares to issue it.

## **CAPABILITIES (ACQUISITION AND INNOVATION):**

### **29. Navy Calls For Shipyard Improvements In Pursuit Of 355-Ship Goal**

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 MAY 21) ... Caitlin Doornbos

WASHINGTON — The United States must repair and modernize its four public shipyards and advance its shipbuilding and maintenance capabilities to maintain its strategic advantage against a growing Chinese navy, the vice admiral who oversees Navy shipyards told lawmakers Thursday.

### **30. Construction Is Underway For A New Navy Vessel Named USS Idaho, The First In 100 Years**

(IDAHO STATESMAN 07 MAY 21) ... Jacob Scholl

BOISE, Idaho — In the coming years, the Gem State will have a new military vessel donning its name.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL/INSTALLATIONS:**

### **31. Navy Confirms New 1,000-Gallon Fuel Release At Red Hill**

(STAR-ADVERTISER 08 MAY 21) ... William Cole

The Navy has confirmed that an approximately 1,000-gallon fuel leak was detected May 6 at the troubled Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, a World War II-built facility that came under criticism following a 27,000-gallon fuel release in 2014.

## **COMMENTARY:**

### **32. In The South China Sea, Beijing's Claims To Power Signal Danger Ahead**

(WASHINGTON POST 07 MAY 21) ... David Von Drehle

“War is God’s way of teaching Americans geography,” wrote Ambrose Bierce, whose bitter insights were shaped in large part by a terrible war. As a soldier in the Civil War, Bierce witnessed scenes of slaughter over what was, in important ways, a fight to control rivers. You can read it in the names of the great Union armies: the Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Potomac, the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland. The battle over slavery was also a battle to preserve free commerce from east to west on the Ohio River and from north to south on the Mississippi.

## CNO:

### 1. CNO Says Navy Department Has Strong Case For Getting Bigger Slice Of Defense Budget

(MILITARY.COM 07 MAY 21) ... Gina Harkins

As the Biden administration finalizes its first budget plan, the Navy's top officer said competition for funding is high among the military's top leaders.

But Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday said Thursday he's confident the Navy Department has a "sound case" for getting a bigger piece of the defense budget since the sea services' forward presence will be crucial in meeting threats from China and Russia.

"I am parochial, of course, as a service chief, but I truly believe that the Navy is providing substantial lethality and capability to the joint force and contributing ... to the kind of fights that we're going to [face] in the future," he said at an event hosted by the Navy Memorial.

Gilday has for more than a year said his service needs a bigger portion of the defense budget to build the ships and submarines to keep other militaries, including China's, in check. During the Cold War, the Navy got 38% of the Defense Department's budget, the CNO said during the 2020 Surface Navy Association's symposium.

But that has fallen to 34%, he said last year, at a time when naval forces have been stretched to respond to threats in the Middle East, Europe, the Asia-Pacific region and other spots. Gilday is not alone in arguing that's not enough.

Blake Herzinger, a defense policy specialist and U.S. Navy Reserve officer, wrote an opinion piece for Foreign Policy last week arguing that today's threats demand that the "rule of thirds," which currently divvies up the funding pot to the Army, Air Force and Navy Department fairly equally, must change.

"Much as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were largely ground-centric efforts led (rightly) by the Army, the challenges faced by the United States now and for the foreseeable future are maritime," Herzinger wrote. "If the United States and China go to war, it will play out in the vast oceans of the region, not on Chinese shores."

Gilday said that the threats China and Russia pose to the world aren't limited to any two regions. Only a steady forward

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presence on and from the seas will assure allies and partners that "we have their backs," he said.

"In order to be relevant, we got to be there," the CNO added. "... Those forward operations are important. They make a difference. Virtual presence is actual absence -- we've got to be there."

Still, the idea that the Navy Department should get more money than other services is not popular with everyone. As Herzinger noted last week, the Navy has had three back-to-back-to-back seriously flawed shipbuilding programs in the littoral combat ship, Zumwalt-class destroyer, and Ford-class aircraft carrier.

The Navy recently halted acceptance of new littoral combat ships due to a new mechanical problem. The Zumwalt-class destroyer was delivered to the service without a working combat system more than three years after it was commissioned. The first in the Ford-class carriers has also faced problems with its weapons elevators and catapult systems, leaving it delayed and far over budget.

Gilday on Thursday defended some of those programs, saying the Ford is on track to deploy in 2022 and that he remains "bullish about LCS" and confident it will play a role in future missions.

Despite the competition for Defense Department funding, he said the internal battles haven't harmed the relationships between the services. The Navy and Marine Corps remain committed to ensuring U.S. ships can freely navigate, and now the Army and Air Force are eyeing those missions, he said.

"The Army is talking about long-range fires and ... how they can contribute to sea control and sea denial. The Air Force, similarly," Gilday said. "So, I'm making the strongest case that I can make for the capabilities that the Navy brings to the fight within the joint force."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/07/cno-says-navy-department-has-strong-case-getting-bigger-slice-of-defense-budget.html>

### 2. CNO Says LCS Will Still Have a Role After Propulsion Issue is Fixed

(SEAPOWERS MAGAZINE 07 MAY 21) ... John M. Doyle

ARLINGTON, Va. — Despite serious propulsion problems with the newest Freedom-class littoral combat ships (LCS), Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday says he is "very bullish" about the small surface combatant.

"We've got 33 of them. We've got to wring the most operational availability that we can out of those ships," Gilday told a livestreamed edition of the United States Navy Memorial's SITREP speakers series May 6.

To that end, Gilday said, the Navy will place the long-range Raytheon-Kongsberg Naval Strike Missile on all the LCS, and in about 18 months, start delivering either anti-submarine warfare or mine counter measures modules to the ships — once a defect with the Freedom variant's combining gear is corrected.

In 2020, problems with the combining gear, which links two gas turbines to the ships' two diesel-powered engines, enabling acceleration to 40 knots, sidelined the USS Detroit (LCS-7) and USS Little Rock (LCS-9). Both are assigned to the 4th Fleet, a component of U.S. Southern Command.

In January, the Navy said it would not accept any more of the odd-numbered Freedom ships until the Lockheed Martin-led manufacturing team fixed the design flaw in the complicated mechanism. The Freedom variant is manufactured by Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin. Even-numbered Independence-class LCS are built at Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.

"The vendor is doing land based testing," Gilday said, "and once that new design is proven, we will first install those



new combining gears in the ships delivering out of Wisconsin, and then we'll back fit some of the older hulls."

There is plenty of work for the LCS to do, whether it is in SOUTHCOM or the Western Pacific, Gilday said. "I'm very bullish about the LCS," he said. "We intend to put them forward in the 5th Fleet and, of course, in the 7th Fleet. They

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## **GREAT POWER COMPETITION:**

### **3. Putin Reviews Russian Military Might As Tensions With West Soar**

*(REUTERS 09 MAY 21)*

President Vladimir Putin reviewed Russia's traditional World War Two victory parade on Sunday, a patriotic display of raw military power that this year coincides with soaring tensions with the West.

The parade on Moscow's Red Square commemorating the 76th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two featured over 12,000 troops and more than 190 pieces of military hardware, including intercontinental ballistic missile launchers, and a fly-past by nearly 80 military aircraft under cloudy skies.

Putin, who has been in power as either president or prime minister since 1999, stood beside Soviet war veterans on a review platform set up on Red Square.

"Unfortunately there are once again attempts to deploy many things from the ideology of the Nazis, those who were obsessed with a delusional theory on their exclusiveness. And not only (by) all sorts of radicals and international terrorist groups," Putin said in what appeared to be a common denunciation of the West but what the Kremlin said was aimed at the rise of neo-Nazism in Europe.

"Russia will again and again uphold international law, but at the same time we will firmly protect national interests (and) ensure the security of our people."

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### **4. U.S. General Warns China Is Actively Seeking To Set Up An Atlantic Naval Base**

*(THE HILL 07 MAY 21) ... Celine Castronuovo*

A top U.S. general is warning that China may be looking to extend its influence beyond the Pacific with the potential construction of a large Atlantic naval base on the western coast of Africa.

In an interview with The Associated Press published Thursday, U.S. Gen. Stephen Townsend, who leads U.S. Africa Command (Africom), said China has been in contact with countries as far north as Mauritania and as far south as Namibia on establishing a naval facility with the capability to host submarines or aircraft carriers.

"They're looking for a place where they can rearm and repair warships. That becomes militarily useful in conflict," Townsend said.

"They're a long way toward establishing that in Djibouti," on Africa's eastern coast, he added. "Now they're casting their gaze to the Atlantic coast and wanting to get such a base there."

The revelation comes as the latest in a series of warnings from U.S. military commanders across the globe that China aims to extend its position not only in Asia and the Pacific

were designed to operate inside, close to land and transit at high speed. You better believe we're going to make use of that capability in the Western Pacific."

<https://seapowermagazine.org/cno-says-lcs-will-still-have-a-role-after-propulsion-issue-is-fixed/>

This year's parade precedes parliamentary elections in September and comes at a time when Moscow's relations with the West are acutely strained over issues ranging from the conflict in Ukraine to the fate of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

The United States and Russia have expelled each other's diplomats in recent months in a series of retaliatory moves and Moscow and EU member states have been involved in a similar tit-for-tat diplomatic dispute.

Sunday's parade follows a massive show of Russian military force near the borders of Ukraine and in Crimea, which Russia annexed from Kyiv in 2014, and an uptick in fighting in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian government forces.

Moscow said the build-up, which alarmed the West, was a training exercise in response to activity by the NATO military alliance and Ukraine. It has since ordered a withdrawal of some troops.

Smaller military parades took place on Sunday in cities across Russia and in annexed Crimea, and at Russia's Hmeymim air base in Syria.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-review-russian-military-might-tensions-with-west-soar-2021-05-09/>

region, but also over countries in Africa, South America and the Middle East.

Townsend said that China's military site in Djibouti, built in 2016 as its first overseas base, has been increasing in size and capacity, with as many as 2,000 military personnel there as well as hundreds of Marines.

The general also said that China is "outmaneuvering the U.S. in select countries in Africa."

"Port projects, economic endeavors, infrastructure and their agreements and contracts will lead to greater access in the future," he told the AP. "They are hedging their bets and making big bets on Africa."

Townsend said that a potential Chinese military base on Africa's Atlantic coast "concerns me greatly" due to the relatively shorter distance to the U.S. than from the Horn of Africa.

The analysis comes after the Defense Department's 2020 report on China's military power revealed that Beijing was seeking to add naval, air and ground forces in Angola and other locations in Africa.

The report also highlighted Africa and the Middle East as significant priorities for China in the coming years, with large amounts of oil and natural gas recently imported from these regions.

Henry Tugendhat, a senior policy analyst with the United States Institute of Peace, told the AP that any efforts by China to extend its influence in the Atlantic could more likely be a result of pursuing economic interests, rather than to gain military power.

The concerns come as the Biden administration has sought to maintain a tough stance on China, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday indicating that he is

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## 5. China Pushes Its News, Reshaping Global View

***The government has been using its money and power to create an alternative to a global news media dominated by outlets like the BBC and CNN***

(NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21) ... Ben Smith

In the fall of 2019, just before global borders closed, an international journalists' association decided to canvass its members about a subject that kept coming up in informal conversations: What is China doing?

What it found was astonishing in its scope. Journalists from countries as tiny as Guinea-Bissau had been invited to sign agreements with their Chinese counterparts. The Chinese government was distributing versions of its propaganda newspaper China Daily in English -- and also Serbian. A Filipino journalist estimated that more than half of the stories on a Philippines newswire came from the Chinese state agency Xinhua. A Kenyan media group raised money from Chinese investors, then fired a columnist who wrote about China's suppression of its Uyghur minority. Journalists in Peru faced intense social media criticism from combative Chinese government officials.

What seemed, in each country, like an odd local anomaly looked, all told, like a vast, if patchwork, strategy to create an alternative to a global news media dominated by outlets like the BBC and CNN, and to insert Chinese money, power and perspective into the media in almost every country in the world.

But the study raised an obvious question: What is China planning to do with this new power?

The answer comes in a second report, which is set to be released on Wednesday by the International Federation of Journalists, a Brussels-based union of journalism unions whose mission gives it a global bird's-eye view into news media almost everywhere. The group, which shared a copy with me, hired an author of the first report, Louisa Lim, to canvass journalists in 54 countries. The interviews "reveal an activation of the existing media infrastructure China has put in place globally," Ms. Lim, a former NPR bureau chief in Beijing who is now a senior lecturer at the University of Melbourne, wrote in the report. "As the pandemic started to spread, Beijing used its media infrastructure globally to seed positive narratives about China in national media, as well as mobilizing more novel tactics such as disinformation."

The report, which was also written by Julia Bergin and Johan Lidberg, an associated professor at Monash University in Australia, may read to an American audience as a warning of what we have missed as our attention has increasingly shifted inward. But it is less the exposure of a secret plot than

optimistic the U.S. would be able to combat China's global influence.

Blinken said in a "60 Minutes" interview that China is the "one country in the world that has the military, economic, diplomatic capacity to undermine or challenge" the rules-based international order, adding that the U.S. was not trying to "contain China" but "uphold this rules-based order."

"Anyone who poses a challenge to that order, we're going to stand up and defend it," he said.

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/552331-us-general-warns-china-is-actively-seeking-to-set-up-an-atlantic-naval-base?rl=1>

it is documentation of a continuing global power shift. China's media strategy is no secret, and the Chinese government says its campaign is no different from what powerful global players have done for more than a century.

"The accusation on China is what the U.S. has been doing all along," a deputy director general of the Information Department at the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Zhao Lijian, told me in a WeChat message after I described the international journalists' report to him.

The report found that a new media push accompanied the intense round of Chinese diplomacy in the pandemic, providing protective equipment initially and then vaccines to countries around the world, all the while scrambling to ensure that things as varied as the pandemic's origin and China's diplomacy was portrayed in the best possible light. Italian journalists said they'd been pressed to run President Xi Jinping's Christmas speech and were provided with a version translated into Italian. In Tunisia, the Chinese embassy offered hand sanitizer and masks to the journalists' union, and expensive television equipment and free, pro-China content to the state broadcaster.

A pro-government tabloid in Serbia sponsored a billboard with an image of the Chinese leader and the words, "Thank you, brother Xi."

Both the media and vaccine campaigns are intertwined with China's "Belt and Road" global investment campaign, in which Chinese support comes with strings attached, including debt and expectations of support in key votes at the United Nations.

China is fighting what is in some ways an uphill battle. Its growing authoritarianism, its treatment of the Uyghurs and its crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong damaged global views of China, according to other surveys, even before the pandemic began in Wuhan. And some governments have begun to make it harder for Chinese state media to function in their countries, with Britain's media regulator revoking the license of the main Chinese state broadcaster. But much of China's diplomacy is focused on places that, while they may not have the cultural or financial power of European countries, do have a vote at the U.N. And while they appear often to be improvisational and run out of local embassies, China's efforts are having a global impact.

"Beijing is steadily reshaping the global media landscape by nation," Ms. Lim found.

Along with two other New York Times reporters, the Lima-based Mitra Taj and Emma Bubola in Rome, I spoke to journalists on five continents who participated in the report. Their attitudes ranged from alarm at overt Chinese government pressure to confidence that they could handle what amounted to one more interest group in a messy and complex media landscape.

In Peru, where the government is friendly to China and powerful political figures got early access to a Chinese-made vaccine, "what really stands out is such a frequent presence in state media," said Zuliana Lainez, the secretary general of the National Association of Journalists of Peru. She said that the Peruvian state news agency and the state-controlled newspaper El Peruano are "like stenographers of the Chinese embassy."

Meanwhile, she said, China's embassy has paid to modernize some newsrooms' technology.

"Those kinds of things need to be looked at with worry," she said. "They're not free."

Not all the journalists watching China's growing interest in global media find it so sinister. The deputy director of the Italian news service ANSA, Stefano Polli, said he has seen China increasingly use media to "have greater influence in the new geopolitical balance." But he defended his service's contract to translate and distribute Xinhua -- criticized in the international journalists report -- as an ordinary commercial arrangement.

China has also cracked down on foreign correspondents inside its borders, making international outlets increasingly dependent on official accounts and denying visas to American reporters, including most of the New York Times bureau. Luca Rigoni, a prominent anchor at a TV channel owned by the Italian company Mediaset, said his news organization had no correspondent of its own in the country but a formal contract with Chinese state media for reporting from China. The cooperation dried up, though, after he reported on the theory that the virus had leaked from a Chinese lab.

But Mr. Rigoni, whose company is owned by Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, said he didn't think China's mix of media and state power was unique. "It's not the only country where the main TV and radio programs are controlled by the government or the parliament," he said.

And the general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, Anthony Bellanger, said in an email that his view of the report is that while "China is a growing force in the information war, it is also vital to resist such pressures exerted by the U.S., Russia and other governments around the world."

But there's little question of which government is more committed to this campaign right now. A report last year by Sarah Cook for the Freedom House, an American nonprofit group that advocates political freedom, found that Beijing was spending "hundreds of millions of dollars a year to spread their messages to audiences around the world."

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The United States may have pioneered the tools of covert and overt influence during the Cold War, but the government's official channels have withered. The swaggering C.I.A. influence operations of the early Cold War, in which the agency secretly funded influential journals like Encounter, gave way to American outlets like Voice of America and Radio Liberty, which sought to extend American influence by broadcasting uncensored local news into authoritarian countries. After the Cold War, those turned into softer tools of American power.

But more recently, President Donald J. Trump sought to turn those outlets into blunter propaganda tools, and Democrats and their own journalists resisted. That lack of an American domestic consensus on how to use its own media outlets has left the American government unable to project much of anything. Instead, the cultural power represented by companies like Netflix and Disney -- vastly more powerful and better funded than any government effort -- has been doing the work.

And journalists around the world expressed skepticism of the effectiveness of often ham-handed Chinese government propaganda, a skepticism I certainly shared when I recycled a week's worth of unread editions of China Daily sent to my home last week. The kind of propaganda that can work inside China, without any real journalistic answer, is largely failing to compete in the intense open market for people's attention.

"China is trying to push its content in Kenyan media, but it's not yet that influential," said Eric Oduor, the secretary general of the Kenya Union of Journalists.

Others argue that what journalists dismiss as amateurish or obvious propaganda still has an impact. Erin Baggott Carter, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Southern California, said her research has found that American news organizations whose journalists accepted official trips to China subsequently "made a pivot from covering military competition to covering economic cooperation."

In talking to journalists around the world last week about Chinese influence, I was also struck by what they didn't talk about: the United States. Here, when we write and talk about Chinese influence, it's often in the context of an imagined titanic global struggle between two great nations and two systems of government. But from Indonesia to Peru to Kenya, journalists described something much more one-sided: a determined Chinese effort to build influence and tell China's story.

"Americans are quite insular and always think everything is about the U.S.," Ms. Lim said. "Americans and the Western world are often not looking at what is happening in other languages outside English, and tend to believe that these Western-centric values apply everywhere."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/09/business/media/china-beijing-coronavirus-media.html>



## 6. China Says Its Rocket Debris Landed In The Indian Ocean

(CNBC NEWS 09 MAY 21) ... Matt Clinch

Debris from a large Chinese rocket landed in the Indian Ocean on Sunday, according to the China Manned Space Engineering Office, which said most parts had burned up on reentry.

The uncontrolled nature of the rocket's fall to Earth had left experts concerned about the potential impact it could have on inhabited areas. Earlier in the week, some space trackers had predicted that it could have landed as far north as New York.

The Chinese agency said early Sunday that the rocket, called the Long March 5B, had re-entered the atmosphere at 10:24 a.m. Beijing time, landing at a location with coordinates of longitude 72.47 degrees east and latitude 2.65 degrees north. That would put the impact location in the Indian Ocean, west of the Maldives archipelago.

"The vast majority of the device burned up during the reentry, and the landing area of the debris is around a sea area with the center at 2.65 degrees north latitude and 72.47 degrees east longitude," the China Manned Space Engineering Office said in a statement on its website.

U.S. Space Command said in a statement that the Long March 5B had re-entered over the Arabian Peninsula at approximately 10:15 p.m. ET on May 8. "It is unknown if the debris impacted land or water," it said.

The rocket was launched on April 29 at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan province. It measured 98 feet long and 16.5 feet wide, and it weighed 21 metric tons.

Its mission was to carry into orbit a module containing living quarters for a future Chinese space station. But after completing that task, the body of the rocket circled Earth in an uncontrolled manner before reentering the lower atmosphere.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a press conference Friday that it was "common

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## 7. New U.S. Indo-Pacific Chief To Visit Japan In Second Half Of May

(KYODO 09 MAY 21)

Adm. John Aquilino, the new commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, will visit Japan in the latter half of May for talks with defense leaders about China's growing military pressure on Taiwan and Beijing's assertive behavior in the broader Indo-Pacific, according to Japanese and U.S. government sources.

During his first trip to Japan since assuming leadership on April 30, Aquilino plans to meet with Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi and Gen. Koji Yamazaki, chief of the Self-Defense Forces Joint Staff, to discuss regional issues such as Beijing's assertive claims over the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

The Taiwan issue drew attention in the meeting between Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington last month and during the Group of Seven foreign ministerial talks in London earlier this month.

The Japanese government is considering arranging a meeting between Suga and Aquilino, with the two countries

practice" across the world for the upper stages of rockets to burn up while reentering the atmosphere.

"China is following closely the upper stage's reentry into the atmosphere. To my knowledge, the upper stage of this rocket has been deactivated, which means that most of its parts will burn up upon reentry, making the likelihood of damage to aviation or ground facilities and activities extremely low," he said, according to a translation on the ministry's website.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin bemoaned the negligence involved in the rocket's fall to Earth and said Washington had no plans to shoot it down.

"I think this speaks to the fact that for those of us who operate in the space domain, that there is a requirement — there should be a requirement to — to operate in a safe and thoughtful mode, and make sure that we take those kinds of things into consideration as we plan and conduct operations," he told reporters.

In a statement shortly after the debris landed, NASA Administrator Sen. Bill Nelson said it was clear that China "is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris."

"It is critical that China and all spacefaring nations and commercial entities act responsibly and transparently in space to ensure the safety, stability, security, and long-term sustainability of outer space activities," he said.

Indeed, it is common for rockets and pieces of space junk to fall back to Earth and experts say that the chances of actually being hit are very small. According to Reuters, parts from the first Long March 5B fell onto the Ivory Coast in Africa last year, damaging several buildings but with no reported injuries.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/09/china-says-rocket-debris-landed-in-indian-ocean-west-of-maldives.html>

aiming to bolster ties and present a robust alliance, according to the sources.

During the admiral's visit, the two allies aim to underscore their increased cooperation toward realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific as well, according to the sources.

In March, Adm. Philip Davidson, Aquilino's predecessor, warned China's threat could be more imminent than perceived.

China could invade Taiwan "in the next six years," Davidson told the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Aquilino told senators at a confirmation hearing in the same month, "My opinion is this problem is much closer to us than most think," but he declined to weigh in on Davidson's assessment of the six-year timeframe.

The Japanese government is studying possible responses by the SDF in the event of a military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan within the strict confines of its national security laws and the war-renouncing Constitution.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/09/national/indonesia-pacific-chief-visit/>

## FLEET READINESS:

### 8. U.S. Navy Seizes Weapons In Arabian Sea Likely Bound For Yemen

*The U.S. Navy says it has seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea*

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 09 MAY 21) ... Jon Gambrell

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- The U.S. Navy announced Sunday it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels.

An American defense official told The Associated Press that the Navy's initial investigation found the vessel came from Iran, again tying the Islamic Republic to arming the Houthis despite a United Nations arms embargo. Iran's mission to the U.N. did not immediately respond to a request for comment, though Tehran has denied in the past giving the rebels weapons.

The seizure, one of several amid the yearslong war in Yemen, comes as the U.S. and others try to end a conflict that spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The arms shipment, described as sizeable, shows that the war may still have far to run.

The guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless dhow, a traditional Mideast sailing ship, in an operation that began Thursday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found the weapons, most wrapped in green plastic, below deck.

When laid out on the deck of the Monterey, the scale of the find came into focus. Sailors found nearly 3,000 Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, a variant of the Kalashnikov. They recovered hundreds of other heavy machine guns and sniper rifles, as well as dozens of advanced, Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles. The shipments also included several hundred rocket-propelled grenade launchers and optical sights for weapons.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet did not identify where the weapons originated, nor where they were going. However, an American defense official said the weapons resembled those of other shipments interdicted bound for the Houthis.

Based on interviews with the crew and material investigated on board, the sailors determined the vessel came from Iran, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation.

"After all illicit cargo was removed, the dhow was assessed for seaworthiness, and after questioning, its crew was

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provided food and water before being released," the 5th Fleet said in a statement.

The seizure marks just the latest in the Arabian Sea or Gulf of Aden involving weapons likely bound to Yemen. The seizures began in 2016 and have continued intermittently throughout the war, which has seen the Houthis fire ballistic missiles and use drones later linked to Iran. Yemen is awash with small arms that have been smuggled into poorly controlled ports over years of conflict.

This recent seizure appeared to be among the biggest. Tim Michetti, an investigative researcher who studies the illicit weapon trade, also said the shipment bore similarities to the others.

"The unique blend of materiel recovered by the USS Monterey appears to be consistent with the materiel from previous interdictions, which have been linked to Iran," he said.

Yemen's war began in September 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa and began a march south to try to seize the entire country. Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates and other countries, entered the war alongside Yemen's internationally recognized government in March 2015. Iran backed the Houthis, who harass Saudi Arabia with missile fire and drone attacks.

The war has killed some 130,000 people, including over 13,000 civilians slain in targeted attacks, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Project.

The war has seen atrocities from all sides. Saudi airstrikes using American-made bombs killed school children and civilians. The UAE paid off local al-Qaida fighters to avoid fighting and controlled prisons where torture and sexual abuse was rampant. The Houthis employ child soldiers and indiscriminately lay landmines.

Since 2015, the U.N. Security Council has imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis. Despite that, U.N. experts warn "an increasing body of evidence suggests that individuals or entities in the Islamic Republic of Iran supply significant volumes of weapons and components to the Houthis."

[https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-navy-seizes-arms-shipment-arabian-sea-amid-77581794?cid=clicksource\\_4380645\\_1\\_heads\\_hero\\_live\\_headlines\\_hed](https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-navy-seizes-arms-shipment-arabian-sea-amid-77581794?cid=clicksource_4380645_1_heads_hero_live_headlines_hed)

## 9. The Weapons Seizure So Big It Covered The Rear Deck Of A 567-Foot US Warship

(CNN 10 MAY 21) ... Brad Lendon

A joint US Navy and Coast Guard team seized thousands of illicit weapons last week after stopping a small ship in the North Arabian Sea, the Navy said in a statement.

The cruiser USS Monterey stopped the stateless dhow on May 6 during a routine operation to verify its registry, the Navy said.

A US Coast Guard Advanced Interdiction Team deployed on the Navy ship then boarded the dhow and found the weapons stash.

The massive arms haul covered much of the rear flight deck of the 567-foot (173-meter) US warship after it was transferred over in what the Navy said was a two-day operation.

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## 10. Navy Commissions \$525M Warship In San Diego

*The expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith is expected to launch sometime this summer*

(UNION-TRIBUNE 08 MAY 21) ... Phillip Molnar

CORONADO — The U.S. Navy officially commissioned its new \$525 million, 785-foot warship Saturday at a ceremony ahead of its departure for the western Pacific sometime this summer.

Construction on the expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith took about two years and is set to be permanently foreign-based. Its first base of operations will be in the U.S. commonwealth of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. A commissioning of a Navy vessel means it has been placed in active service.

The Miguel Keith will hold a crew of roughly 100 sailors and 44 civilian mariners. Its massive size allows it to have a flight deck capable of accommodating the Navy's largest helicopters, the MH-53, as well as Marine Corps F-35B jets.

At the ceremony on Naval Air Station North Island, Adm. Craig Faller of the U.S. Southern Command said the Miguel Keith could go all over the world in its lifetime, to places such as the Caribbean, South China Sea or the Strait of Hormuz.

He said the crew would be on the front line of global conflict against threats to the United States — particularly China.

"The Chinese Communist Party — with its insidious and corrupt influence — seeks global dominance and to impose its version of international order," Faller told the crowd of around 100 people. "To continue winning this global competition we must be at the top of our game. We need to keep developing the best technology and the best ships, like you see here today."

The Miguel Keith was constructed by San Diego-based General Dynamics NASSCO and can travel at more than 9,500 nautical miles at a speed of 15 knots. Its propulsion system is made up of twin screw diesel engines, a medium speed diesel main engine and a 24-megawatt diesel electric plant.

Construction was slowed in July 2018 when a dry dock used for construction at the General Dynamics NASSCO facility flooded.

Expeditionary sea bases, like the Miguel Keith, can be used for a variety of military operations, such as warfare,

"The cache of weapons included dozens of advanced Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles, thousands of Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, and hundreds of PKM machine guns, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Other weapon components included advanced optical sights," the Navy statement said.

The US military was investigating the source and the intended destination of the huge weapons cache, which will remain in US custody, the Navy said.

After the dhow was deemed seaworthy and its crew was questioned, they were provided with food and water and released, according to the statement.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/10/middleeast/us-navy-seizes-weapons-arabian-sea-intl-hnk-scli-ml/index.html>

counter-piracy and humanitarian support. General Dynamics NASSCO was awarded a contract of up to \$1.6 million in 2019 to build two more expeditionary sea bases and an option for a third.

The Navy originally intended the ships to operate as Merchant Marine vessels manned by civilians, but in 2020 the service said all expeditionary sea bases will be commissioned as warships — a designation that allows them more flexibility to take an active role in military operations. The Navy's other expeditionary sea bases have conducted operations off the coast of Africa and in the Middle East.

Rep. Scott Peters, D-San Diego, said at the ceremony that the locally built ship reinforced San Diego's status as a Navy town.

"The USS Miguel Keith is prepared to meet any challenge in defense of our freedoms," he said, "just as her namesake."

The sea base was named after Marine Lance Cpl. Miguel Keith, who was killed in Vietnam 51 years to the day of the commission. The San Antonio native was killed when he was 18 and awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism. He completed his military training at Camp Pendleton.

Military leaders recounted the story several times Saturday of how Keith was wounded with his platoon when they were heavily outnumbered in Quang Ngai Province. They said Keith, a machine gunner, shot at and took out three enemy fighters and dispersed two more while completely exposed to view. He then suffered more wounds when a grenade exploded near him. Despite serious injuries, he again charged the enemy, except this time it was an estimated 25 soldiers. He was killed but has continued to be honored by fellow Marines for his sacrifice and the success of his platoon against enemy fighters.

Keith's siblings, along with several other family members and friends, attended the commissioning either virtually or in person. His mother, Eliadora Delores Keith, was made the honorary ship sponsor and delivered a virtual speech.

"I am happy that they still remember him," she said through tears. "Because I will never forget him. Never, ever."

## 11. NAVWAR Commander: Overmatch Is ‘Imposing Risk Over A Wider Expanse’

(SEAPOWER MAGAZINE 07 MAY 21) ... Richard R. Burgess

ARLINGTON, Va. — The admiral in charge of Project Overmatch said the Naval Operational Architecture (NOA) being developed by the Navy is necessary to preserve free access to the seas and hold adversaries at risk with fully netted, distributed force.

Rear Adm. Douglas Small, commander, Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR), said the U.S. Navy, which enjoyed unfettered maritime supremacy since the Cold War, can no longer take that supremacy nor freedom of navigation for granted, especially with the rise of China and its navy which is rapidly improving in capability and capacity.

He spoke May 7 at a webinar jointly conducted by the U.S. Naval Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies and sponsored by Huntington Ingalls Industries.

Small said the Navy’s Project Overmatch is charged to “deliver the Naval Operational Architecture,” a capability to

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enhance distributed maritime operations by imposing “risk over a wider expanse.”

Small said the goal of the architecture is for it to be the connective tissue for the Navy’s sensors, weapons, and command structure, to operate near and far, at every axis and in every domain, and synchronize those effects to form a widely distributive force.

The admiral said the system of systems the Navy relies on for warfighting can be increasingly vulnerable to Chinese intrusion or countermeasures and the United States needs to maintain an overmatch to minimize such vulnerability, taking the system of systems “to a higher level.”

That overmatch is not only necessary to put potential enemies at risk but to assure allies and partners, he said.

NOA is the naval component of the Joint All-Domain Command and Control architecture.

<https://seapowermagazine.org/navwar-commander-overmatch-is-imposing-risk-over-a-wider-expanse/>

## 12. Forging A Team: Sailors Of The USS Oscar Austin Go Through The ‘Crucible’

(DAILY PRESS 08 MAY 21) ... Dave Ress

When Chief Petty Officer Andrew Blalock reported to the USS Oscar Austin, where he was to be the leading chief petty officer for the engineering department, he could tell right away there was something different about his third ship.

After a five-week orientation capped by the ship’s unusual “crucible” — scenarios on firefighting, first aid, active shooters and navigating the tight passageways and small compartment doors of a destroyer, even through dark and blinding smoke — he knew what it was.

Everyone on the Austin goes through the crucible — Blalock went through with a commissioned officer, along with Petty Officer 3rd class Leslie S. Stephens, reporting to his first ship and another sailor fresh out of boot camp.

“On a destroyer, we all have different technical skills, and I know I’ll probably see everyone at some point ... you know who they are. It’s knowing we’re all in this together,” he said.

“Your first ship, it can be intimidating,” Stephens said. “You learn a lot of this in boot camp, but I ended up feeling a lot more confident.”

And a lot more confident in his shipmates, he said.

Doing that earns the Austin’s crew-member patch. It features the star of Congressional Medal of Honor of the ship’s namesake, Marine Corps Private First Class Oscar Austin. Though seriously injured by shrapnel from a grenade when he shielded a fellow Marine, Austin was hit by a spray of bullets when he tried again to shield his comrade during a North Vietnamese attack on their observation post near Danang in 1969. Austin died, his fellow Marine survived, eventually to become an officer.

The idea of the crucible is to focus on the basics that all sailors need to know, as well as some of the special challenges that come with life on one of the Navy’s workhorse destroyers, said Command Master Chief Clayton Alek-

Finkelman. His senior enlisted sailor leadership team refined the idea shortly after he reported to the Austin two years ago.

At the time, the destroyer was in the shipyard for repairs after a devastating electrical fire, and Alek-Finkelman wanted to make sure sailors didn’t lose their edge.

“They say every sailor is a firefighter. After 9/11, we’re all anti-terrorist fighters. These days, we need to know what to do about an active shooter,” he said. “Every sailor needs to know how to defend the ship.”

But unlike bigger ships, destroyers don’t have separate security departments. Nor do they have the kind of sick bay facilities that an aircraft carrier, amphibious assault ship or cruiser boast. One element of the crucible is a medical emergency scenario. The Austin’s crucible also features multi-hour scenarios on firefighting, on repelling a terror attack and on what to do in an emergency.

“You’ve got to know your way in the dark, or when you can’t see because of the smoke; where to find the EEBD (emergency escape breathing device) and getting to safety with that 10 minutes of air. And then, how to save the ship,” Alek-Finkelman said.

“Step 1 is to survive. Then, step 2 is to keep the ship afloat.”

A few weeks back, two new sailors called on their just-rehearsed first aid lessons when a contractor working on the ship fell, suffering a severe head injury.

They had him stabilized, called for help, and had the injured worker headed to the hospital in minutes, said Petty Officer 1st Class Travis Mosley, an Austin hospital corpsman.

The scenarios end up as learning experiences for all participants, as well as the senior sailors who design them, said Petty Officer 1st Class Gerald R Riebe, who coordinates the crucible’s anti-terrorism training. That includes



participants with years of experience or those like Stephens, a cryptologic technician who's trained in some of the newest specialized skills the Navy demands.

"Sometimes, you know to let a shipmate with a particular skill set take the lead, sometimes, you have to lead because of where you are and what you see," said Alek-Finkelman.

"We need leaders at all levels."

For the Austin's captain, Cmdr. Matt Krull, the payoff is the bonding and teamwork that results.

And when one sailor sees another with that patch, "It means no matter where you're going to be or who you're with, you know they've been through it, and that you can draw on their strength and you together can do what needs doing," he said.

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### 13. Aircraft Carrier USS John C. Stennis Heads Home for Refueling and Overhaul

(DAILY RPESS 07 MAY 21) ... Dave Ress

Nudged by a team of tugs from its pier at Naval Station Norfolk, past the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel and the mouth of the James River, the carrier USS John C. Stennis moved Thursday to Newport News Shipbuilding, where it'll bring work for more than 4,000 of the shipyard's 25,000 employees over the next four years.

The 1,092-foot long nuclear-powered Nimitz-class carrier is back where it was built and delivered to the Navy in 1995. It is about to undergo a refueling and complex overhaul. That project will keep it in service for another quarter-century.

In addition to refueling the carrier's nuclear reactor, the project involves a modernization of more than 2,300 compartments, hundreds of tanks and mechanical systems and installation of updated equipment. There will be major upgrades of the propulsion system, the flight deck, catapults,

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That's really the point of the crucible, Alek-Finkelman said as he thinks about the changes he's seen over the course of his career. That includes tours in the small craft of river and harbor patrols in the Middle East and time as a special warfare sailor on a Special Boat Team and all the things he's learned as the senior enlisted sailor on the Austin.

"Our adversaries have the ships, they can bring the guns. We have the tough sailors," he said. "It's sailors who give us our edge."

<https://www.pilotonline.com/military/dp-nw-destroyer-oscar-austin-20210508-cx3ay3duvng7jmue6pghmuypea-story.html>

combat systems and the island, from which the carrier is navigated and air operations managed.

Engineers, technicians and support staff from the shipyard have been working on the Stennis overhaul since 2019.

But by the time they and the yard's shipfitters, machinists, electricians pipefitters, riggers and welders are ready to turn the Stennis back over to the Navy, the Stennis's crew, working alongside the shipbuilders, will put in 2 million hours worth of work. They're taking on about a third of project.

Newport News Shipbuilding formally won the \$2.99 billion contract for the bulk of the refueling and overhaul of the carrier USS John C. Stennis — a project it has been working on for years — earlier this year.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/07/aircraft-carrier-uss-john-c-stennis-heads-home-refueling-and-overhaul.html>

## SECURITY ENVIRONMENT:

### 14. Two Nations Divided By a Common Goal

*After five weeks of diplomatic shadow boxing, it is clear that the old agreement no longer works for Tehran or Washington, except as a steppingstone.*

(NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21) ... Steven Erlanger and David E. Sanger

President Biden and Iran's leaders say they share a common goal: They both want to re-enter the nuclear deal that President Donald J. Trump scrapped three years ago, restoring the bargain that Iran would keep sharp limits on its production of nuclear fuel in return for a lifting of sanctions that have choked its economy.

But after five weeks of shadow boxing in Vienna hotel rooms — where the two sides pass notes through European intermediaries — it has become clear that the old deal, strictly defined, does not work for either of them anymore, at least in the long run.

The Iranians are demanding that they be allowed to keep the advanced nuclear-fuel production equipment they installed after Mr. Trump abandoned the pact, and integration with the world financial system beyond what they achieved under the 2015 agreement.

The Biden administration, for its part, says that restoring the old deal is just a steppingstone. It must be followed

immediately by an agreement on limiting missiles and support of terrorism — and making it impossible for Iran to produce enough fuel for a bomb for decades. The Iranians say no way.

Now, as negotiators engage again in Vienna, where a new round of talks began on Friday, the Biden administration finds itself at a crucial decision point. Restoring the 2015 accord, with all its flaws, seems doable, interviews with European, Iranian and American officials suggest. But getting what Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken has called a "longer and stronger" accord — one that stops Iran from amassing nuclear material for generations, halts its missile tests and ends support of terrorist groups — looks as far away as ever.

That is potentially a major political vulnerability for Mr. Biden, who knows he cannot simply replicate what the Obama administration negotiated six years ago, after marathon sessions in Vienna and elsewhere, while offering vague promises that something far bigger and better might follow.



Iran and the United States “are really negotiating different deals,” said Vali R. Nasr, a former American official who is now at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. “It’s why the talks are so slow.”

The Americans see the restoration of the old deal as a first step to something far bigger. And they are encouraged by Iran’s desire to relax a series of financial restrictions that go beyond that deal — mostly involving conducting transactions with Western banks — because it would create what one senior administration official called a “ripe circumstance for a negotiation on a follow-on agreement.”

The Iranians refuse to even discuss a larger agreement. And American officials say it is not yet clear that Iran really wants to restore the old deal, which is derided by powerful hard-liners at home.

With Iran’s presidential elections six weeks away, the relatively moderate, lame-duck team of President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif are spinning that an agreement is just around the corner. “Almost all the main sanctions have been removed,” Mr. Rouhani told Iranians on Saturday, apparently referring to the American outline of what is possible if Tehran restores the sharp limits on nuclear production. “Negotiations are underway for some details.”

Not so fast, Mr. Blinken has responded. He and European diplomats underscore that Iran has yet to make an equally detailed description of what nuclear limits would be restored.

But even if it does, how Mr. Biden persuades what will almost surely be a new hard-line Iranian government to commit to further talks to lengthen and strengthen the deal is a question American officials have a hard time answering. But Mr. Biden’s aides say their strategy is premised on the thought that restoring the old deal will create greater international unity, especially with Europeans who objected strenuously to Mr. Trump’s decision to exit a deal that was working. And even the old deal, one senior official said, “put a serious lid on Iran’s nuclear program.”

Hovering outside the talks are the Israelis, who continue a campaign of sabotage and assassination to cripple the Iranian program — and perhaps the negotiations themselves. So it was notable that the director of the Mossad, who has led those operations, was recently ushered into the White House for a meeting with the president. After an explosion at the Natanz nuclear plant last month, Mr. Biden told aides that the timing — just as the United States was beginning to make progress on restoring the accord — was suspicious.

The split with Israel remains. In the meetings in Washington last week — which included Mr. Blinken; the C.I.A. director, William J. Burns; and the national security adviser, Jake Sullivan — Israeli officials argued that the United States was naïve to return to the old accord, which they think preserved a nascent nuclear breakout capability.

Mr. Biden’s top aides argued that three years of “maximum pressure” on Iran engineered by Mr. Trump and his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, had failed to break its government or limit its support of terrorism. In fact, it had prompted nuclear breakout.

In Vienna, by all accounts, the lead negotiator, Robert Malley — whose relationship with Mr. Blinken goes back to the high school they attended together in Paris — has made a

significant offer on lifting sanctions “inconsistent” with the original deal.

On Wednesday, Mr. Blinken said that the United States had “demonstrated our very seriousness of purpose” in returning to the deal.

“What we don’t yet know is whether Iran is prepared to make the same decision and to move forward,” he told the BBC.

Iran wants more sanctions lifted than the United States judges consistent with the deal, while insisting on keeping more of its nuclear infrastructure — in particular advanced centrifuges — than that deal permits. Instead, Iran argues that the International Atomic Energy Agency should simply inspect the new centrifuges, a position that is unacceptable to Washington.

While the talks continue, Iran is keeping up the pressure by adding to its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and the equipment to make it, all in violation of the deal.

Both Iran and the United States are working under delicate political constraints. Even as Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has supported the Vienna talks, Mr. Rouhani and Mr. Zarif are mocked by powerful conservatives who do not trust Washington and who expect to capture the presidency.

For his part, Mr. Biden must contend with a Congress that is highly skeptical of a deal and largely sympathetic to the concerns of Israel.

But with the Iranian elections close, time is pressing, and the Biden administration lost significant chunks of it as its negotiating position has evolved, officials say. The Americans initially demanded that Iran return to compliance, and then chose to keep some of the Trump administration’s sanctions in place as leverage to try to force a broader negotiation.

In two discussions in February, the Europeans urged American officials to start negotiating in earnest and lift some sanctions as a gesture of good faith toward Iran. Those suggestions were ignored. But when Ayatollah Khamenei said that the country could proceed to enrich uranium up to 60 percent purity — as opposed to the 3.67 percent limit in the nuclear deal — Washington took matters more seriously, officials said, fearing that it would further diminish the so-called breakout time for Iran to get enough material for a bomb.

It was only at the end of March that the two sides agreed to negotiate the whole deal at once, and the Vienna talks began in early April. Then it took more time for the Americans to concede that returning to the 2015 deal as it was written was the best and perhaps only way to build enough trust with Iran that its leaders might even consider broader, follow-on talks.

Three working groups have been established: one to discuss which sanctions Washington must lift, one to discuss how Iran returns to the enrichment limits and one to discuss how to sequence the mutual return. Iran has not yet engaged seriously on its plans, still insisting that Washington move first, but another sticking point remains: which sanctions will be lifted.

Mr. Trump restored or imposed more than 1,500 sanctions in an effort to prevent a renewal of the pact. The sanctions have been put into three baskets — green, yellow and red, depending on how clearly they are inconsistent with the deal.

Green will be lifted; yellow must be negotiated; and red will stay, including, for example, sanctions on individuals for human-rights violations.

Deciding which sanctions to lift is politically delicate for both countries. For example, in the yellow category, Iran insists that a Trump-era sanction of its central bank under a terrorism designation must be lifted because it damages trade. But it would be even more complicated for Washington to lift the terrorism designation on the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the officials said.

For the Iranians to agree to a deal that does not resolve the designation of the Guards would be a hard sell, even for the supreme leader.

“For Biden, it’s hard to justify lifting sanctions against institutions still threatening U.S. interests in the region, and it’s hard for Rouhani to go home boasting about lifting all sanctions except those on his rivals,” said Ali Vaez, the Iran project director at the International Crisis Group.

“It’s a fragile process,” Mr. Vaez said, noting Iran’s rocket attacks in Iraq. “If a single American is killed, the whole process is derailed.”

But how Mr. Biden gets Iran to move to negotiate a better or new accord is the question.

American officials have no real answer to this dilemma as they try to resurrect the old deal, but they assert that Iran, too, wants more benefits than the old deal provided, so it should be willing to talk further. The Americans say they are ready to discuss how to strengthen the deal to mutual benefit, but they say that would be a decision for Iran to make.

Despite Iran’s pressure tactics — increasing enrichment to just short of bomb grade in small quantities and barring international inspectors from key sites in late February — Mr. Zarif insists that these moves are easily reversible.

American intelligence officials say that while Iran has bolstered its production of nuclear material — and is probably

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only months from being able to produce enough highly enriched uranium for one or two bombs — even now, there is no evidence Iran is advancing on its work to fashion a warhead. “We continue to assess that Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that we judge would be necessary to produce a nuclear device,” Avril D. Haines, the director of national intelligence, said in a report last month.

The Israelis are more skeptical, arguing that evidence they stole from a warehouse “archive” of Iran’s nuclear program three years ago shows that Iranian scientists had already done extensive work on warhead design.

Mr. Blinken says that the Vienna talks are intended to return to the stability and oversight of Iran’s nuclear program that the 2015 deal provided until it was abandoned by Mr. Trump.

“So there’s nothing naïve about this. On the contrary, it’s a very cleareyed way of dealing with a problem that was dealt with effectively by the J.C.P.O.A.,” Mr. Blinken said, referring to the 2015 deal. “We’ll have to see if we can do the same thing again.”

The atmosphere in Iran has been complicated by a recent scandal over Mr. Zarif, whose criticism of internal decision-making recently leaked, apparently in an effort to damage his reputation and any chance he had to run for the presidency.

Ayatollah Khamenei refuted the criticism without naming Mr. Zarif, but he said the comments were “a big mistake that must not be made by an official of the Islamic Republic” and “a repetition of what Iran’s enemies say.”

At the same time, by downplaying Mr. Zarif’s role, the supreme leader reaffirmed his support for the talks while also sheltering them from criticism by hard-liners, said Ellie Geranmayeh of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/09/world/middleeast/biden-iran-nuclear.html>

## 15. U.S. Considers Boost To Security Aid For Ukraine, Says Blinken

(DEFENSE NEWS 07 MAY 21) ... Joe Gould

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Biden administration will consider Ukraine’s expected request to buy American missile defense systems and other weaponry in the wake of a Russian military buildup on its border.

In an interview with Radio Free Europe on Thursday, amid his one-day visit to Ukraine, Blinken said the Pentagon is in the midst of “a very active consideration” of how to boost security assistance to Ukraine.

The comments from America’s top diplomat came after Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba told CNN he planned to discuss a “list” of U.S. military support with Blinken, including a request for air defense systems and anti-sniper technology.

“I want to make it clear that it’s not only about receiving it from the United States, but also about buying it from the United States,” Kuleba said. “We want this partnership to work both ways. It should be mutually beneficial.”

The Pentagon last month announced a \$125 million military aid package to Ukraine, including two Mark VI patrol boats as well as “counter-artillery radars and tactical equipment.”

Meanwhile, Ukraine is hoping for bolstered support toward its membership with NATO. “The path to NATO membership is absolutely on the table already. ... NATO membership does not come in a day. We have plenty of time to settle the conflict,” Kuleba said. “But we have to have a clear step-by-step road map of our accession to NATO. And this is where the United States can help us.”

Ukraine has seen an increase in hostilities in its eastern region in recent months. Ukraine’s military says 35 of its soldiers were killed by rebel attacks this year, a significant rise from the latter part of 2020. Russia, which claims it has no soldiers in eastern Ukraine, fueled the tensions this year by massing troops and conducting large-scale military exercises near the border.

Blinken reaffirmed Washington’s support for Ukraine at a meeting Thursday with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Blinken said at a news conference that Ukraine’s “Euro-Atlantic aspirations” were discussed with Zelenskyy and that the U.S. is “actively looking” at strengthening its security assistance to Ukraine, but he didn’t give details.

Zelenskyy also said the military support and the financial support from the U.S. “is increasing,” but he didn’t elaborate.

Both noted that while Russia has pulled back some of its forces from the border, a significant number of troops and equipment is still there. Blinken said Washington is watching the situation "very, very closely," as "Russia has the capacity, [Return to Index](#)

## **16. Afghan Taliban Declares Three-Day Ceasefire For Eid Celebration This Week -Spokesman** (REUTERS 09 MAY 21)

Taliban insurgents said on Monday they would observe a three-day ceasefire in Afghanistan for the Muslim religious holiday of Eid, starting this week, after weeks of increasing violence that gripped the country.

"In order that the Mujahideen again provide a peaceful and secure atmosphere to our compatriots during Eid-ul-Fitr so that they may celebrate this joyous occasion, all Mujahideen ... are instructed to halt all offensive operations," Mohammad Naeem, a Taliban spokesman, said on Twitter.

Eid will begin on Wednesday or Thursday this week depending on the sighting of the moon.

The ceasefire declaration came two days after bombings outside a school in the western part of the Afghan capital, Kabul, killed at least 68, most of them students, and injured more than 165 others.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Taliban insurgents, fighting to overthrow the Afghan government since their ouster by U.S.-led forces in late 2001, denied involvement in the bombings and condemned them.

Afghan government leadership said the group was behind the attack.

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on fairly short notice, to take aggressive action if it so chooses."

<https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2021/05/07/us-considering-security-aid-boost-for-ukraine-says-blinken/>

Naeem said the group's fighters had been instructed to cease all military operations against the Afghan government, but added they were ready to retaliate if attacked by government forces.

Fraidoon Khwazoon, a spokesman for Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, which heads the peace process, said the group welcomed the Taliban's ceasefire announcement.

President Ashraf Ghani's spokesmen were not immediately available to comment on whether they would observe the ceasefire.

Peace talks between both warring sides in the Qatari capital, Doha, which began last year, have made no progress and violence has risen.

Kabul has been on high alert since Washington announced plans last month to pull out all U.S. troops by Sept. 11, with Afghan officials saying the Taliban stepped up attacks across the country following the announcement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghan-taliban-declares-three-day-ceasefire-eid-celebration-this-week-spokesman-2021-05-09/>

## **MARINE CORPS:**

### **17. A Platoon Of Female Marines Made History By Graduating From This San Diego Boot Camp** (CNN 07 MAY 21) ... Scottie Andrew

It takes 13 weeks to complete boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, where young recruits become hardened US Marines. The three-month course is considered one of the most difficult in any branch of the US military.

But before this year, male and female recruits never trained side-by-side.

This week, after grinding through three months of training and team building, the San Diego depot's first gender-integrated class of Marines graduated after completing boot camp together. The historic first was motivated by the National Defense Authorization Act, signed in 2020, which required the Marines to begin training male and female recruits together before 2028.

Until recently, the two training depots were largely segregated by gender: Companies of women trained at the recruit depot in Parris Island, South Carolina, and men trained either in South Carolina or San Diego, but not concurrently with the women recruits. A coed company first trained together at Parris Island in 2019, CNN reported at the time.

"This graduation of the first integrated company of Marines trained here at MCRD San Diego marks the completion of the first step toward a future in which each Marine who graduates MCRD San Diego has the same experience as their peers at Parris Island," said Brig. Gen.

Ryan P. Heritage, commanding general of MCRD San Diego, in a statement.

The Marine Corps has always trained women and men separately since women were allowed to join the Corps (first during World War I, then in the 1940s when Congress allowed women to serve as permanent military members).

The military branch has also struggled to recruit women: According to the New York Times, just 8% of Marines are women -- the lowest percentage among the US military branches. It was also the last military branch to adopt gender integration at its training facilities, the Times reported.

Pfc. Katey Hogan was a recruit with the groundbreaking Platoon 3241. She and the 52 other women recruits didn't take their history-making training lightly, she said -- it motivated her to perform at her best.

"We get to set the standard for other fellow future Marines or people who are inspired by us," the 18-year-old Marine told CNN. "I definitely proved a point to people."

Hogan's platoon was one of six in the company that trained together at the San Diego facility, each made up of around 60 to 70 recruits each (Hogan's platoon began with 60 women, but 53 of them completed the training). While the women's platoon lived in a separate dorm, they attended classes with their male counterparts and competed against

them in some events -- and often scored the highest, a spokesman for MCRD San Diego said.

The women and men competed alongside each other in demanding endurance events known as "physical training," which tested their strength and fitness. The women's platoon bested the rest of the company in "final drill," the spokesman said. It's considered the most prestigious event -- a drill that requires the platoon act in complete synchrony.

The platoon's physical and mental synchrony wasn't immediate, though. Hogan said the all-women Platoon 3241 resisted initial attempts to bond or build trust with each other.

"We struggled at first," she said of Platoon 3241. "We didn't want to communicate with each other."

They grew close, inevitably, after spending nearly every waking moment together. That bond paid off in the most punishing challenge of all: "the Crucible," a 54-hour course comprised of 24 events, including the feared "Reaper," a 10-mile uphill hike made more difficult by heavy backpacks.

"We made it up that Reaper," Hogan said. "We showed people that we can do exactly what everyone else can."

It's only after recruits complete the Crucible that they can be called Marines.

The new Marines graduated this week in a ceremony attended by families they hadn't seen in months. Hogan was

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## 18. Marine Grunts Are Getting New Night Vision, Helmets, Vehicles, Tropical Uniforms And Boots

(MARINE CORPS TIMES 07 MAY 21) ... Todd South

The core infantry gear upgrades are nearly complete across the force and new night vision, a high-cut helmet, new tropical uniforms and boots are soon to follow.

That's according to a recent update provided to media by Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, head of Marine Corps Systems Command, on Thursday.

Officials see the new kit, which does everything from improving shooter accuracy, night vision to body armor protection, vehicle mobility and basic comfort, as more than simply giving grunts better gear.

As the Corps restructures itself for a new kind of warfare, small teams separated on distant beachheads to thwart an adversary's Navy, it is experimenting and war gaming both in exercises and simulations, the best way to meet those challenges.

Pasagian said that his command will be working closely with each of the three battalions, one per active duty division, as they experiment with new concepts and tactics.

The Corps is also upgrading its ranges at places such as Twentynine Palms, California, to better collect data on how Marines are performing in the field.

Combining that data with new gear can show its effectiveness in making Marines more lethal and survivable.

"I can then present that to the new Marine Corps Wargaming Center for analysis," he said.

That means that planners can take data from the squad level up, aggregate the results and measure performance of actual Marines in field scenarios, rather than just statistical representations of how Marine might behave in a war game.

The Marines are nearly finished fielding the squad binocular night vision goggle. It is a separate effort from the Army's enhanced Night Vision Goggle-Binocular.

named the honor graduate of her platoon for her exemplary leadership.

Photos from the graduation show Hogan and her platoon dressed in their uniforms, marching together with solemn, focused expressions. But once their drill instructor dismissed them, the Marines cracked smiles and dropped their perfect posture to celebrate together.

Hogan was beaming with pride at graduation, particularly when sergeant majors congratulated her as a fellow Marine.

"I felt like I actually accomplished my mission," she said.

Perhaps the highlight of the day, though, was a hug from her dad, also a Marine. It was the first time she'd seen him cry.

"I feel like I'm (his) equal," she said.

Hogan left Friday for Camp Pendleton, where she and the new Marines will continue their training. She'll complete additional training after that and, eventually, settle on a Marine occupational specialty. She said she plans to remain in the Marines for 20 years.

As for where she's stationed, she said she's hoping to end back up in San Diego, home to the facility where she became a Marine. But she's not tied to it.

"Anywhere (the Marine Corps) takes me, I'll go," she said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/07/us/marines-women-platoon-integrated-company-trnd/index.html>

Both devices are binocular, providing real depth perception not previously available with monocular devices. The SBNVG was pursued by the Marine starting in 2018 to field that capability to the fleet faster. Though Pasagian noted that the Marines are monitoring the Army ENVG-B work, which began fielding in 2019.

The SBNVG has an external thermal clip. The ENVG-B has those features built into the device and also can work on a network to share data and provide a common operational picture.

The new Marine Corps tropical uniform has concluded its testing and begun shipments to units. That will go to units in those climates, primarily the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

A new tropical boot for the same Marines is expected to be fully fielded by 2022.

The command continues to work on a high-cut version of the enhanced combat helmet, or ECH, which is already in use by troops with U.S. Special Operations Command. The higher cut allows for the use of networked communications and hearing protection devices.

Officials also expect the ultra light tactical vehicle fleet to be fielded by late 2022, Pasagian said.

"That's really a tremendous utility vehicle that allows you to conduct all sorts of mission role variations, whether logistics carrying ammo, heavy class four stuff, concertina wire," he said. "We're also kitting it out with really advanced data networks and data routers."

The vehicle would replace the existing Polaris MRZR all-terrain tactical vehicle but have similar characteristics.

Shooters are now seeing new optics arriving at their units. The Corps announced fielding of the squad common optic in February. It will replace the existing rifle combat optic.



The SCO is a magnified day optic that has both an illuminated and nonilluminated aim point that's built to increase effective target acquisition and probability of hit, according to a Marine statement.

The new scope weighs 31.5 ounces and is 10.5 inches long — making it nearly double the size of the nearly 6-inch and 10 ounce RCO.

But with that size Marines are able to double their magnification, from the current four times magnification of the RCO to eight times with the SCO.

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## 19. More Marines Will Test Lighter Polymer-Cased Ammunition as Experiments Expand to Fleet

(MILITARY.COM 09 MAY 21) ... Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps has been testing the performance of a polymer-cased .50-caliber ammunition in a lab environment, and leathernecks soon will get a chance to see how the lighter rounds hold up in the field.

Marines at the schools of infantry on both coasts, Advanced Machine Gunners Course, and 1st and 2nd Amphibious Assault Battalions will likely be the first to try out the new round for the "Ma Deuce" M2 machine gun, said Kelly Flynn, a Marine Corps Systems Command spokeswoman. Officials then want members of I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces to test the round on static and maneuver ranges, she said.

The evaluations, which are set to start later this year and run into 2022, could determine whether Marine Corps and Army mounted combat units will swap the traditional brass .50-caliber round for a lighter polymer version. The lighter casings cut the weight of the machine gun rounds by about a quarter, Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, head of Marine Corps Systems Command, told reporters Thursday.

Marine officials announced last year they planned to invest \$10 million in the polymer-cased .50-caliber rounds for user evaluations. The lab tests so far have produced promising results, Pasagian said.

The rounds have been exposed to temperature changes to see how they perform compared with brass versions. The trajectory and performance have so far been on par with brass rounds, Pasagian said.

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## 20. Growing Marine Corps Base On Guam Holds Its First Change-Of-Command Ceremony

(STARS AND STRIPES 09 MAY 21) ... Seth Robson

A new commander has taken charge of a new Marine Corps base on Guam, where 5,000 members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force are set to move over the next five years from Okinawa.

Camp Blaz, near Andersen Air Force Base, was commissioned in September as the first new Marine installation since Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany opened in Georgia on March 1, 1952.

Its new leader, Col. Christopher Bopp, took command Friday from Col. Bradley Magrath at the Camp Blaz Aviation Maintenance Hangar, the Marines said in a statement posted Saturday on Facebook.

Magrath oversaw the transition of forces from Marine Corps Activity Guam to the new base, according to the Marines.

The Marines have also fielded a Generation III Plate Carrier for body armor. The new design offers fragmentation, projectile and rifle round protection with better fit and function, the one-star said.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2021/05/07/marine-grunts-are-getting-new-night-vision-helmet-vehicle-tropical-uniform-and-boots/>

"But what we want to do ... is expose the round to the more operationally realistic environment in which we typically see Marines, which is kind of not so pretty," he said. "It's very austere, a lot of sand, grime and dirt. There are days where you don't get the opportunity to clean the weapon as often as you'd like or maintain it with lubrication or other means, so those are the things we want to check out."

The Marine Corps is on a mission to lighten the weight of gear required for warfighting, especially as it returns to naval operations after decades of ground-based combat. Pasagian said it's not just ground units that are excited about the idea of lighter ammunition, but logisticians and aircrews, too.

"A lot of optimism here, but we're going to bring it out and we're going to put it through its paces," he said.

Other services are experimenting with polymer ammunition, too. Adopting the lighter rounds could put an end to a decades-long effort to replace brass-cased ammunition. The Army wants to replace its brass-cased 7.62mm ammo, and the Navy is working to develop lightweight cartridges that perform as well as traditional options.

Combined, Pasagian said, the results of those experiments could lead to changes for the joint force.

"Just the fuel savings alone [could be] a ... strategic advantage," he said.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/09/more-marines-will-test-lighter-polymer-cased-ammunition-experiments-expand-fleet.html>

"It was a great honor to serve as Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz's first commanding officer," he said in the statement.

Bopp was commissioned in 1996 after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy. He most recently served as a Secretary of Defense Executive Fellow at Norfolk Southern Corp. in Atlanta, according to the Marines.

"I look forward to the opportunity to lead our nation's finest and continuing the great progress that has been accomplished thus far," he said in the statement. "We remain committed to working together with all our partners to ensure a responsible and effective construction process."

The command change comes at a time of rising tensions in the Pacific as China presses claims to sea territory and builds military strength that threatens U.S. forces in the region.



Camp Blaz is named in honor of the late Marine Brig. Gen. Vicente “Ben” Tomas Garrido Blaz, a Guam native.

The base is still under construction in an area known as Finegayan on land that, until recently, was covered in a thick jungle full of snakes and littered with World War II-era bombs and bullets.

The Japanese government is funding \$3 billion worth of projects for the Marines’ relocation, with the U.S. government spending another \$5.7 billion.

Only 1,300 Marines will be permanently stationed on Guam, with another 3,700 coming to the island as a rotational force in the same way a Marine Air Ground Task Force deploys to Australia’s Northern Territory to train each summer.

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The heart of Camp Blaz is next door to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station Guam, just west of Andersen. Families of Marines working on Blaz will live on Andersen.

The facility will include several new ranges, including a multipurpose machine gun range along Guam’s northwestern coast. An abandoned housing area, known as Andersen South, is being turned into an urban training compound for the Marines.

Facilities for the Marines’ aviation element will be at Andersen’s North Ramp.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/growing-marine-corps-base-on-guam-holds-its-first-change-of-command-ceremony-1.672897>

## ALLIES & PARTNERS:

### 21. Britain’s Royal Air Force Chief Talks F-35 Tally And Divesting Equipment

(DEFENSE NEWS 09 MAY 21) ... Aaron Mehta

WASHINGTON -- On March 16, the United Kingdom rolled out its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, a document that will serve as the guidepost for its military going forward. Included in that document were both cuts to existing systems and investments in new technologies.

During an April visit to Washington, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, the head of the Royal Air Force, sat down with Defense News to discuss the impact of the review on the service, program cuts and future investments.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**The integrated review pushes a lot of money into high-end capabilities, but cuts programs and end strength. What do you say to criticisms that the document goes too far in the “capability vs. capacity” discussion?**

We all recognize over the last two, three decades, perhaps longer, [that militaries] have had to make that trade-off between mass and technology, because technology came at a high price, and that technological sophistication cost significantly more than the simpler platforms that were being replaced. But I think we’re at a turning point now, and I think we’re at a point where we can look to technology to bring us mass. We can have mass and technology and technological sophistication. And it’s that technology that that enables us to have that mass.

[Look at] today’s tactical unit of an eight-ship of Typhoon or eight-ship of F 15s. Well, in the future that eight-ship equivalent might be 100 swarming drones, 10 uncrewed combat aircraft loyal wingmen and two piloted motherships. The numbers and the calculus changes because of technology.

There’s an opportunity now for us to reframe that narrative of “it’s a choice between mass and technology.” I think you can have both.

**The review hints at a reorganization inside the Royal Air Force but without much detail. What specifics can you offer?**

Everything tells me we’re going to need different skills into the future. I’m going to need more people that understand space, I’m going to need more data analysts, I’m going to need more digital engineers. The workforce is going to have to change, and it’s going to have to change quickly, probably

faster than we have changed our workforce and our professional skill base in the past. We’ve got to be more agile about how we transform our workforce.

The second thing is how we train that workforce — synthetic training, virtual reality, the opportunities for coaching and training in the workplace. The other changes we’re going to make is around our infrastructure and our bases, bringing a much higher level of automation into everything we do, from guarding the bases to running the supply networks on the bases to servicing the aircraft and platforms on those bases. That’s work that we’ve got underway now. And again, it’s work that’s benefiting from the enormous leaps in digital technology and the technological revolution that we’re seeing in the private sector and across the commercial sector.

**As part of the review, you decided to retire the E-3D Sentry aircraft while also cutting the planned purchase of its replacement, the E-7 Wedgetail, from five planes to three. Why?**

It’s a really good question, and it was a topic of a lot of discussion during the integrated review as well. I’m delighted that our government has recognized the importance of stepping to the future with the E-7. The E-3 has served us brilliantly for many decades, but it has, to my mind, reached the limit of its ability to develop and our ability to innovate and technologically [prepare it] for the future battlespace, and some of the threats and some of the threat systems that we’re going to be facing. And the E-7 offers all of that. The E-7 offers that generational leap in technology and digital technology in terms of the sensors, in terms of how it moves data and information around to other platforms, other aircraft, other users in the battlespace, and its ability to reshape the terms of what airborne warning as well as command and control actually means.

As far as the numbers are concerned, yes, working with a fleet of three is going to have its limitations. I think anybody would recognize that. But there’s scope for working with NATO, there’s scope for working with the United States Air Force as we operate as allies around the world. And I think the connectivity of the Royal Air Force’s E-7 fleet in the future

and our ability to work with allies will make up for any shortfalls in capacity in the short term.

**Do you want to get that fleet back up to five planes?**

Well, I think that's an option, and I certainly wouldn't rule it out. As it stands at the moment, the announcement and the plan is for three, and of course we can make that work. And we will work with NATO, and we will both contribute to the NATO airborne early warning and command-and-control network, and we will use the NATO platforms as well. So I think there's always a scope to come back to us in the future. But right now we're focused on introducing this new platform, this exciting new platform and taking advantage of everything that it offers as a step into the future.

**The U.K. had an official target of buying 138 F-35B fighter jets. However, the integrated review only says the government plans to buy more than the 48 planes already under contract. Officials have dodged when asked for specifics, such as if 138 is still the target. Is that number still in play for you?**

The F-35 is a hugely important program for me. We're still in the early stages. I've only had 21 delivered so far of my 48 original order, we'll be up at 33 next year and 48 in the years after that. I'm very conscious that the reason we bought the F-35Bs was to pair them up with our two carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. [The carriers] are going to be in service until the late 2060s, at least. And so I need a fleet of aircraft that is going to last into that sort of time frame. So I'm taking a very steady view to how I build a fleet up because I need these aircraft to last for that amount of time.

We are committing to growing the fleet and we're going to continue to grow the fleet. And in that regard, nothing has changed. We've had discussions with the F-35 Joint Program Office and Lockheed Martin this year, and decisions are to be made next year about the next batch of aircraft that we will buy. We have now established two squadrons: a training unit and a front-line squadron. I'm looking to establish a third squadron, and I think I need at least three, probably four squadrons worth of F-35Bs to work off the carriers.

But as I say, this is still a force that we're growing. And we are going to be operating these platforms for potentially 50 years. So I'm not in any hurry to get to any final figure in the short term. And we will just make sure that we've got a force that is sustainable through the life of HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

**Could you see the U.K. shifting from buying the "B" model to the conventional "A" model?**

Yes. It's been a live topic over the years in the United Kingdom, and to that, I also say: "Never say never." But that's a decision for the future, and that's something that perhaps my successor will come back to.

But there is no question that for the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, our focus right now is on building sufficient F-35Bs that we can operate from our two carriers, and not be trying to do it with too few aircraft and too few people and putting unnecessary strain on the force.

**One program getting a big funding boost is the Future Combat Air System, and specifically the Tempest fighter. Did getting that money for Tempest require trade-offs elsewhere in the budget?**

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The U.K. government is committing an additional \$2.8 billion over the next four years for the Future Combat Air System program. I think that sends a very clear signal of how important the government sees the requirement for a future fighter aircraft that's ready to protect the U.K. and our allies' airspace, something that's ready to replace the Eurofighter Typhoon from the late 2030s, something that can compete on the world stage as an exportable platform, and something that gives the United Kingdom the opportunity to work with allies, like Italy and Sweden, in the development of it. So for me, it was a very clear statement of sovereign ambition from the United Kingdom.

I don't see it as [requiring] trade-offs in those terms because the additional money that the government decided to invest in the U.K. armed forces over the next four years, which equates to \$33 billion — the Future Combat Air System and space were all part of that, and our ambition to do more around space and with our allies, like the United States in space. So the Future Combat Air System is a hugely important program, but that's something that didn't require a trade-off with other aspects of our program.

**Another kind of futuristic capability in which the U.K. is investing is the Mosquito, which is a unmanned loyal wingman program. What is the target date for it to be operational?**

When we talk about the Future Combat Air System, Tempest is the piloted fighter within that. But the Future Combat Air System will be a mix of piloted combat aircraft, of unpiloted or autonomous or remotely piloted combat aircraft, and then down to cheap, expendable drones all working together. The date for the Tempest (the piloted fighter) is from the late 2030s. For me, I want to see — and I think technology allows us to get our loyal wingman, our uncrewed autonomous combat aircraft Mosquito — on the front line this decade. And that's the target I've set for our team who is working on it. I want to see it flying on the wing of the F-35, I want to see it flying on the wing of Typhoon this decade, as an operationally deployed platform and as a concept demonstrator, and to de-risk the Future Combat Air System program. So the first flight within the next couple of years [as part of] a really impressive, digitally enabled design program where we are iterating the design very rapidly, and then fielding it within a matter of years, is the ambition.

**Will you seek international partners for Mosquito the same way you did for Tempest?**

There's no question that there's an opportunity for international collaboration on that system. At present, we're doing the concept of development with a company in Belfast, Northern Ireland. But I know that we've had a lot of interest from potential allies, potential partners to join us in the program. And of course, we're watching what Australia is doing, what the United States is doing, because we're not alone in developing this technology. But for me, the imperative is to get this into service as quickly as we can. And as I say, getting our Mosquito loyal wingman in service by the end of this decade is my challenge to the team.

<https://www.defensenews.com/interviews/2021/05/09/britains-royal-air-force-chief-talks-f-35-tally-and-divesting-equipment/>

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:

### 22. How Bad Is DoD's Domestic Abuse Problem? Unclear, Thanks To Data Gaps, Auditors Say

(MILITARY TIMES 07 MAY 21) ... Karen Jowers

Defense officials aren't able to get a full picture of the level of domestic abuse in the military, because they're not meeting all the requirements of the law in reporting the incidents, according to a new report from government auditors who conducted a sweeping, 21-month review.

While DoD and the services have made strides in implementing and overseeing prevention and response programs, there are still gaps, according to auditors with the Government Accountability Office, in a report required by Congress released Thursday.

There were more than 40,000 incidents of domestic abuse involving service members, spouses or intimate partners in fiscal years 2015 through 2019, according to an analysis of the military services' data conducted by the GAO. Of those incidents, 74 percent were physical abuse.

But those incidents represented only those that met the DoD criteria for domestic abuse. DoD hasn't collected accurate data for all domestic abuse allegations received, including those that don't meet the DoD criteria for domestic abuse, as is required by law, the auditors found. And this data give DoD better visibility over actions taken by commanders to address domestic violence.

And other research in the report, such as interviews with 68 survivors of domestic abuse, chaplains, legal and others, indicate that some victims have had problems reporting their abuse, and there are some inconsistencies in the installations' screening of the reports to determine whether they meet DoD's criteria for domestic abuse.

Defense officials agreed with the auditors' 32 recommendations, and described actions that are under way or planned to improve their prevention, response and oversight. Officials are in the process of revising some family advocacy guidance, that will address some recommendations. In addition, officials agreed to explore other recommendations such as developing a quality assurance process for reporting accurate data; and developing a communications plan to increase awareness of different reporting options and resources for abuse victims.

Because they don't collect data on all domestic abuse allegations, "DoD is unable to assess the scope of alleged abuse and its rate of substantiation," the auditors stated. DoD hasn't collected comprehensive data about the number of allegations of domestic violence, which has been required by law since 1999, and data on actions taken by commanders in response to those allegations.

Domestic violence is a subcategory of different types of domestic abuse that constitute criminal offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Improving collection of the data "would allow DoD to determine the incidence of domestic violence, the rate that domestic violence allegations received are substantiated for command action, and the number and types of associated actions that are taken," auditors stated.

Domestic abuse in the military has been a concern among lawmakers and advocates for more than 20 years, and lawmakers have pushed for the military to hold offenders accountable.

"Domestic abuse can result in devastating personal consequences and societal costs, and according to DoD is incompatible with military values and reduces mission readiness," auditors noted.

Besides the issues with data collection and reporting, auditors identified gaps in DoD's and the services' implementation and oversight of actions in response to reports of domestic abuse; inconsistencies in screening of abuse reports, and gaps in training for key personnel such as commanders and senior enlisted advisers on their responsibilities in responding to these allegations.

In their research, conducted from September, 2019 to May, 2021, auditors interviewed 68 domestic abuse survivors; interviewed DoD and service officials, including legal, law enforcement, family advocacy, medical, chaplains and others; analyzed data, policies and guidance; assessed documents from a "nongeneralizable" sample of 20 military installations such memorandums of understanding with local law enforcement officials. They also listened by phone to each service's Incident Determination Committee process, where each installation determines whether an incident meets DOD's criteria for domestic abuse—at a total of 12 installations, three per military service.

The auditors issued 32 recommendations to DoD and the services to help them "improve their ability to consistently identify instances of abuse and provide available safety measures and resources to servicemembers and families affected by abuse."

Digging into the screening decisions being made about the incidents, GAO auditors found "the military services perform limited monitoring of installation incident-screening decisions, and therefore lack reasonable assurance that all domestic abuse allegations are screened in accordance with DoD policy."

Among the 68 military-affiliated survivors of domestic abuse, the minimum amount of time the abuse had occurred was one year; the longest amount of time being abused was 25 years. Of the 68 survivors, 60 said they had reported the abuse to the military or to civilian law enforcement, and 8 said they had not reported the abuse to the military or to civilian law enforcement.

#### Other findings:

- 59 survivors said they experienced barriers to reporting the abuse. The most common barriers cited were being dependent on the abuser for financial resources; feeling their report wouldn't be believed or taken seriously; concern about the impact to the abuser's career; and fearing retaliation from the abuser.
- Asked about their motivation for reporting the abuse, the most common reasons the victims cited were protecting their children, fear for their own safety, and escalating abuse.
- 8 of the 68 survivors interviewed said they tried to report the abuse, but believed no action was taken. Some survivors described feeling ignored or not taken seriously, or that the person they reported the

incident to tried to defend the actions of their abuser. In some cases, survivors described negative actions that resulted from these attempts to report, such as being ridiculed by members of their abuser's command or unit.

- The survivors described a range of responses to their reports of domestic abuse from the command, including senior enlisted advisers. Some survivors described positive actions, such as issuing a protective order or taking disciplinary action against the alleged abuser, while others said the command took no action, or took an action that was negative for the survivor or positive for the alleged abuser.
- Chaplains have varying degrees of training in responding to domestic abuse, and the survivors described a wide variety of responses. For example, one survivor said a chaplain provided commissary gift cards to ease the financial burden, and another said the chaplain helped keep the abuser out of the house while the survivor prepared to leave. But another survivor reported being deterred from reporting the abuse to others because of the chaplain's lack of action or support. One chaplain advised "thinking hard before reporting abuse, because of the potential effect on the service member's career," the auditors reported.

Chaplains also reported varying degrees of confidence in their family advocacy program. "Chaplains at one installation told us they would hesitate to refer a victim to FAP because they are not confident FAP services will result in a positive outcome," the auditors wrote. "Similarly, although some chaplains stated they would share information about FAP and encourage victims to self-refer, others stated they had more confidence referring servicemembers to other resources, such as financial education or substance abuse counseling."

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## 23. Most Of Pentagon Billions Moved To Border Wall Not Recoverable

(CQ ROLL CALL 08 MAY 21) ... John M. Donnelly

WASHINGTON — Most of the nearly \$10 billion that the Trump administration diverted from the armed services to build barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border will never be seen again, Pentagon and congressional officials confirmed Friday.

That includes some of the money diverted from military construction funds and all the money former President Donald Trump had reprogrammed from a variety of other Pentagon initiatives, such as National Guard equipment, a new amphibious assault ship for the Navy, F-35 fighter jets for the Marine Corps, Osprey tilt-rotors for carrying forces to battle and C-130J transport planes.

Betty McCollum, the Minnesota Democrat who chairs the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, told panel members at the end of a hearing Friday that they are "not going to be getting any money returned" from Defense subcommittee appropriations that were diverted to border projects in fiscal 2019 and 2020.

McCollum did not elaborate at the hearing. She said the panel's members will soon be receiving a memo from the staff director explaining the situation.

The auditors recommended that DoD take steps to specify learning objectives or content requirements for chaplain training on domestic abuse. Defense officials will look at the feasibility of coordinating with the military departments' chaplain corps to do this, according to the DoD response.

Among other recommendations:

- DoD should take steps to improve the guidance and process for submitting reports on domestic abuse allegations, including those that don't meet DoD's criteria for abuse, and expand the analysis of those allegations;
- DoD should evaluate responsibilities for tracking domestic violence and related actions by commanders;
- The services should take steps to make sure regulations are clear: that violation of civilian protective orders is punishable under the UCMJ;
- The services should develop a process to consistently monitor how the allegations of domestic abuse are screened at installations;
- The services should provide additional guidance or sample training materials for installation-level commander and senior enlisted adviser domestic abuse training.
- The services should take steps to develop a process for installation family advocacy offices to enter into memorandums of understanding with local civilian authorities regarding investigating reports of domestic abuse.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2021/05/07/how-bad-is-dods-domestic-abuse-problem-unclear-thanks-to-data-gaps-auditors-say/>

But a House aide and a Pentagon official told CQ Roll Call why so few of the diverted defense dollars are still available.

All told, about \$14 billion was spent on the border barriers through the budgets of the Pentagon and the departments of Homeland Security and Treasury.

Most of it was not appropriated by Congress but was instead redirected from other programs that had been enacted into law.

Of that \$14 billion, fully \$9.9 billion came from the Pentagon through two funding streams in fiscal 2019 and 2020.

In the first stream, \$3.6 billion was moved from military construction projects at home and abroad, including many in Eastern European countries facing down threats from Russia.

In the second, \$6.3 billion was moved from other defense projects — including several high-profile weapons favored by lawmakers and supported by the brass.

The \$6.3 billion was routed through a Pentagon counterdrug account under a law that allowed money to be moved from that account to other agencies that are deemed to be fighting the drug trade.



Of course, to the extent money has already been spent on border projects, it would not be available anyway. That is the case with most of the projects funded by the counterdrug money, the Pentagon official said. So not much money from that funding stream is likely to be left over for that reason alone.

The second reason the \$6.3 billion is no longer accessible, he and the House aide said, is that the counterdrug funds expired after one year, meaning they have not been available since September to be used for any other purpose.

As for the \$3.6 billion that was taken from military construction programs, only about half the border construction work that was planned to be completed with that money was done before President Joe Biden froze the work in January, the Pentagon official said.

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## 24. 'We Cut Too Deep': Air Force Reinstates Hundreds Of ROTC Cadets After Dismissals Spark Backlash

(WASHINGTON POST 09 MAY 21) ... Alex Horton

The Air Force reversed its decision to dismiss hundreds of reserve officer training cadets and restored nearly 130 scholarships, officials said, after a lobbying effort assailed the decision as a punishment for many qualified cadets that would create catastrophic financial problems.

The pandemic's wave of economic and social uncertainty triggered the initial decision, officials said. The natural cycle of departing officers creating room for the younger ranks has been disrupted, and service members, wary of leaving jobs and health care, are staying at the highest rate in two decades.

To rebalance the numbers, the Air Force rejected far more cadets than in past years. The cuts were so drastic that they swallowed up cadets with excellent grades and high fitness marks, according to current and former Air Force officials, sending scores of families into financial panic after scholarships vanished.

Kaili Glasser, a 20-year-old studying mechanical engineering at MIT, said she has flawless grades and rows for the crew team. But her future career and scholarship imploded on a Zoom phone call with her commander on Apr. 20 when she learned of her rejection.

"It was heartbreaking to feel I wasn't wanted after I put so much in," she told The Washington Post.

Congressional representatives, retired officers and a wave of parents and students pressed the Air Force behind closed doors to reexamine decisions to reject 1,000 cadets, an Air Force official said. Policy officials relented Thursday evening, reinstating 400 cadets, about 130 of whom won back scholarships.

"We cut too deep," said Ann Stefanek, an Air Force spokesperson. "We recognized that the planned reductions to meet end strength requirements were going to cause unanticipated hardships for many well-qualified cadets."

Air Force officials acknowledged that cuts this year were far outside the norm. Historically, the Air Force dismisses about 25 percent of second-year cadets who don't meet fitness, academic and leadership standards. This year, it cut nearly half of 2,300 cadets in the crucial lead up to junior year, when cadets begin field training.

Reinstating hundreds of cadets puts the rejection rate back into historical norms, Stefanek said. ROTC cadets attend

So approximately half or more of that money may still be available.

But that does not amount to much, relatively speaking.

In sum, of the \$9.9 billion taken from the Pentagon for the border, none of the money overseen by the congressional appropriations subcommittees on defense is still available. And only a few billion in military construction funds overseen by the Subcommittee on Milcon-VA is left.

On April 30, the Pentagon and White House announced that unspent border money would be recouped. But the details about how few dollars were available was not explained. And the exact figures are still being worked out, officials said.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/most-of-pentagon-billions-moved-to-border-wall-not-recoverable-1.672705>

civilian schools rather than service academies. Air Force cadets who stay for the full program commit to at least four years of service.

The reversal relieved stress that families have absorbed in recent weeks. Parents who have been relieved to forgo tuition were beset with panic about costs that in some cases would surpass \$100,000.

Timing also compounded worries. The decision in late April fell well beyond transfer and scholarship application deadlines, leaving students marooned if they could not afford the changes.

Officials who oversee the ROTC program realized the gravity of the decision after hearing about the emotional and potential financial turmoil students and parents were put through, an Air Force official said.

The move was celebrated across the country. At Detachment 365 — which serves Harvard, MIT, Wellesley and Tufts — 10 out of nearly two dozen sophomores were cast out, including Glasser, she said. They learned of their dismissal together on a brief and surreal video call.

Glasser went into a tailspin, she said. Her father's death when she was 14 was a catalyst to take more responsibility and find a way to pay for school. She carved a path to a full scholarship with the Air Force after embracing its culture and values, earning a NASA internship along the way.

She kept news of the rejection secret from her mother until Thursday, when she learned she was reinstated, scholarship and all. She was hit by a wave of relief, but the episode shook Detachment 365 into a more clear-eyed view of military bureaucracy, she said.

"Until now, I had very full trust in the Air Force," she said. "It wasn't until this past month that I realized that's not always how it's going to be."

The detachment saw eight total candidates reinstated, bringing a flash of joy tempered with disappointment in Air Force leaders. "Integrity is essential," wrote one cadet in a group chat discussing the episode, reciting cadet core values they felt were breached.

"This should have never happened," said one reinstated cadet, who spoke on the condition of anonymity out of



concern for consequences. "The only thing that got them to reverse their decision was attention from outside."

The detachment, loaded with STEM-focused students at elite colleges, was also shaken over who was initially dismissed from its ranks — five women and five minorities. The military, which has struggled to elevate minority officers into senior commands, has pledged to do better.

The Air Force typically does a better job than other branches at marshaling women into service, said Katherine L. Kuzminski, a military policy expert at Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank.

"Cutting off the flow of high-performing women is misguided," she said. "The lack of intention is the issue."

There are some ways to reduce the number of officers in uniform who may be stagnant or at retirement, she said, like

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offering buyouts, or even putting them into undesirable duties to accelerate their exit.

But most solutions are at the entry point, rather than the exit, she said. Air Force officials said to account for the reinstated cadets they may reduce future slots for officer candidate school, which is a separate program.

Cadets now back on track for training have resolved to take leadership lessons from the episode.

"You can grow and develop while the Air Force does the same," Glasser said. "In 20 years, we shouldn't be the ones making the same mistake made this year."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2021/05/09/air-force-rotc-cadets/>

## EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE:

### 25. NAVSEA: Navy Could Accelerate Some Public, Private Shipyard Upgrades If Money Were Available

(USNI NEWS 07 MAY 21) ... Megan Eckstein

Support is growing within the House Armed Services Committee to accelerate Navy efforts to improve ship repair capacity at both private and public shipyards, and for funding that either through ongoing talks about a massive federal infrastructure bill or other means, lawmakers made clear during a Thursday afternoon hearing.

The HASC readiness subcommittee questioned three Navy leaders about ship repair efforts and how to both add capacity and make the existing yards more efficient. The general consensus among lawmakers seemed to be that more progress was needed on a quicker timeline.

The Navy has a plan to overhaul its four yards through a 20-year, \$21-billion Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP), though lawmakers earlier this year asked the Navy to look for ways to speed up the program. The Navy also has a lot of ideas for what it would like to see from private yards, though Naval Sea Systems Command head Vice Adm. Bill Galinis said during the hearing that the current fixed-price contracting strategy the Navy uses would make it difficult for the yards to finance large capital expenditure projects on their own.

HASC readiness subcommittee chairman Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.) multiple times during the hearing asked the Navy admirals for a detailed five-year plan for public and private yard improvements, partly so that HASC could write some upcoming milestones and associated timelines into this year's National Defense Authorization Act, and partly so that they could quickly jump on any opportunities to find funding for the items.

"One of the reasons that I'm driving so hard for the five-year — what are we going to do next year and the year after that and the next three years beyond — is, I'll give you an example: last week, several billion dollars was returned to the Department of Defense for military construction programs" that had been diverted by the Trump administration to cover border security projects, he said.

"To my knowledge, none of that will be available for this particular purpose because none of the programs we've been talking about, none of the activities we've been talking about here, are yet in the military construction, MILCON, program;

they're not programmed. So I'm going to drive very hard through Adm. Galinis for detail for the next five years so that we can, every year, know what you need" and quickly act if there's a chance to secure money for any of them outside the annual defense budget process.

Galinis said that, on the SIOP program for the public yards, there was probably some opportunity to accelerate planning efforts if money were made available. By the end of the year, he said, digital twin models of each of the four yards — Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Washington, and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and IMF in Hawaii — would be complete, showing a computer model of the ideal layout of the yard to create the most efficient flow of people and material for ship repair work.

From there, Galinis said, "our ability to get the planning done upfront, which includes the area development plans and talk about the infrastructure, the foundational environments that we want to build these new buildings in, that's probably a key part there" that could be accelerated.

Rear Adm. Howard Markle, the deputy commander of NAVSEA for logistics, maintenance, and industrial operations (SEA 04), said during the hearing that the actual process of overhauling shops and buildings at the yards may have some opportunity to speed up, but the Navy would have to be careful not to conduct SIOP efforts at the expense of actual ship repair work.

"As you look at the potential for acceleration, there's obviously two very large constraints that would constrain that: those are funding, and those are the ability to accelerate those and integrate them with the ongoing maintenance, ensuring that we can meet our mission," he said.

"Opportunities certainly could exist as we continue to study SIOP and perform our analysis on those mega-projects. Clearly we're focused on the docks up front, you can see that in the previous president's budget and you will likely see further commitment to that. But as we look to the broader optimization piece and those things that support that, those are

certainly areas of opportunity for us to accelerate integrating (yard upgrades) with overall mission execution.”

On the private yard side, Galinis said he has a lot of ideas for how to help industry improve performance, but funding them can be difficult.

The private shipyards today can handle the current workload and are seeing better performance recently after a concerted effort by the Navy and industry to get the fundamentals right: the government awarding contracts early for better planning, both for ordering materials and understanding workforce requirements, and buying government-furnished long lead time materials earlier; and industry investing in workforce training and ensuring they stick to the schedule.

Galinis said the issue is that the fleet is expected to grow, and there’s not enough capacity for the expected future ship maintenance workload. For that, the Navy needs to help invest in and support not only expanding current repair yards and incentivizing new ones to do business with the Navy, but also in supporting smaller companies that focus on specific skillsets and often work as a subcontractor to a repair yard.

Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, the director of surface ship maintenance and modernization (SEA 21) at NAVSEA, said during the hearing that “I would like to see a CAPEX-like approach, things focused on training, things focused on maybe dredging or expanding drydock capacity; those things will give us some flexibility and surge capacity, both during normal operations and more kind of emergency situations.”

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## 26. Talk Grows Of Billions For Revamp Of Puget Sound, Nation's Shipyards

(KITSAP SUN 09 MAY 21) ... Josh Farley

BREMERTON — On a recent tour of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor, and Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker stopped to chat at the concrete edge of one of its six dry docks. In around a decade, the bathtub-shaped dock, closest to the downtown Bremerton waterfront, could become useless to the Navy.

Or, if a push for billions of dollars to overhaul the shipyard is successful, the aging structure could become the Navy's most advanced and versatile dry dock in the world.

"It is very much the case that as we look into the 2030s, there's the real concern of obsolescence there," Kilmer said of the dock. "I think there is increasing recognition by lawmakers that these investments in our shipyard infrastructure are really important."

Amid talk of a bill to invest trillions into the nation's highways, railroads and other infrastructure, members of Congress this week expressed a desire that the Navy's four public Navy shipyards — including Puget Sound, as well as those in Maine, Virginia and Hawaii — be brought into those discussions.

Kilmer, who has pushed for such funding since his election to Congress in 2012, feels it's a good fit as part of President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion infrastructure overhaul.

"We gotta get it done," said Kilmer, a member of the house defense appropriations committee.

The Navy has been pushing a \$21 billion, 20-year plan called the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan for such work. Members of Congress, including the House Armed Services Committee this week, have begun openly wondering

Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine) said during the hearing that he viewed these kinds of investments in private yards and industry as both critical infrastructure and national security issues and would like to see them addressed in the upcoming American Jobs Act from the Biden administration, an idea that's been pitched on the Senate side of the Hill by Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.).

Galinis told Golden that there are plenty of ways this federal money could be used to support private industry in a way that would directly benefit the Navy and lead to increased repair capacity and options.

"There are potential dredging projects that would help in one port; the addition of maybe a ship lift system to better utilize the capacity within the shipyard, maybe another project; I think as Adm. Ver Hage talked about, the development of the workforce is always high on my list anyway in terms of ensuring we have a well-qualified and trained workforce. So those are a couple of projects that we have, kind of shovel-ready type efforts, if you will," the NAVSEA commander said.

"We certainly get a lot of input from industry as well, and if that opportunity were to present itself, sir, I feel pretty confident we can provide a pretty good, detailed list in relatively short order."

<https://news.usni.org/2021/05/07/navsea-navy-could-accelerate-some-public-private-shipyard-upgrades-if-money-were-available>

if that plan needs to be accelerated with such infrastructure funding rather than waiting for yearly defense appropriations. The Navy, for its part, says it will complete modeling that will establish the best layout for each shipyard to move people and material later this year.

Only two dry docks in the Navy can squeeze in the Navy's 11 aircraft carriers. One is in Norfolk; the other in Bremerton. The addition of a third on the shores of Puget Sound would have the added benefit of giving a break for the existing carrier dry dock, found by a consultant to need \$667 million in seismic improvements. This summer, the dry dock will host the USS Theodore Roosevelt, a carrier that will remain in Bremerton for an overhaul into 2022.

The 950-foot-long dry dock 3, built in 1919, has mostly been relegated to recycling fast-attack submarines. While crews churned out four ships at a time there during World War II, a recent Government Accountability Office report said shipyard workers today can only get vessels in the dock at high tides and by over-flooding the dock.

The most likely solution is to both enlarge and modernize the dry dock, making it capable of handling the new Gerald Ford class of carriers as well as the new Virginia class of fast-attack submarines. Meghan Henderson, a spokeswoman for the shipyard, said there are still "many alternatives being considered to best improve and recapitalize the shipyard." A decision as to dry dock 3 has not been made.

In 2020, the Pentagon signed a \$100 million contract with WSP USA of Federal Way for architecture and engineering work. Its first task was a \$5.9 million feasibility and

engineering study. The Navy will use that to form the environmental review prior to construction. Henderson said specifics of that review, to include public meetings, will come later this year.

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<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2021/05/09/puget-sound-nations-shipyards-talk-grows-billions-revamp/4973043001/>

## **27. Biden To Join Eastern European NATO States Summit, Focus Seen On Ukraine**

(REUTERS 10 MAY 21)

BUCHAREST -- U.S. President Joe Biden will join a virtual summit of eastern European NATO states held in the Romanian capital Bucharest on Monday, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said, with a focus on security in the Black Sea region and Ukraine.

The summit of the Bucharest Nine, a group of European countries on the eastern edge of NATO, will be jointly hosted by Iohannis and Poland's President Andrzej Duda and aims at coordinating the security positions of countries in the region.

"Glad to welcome Joe Biden to the Bucharest9 Summit which I host in Bucharest today," Iohannis said on his Twitter account.

"Together with President Andrzej Duda we'll also welcome ... Jens Stoltenberg in preparation of NATO Summit, focusing on Transatlantic ties, NATO 2030, defence and deterrence on the eastern flank."

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Biden, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and the presidents of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia will video-conference into the gathering.

"In ... the statement that the nine will publish after the meeting there will be the issue of security in the Black Sea region and the related security issues in Ukraine," the head of Poland's National Security Bureau, Pawel Soloch, told reporters.

Earlier this month, Washington said it could increase security help for Kyiv after Russia moved troops near its border with Ukraine's eastern Donbass region, where Ukrainian troops are in conflict with Moscow-backed separatists.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/biden-join-eastern-european-nato-states-summit-focus-seen-ukraine-2021-05-10/>

## **28. Executive Order Would Ramp Up Cyber Defense, But Will It Be Enough?**

*A hack of a major pipeline, the latest evidence of the nation's vulnerabilities to cyberattacks, prompted questions about whether the administration should go further.*

(NEW YORK TIMES 10 MAY 21) ... David E. Sanger, Nicole Perlroth and Julian E. Barnes

WASHINGTON — A pipeline that provides the East Coast with nearly half its gasoline and jet fuel remained shuttered on Sunday after yet another ransomware attack, prompting emergency White House meetings and new questions about whether an executive order strengthening cybersecurity for federal agencies and contractors goes far enough even as President Biden prepares to issue it.

The order, drafts of which have been circulating to government officials and corporate executives for weeks and summaries of which were obtained by The New York Times, is a new road map for the nation's cyberdefense.

It would create a series of digital safety standards for federal agencies and contractors that develop software for the federal government, such as multifactor authentication, a version of what happens when consumers get a second code from a bank or credit-card company to allow them to log in. It would require federal agencies to take a "zero trust" approach to software vendors, granting them access to federal systems only when necessary, and require contractors to certify that they comply with steps to ensure that the software they deliver has not been infected with malware or does not contain exploitable vulnerabilities. And it would require that vulnerabilities in software be reported to the U.S. government.

Violators would risk having their products banned from sale to the federal government, which would, in essence, kill their viability in the commercial market.

"That is the stick," said James A. Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Companies will be held liable if they're not telling the truth."

The order, which is expected to be issued in the coming days or weeks, would also establish a small "cybersecurity incident review board." The board would be loosely based on the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates major accidents at air or sea.

The measures are intended to address the fact that the software company SolarWinds made for such an easy target for Russia's premier intelligence agency, which used its software update to burrow into nine federal agencies as well as technology firms and even some utility companies. (Despite SolarWinds' incredible access to federal networks, an intern had set the firm's password to its software update mechanism to "SolarWinds123.")

But federal officials, who caution that the draft of the order is not final, concede that the regulations would still almost certainly have failed to thwart the most skilled nation-state intrusions and disruptions that have rocked the government and corporate America in recent months, given their sophistication. That includes the more recent Chinese hacks of American businesses and military contractors that used a series of unknown holes in Microsoft email systems.

Theoretically, it could be more effective against the kind of criminal ransomware attack that took over Colonial Pipeline's headquarters networks last week. That attack — the second to shut down a pipeline in a little over a year — did not appear to involve the kind of highly sophisticated steps that Russia and China are known for: Rather than directly try to take over the pipelines, the attackers went after what officials say was poorly protected corporate data, stealing it on such a large scale that it forced the company to shutter the pipeline rather than risk a spreading attack.

But it was unclear whether Mr. Biden's executive order would apply to Colonial Pipeline. It is a privately held firm that oversees the distribution of much of the East Coast fuel supplies — just as 85 percent of America's critical infrastructure, from power grids to communications networks to water treatment plants, is controlled by private firms.

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On Sunday afternoon, the company offered no more details and refused to answer questions about the hack, including whether it was paying the ransom — a step the F.B.I. discourages. The firm did not say when it would resume operations, only that it “is developing a system restart plan.”

Federal officials expressed frustration at how ill-prepared the company was to fend off the attack or respond to it, and White House officials were holding emergency meetings, some focused on how to protect other operators who may have similar vulnerabilities.

Officials involved in the investigation said a criminal gang known as DarkSide invaded Colonial's networks and took 100 gigabytes of data in a few hours. The firm then received a ransom demand for an unspecified amount threatening to make its data forever inaccessible to the firm, and publish some of it — presumably proprietary information — on the internet.

“The success of this attack is pretty stunning given how important they are to our nation's critical infrastructure,” said Kiersten Todt, the managing director at the nonprofit Cyber Readiness Institute and a former director of the President's Commission on Enhancing National Cybersecurity.

On Sunday, the commerce secretary, Gina Raimondo, warned companies to secure their networks.

“This is what businesses now have to worry about,” Ms. Raimondo told CBS's “Face the Nation.” “Unfortunately, these sorts of attacks are becoming more frequent. They're here to stay, and we have to work in partnership with business to secure networks to defend ourselves against these attacks.”

Government officials have been repeating similar statements since the George W. Bush administration. While some industries — particularly the nation's biggest financial institutions and utilities — have invested billions of dollars, many have not.

And efforts to regulate minimum cybersecurity standards for companies that oversee critical systems have repeatedly failed, most notably in 2012, when lobbyists killed such an effort in Congress, arguing that the standards would be too expensive and too onerous for businesses.

“The ghost of 2012 hangs over this,” Mr. Lewis said. “But we've been recommending these same measures since there were two people on the internet.”

Colonial Pipeline is a prime example. Though the industry talks constantly about “information sharing” to deter attackers, the company has said nothing publicly about how cybercriminals broke into its network.

The group responsible, DarkSide, is considered a relative newcomer to ransomware, surfacing in August. It is one of dozens of organized criminal groups that have moved to the double-extortion model of not only locking up victims' data with encryption, but threatening to release it. Such groups run sophisticated “help desks” to negotiate payment in hard-to-trace cryptocurrencies.

It is a wildly profitable business: In previous attacks, DarkSide is estimated to have made anywhere from \$200,000 to \$2 million in extortion demands, it has said. But that actually falls on the low end of the spectrum. A recent study by the cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks said the average ransom demand is now \$850,000, with the highest \$50 million.

Intriguingly, DarkSide advertises a code of conduct on its website: Hospitals, hospices, schools, nonprofits and government agencies are considered off limits. Large, for-profit companies like Colonial Pipeline are considered fair game, and the cybercriminals even claim to donate some of their illicit proceeds to charities. (Some recipients of DarkSide's “donations” have said they would not accept them.) Investigators say they believe some profits are funneled into designing even better ransomware that evades existing protections.

Last month, top executives from Amazon, Microsoft, Cisco, FireEye and dozens of other firms joined the Justice Department in delivering an 81-page report calling for an international coalition to combat ransomware. Leading the effort inside the Justice Department are Lisa Monaco, the deputy attorney general, and John Carlin, who led the agency's national security division during the Obama administration.

Last month the two ordered a four-month review of what Ms. Monaco called the “blended threat of nation-states and criminal enterprises, sometimes working together, to exploit our own infrastructure against us.” Until now the Justice Department has largely pursued a strategy of indicting hackers — including Russians, Chinese, Iranians and North Koreans — few of whom ever stand trial in the United States.

“We need to rethink,” Ms. Monaco said at the recent Munich Cyber Security Conference.

Among the recommendations in the report by the coalition of companies is to press ransomware safe havens, like Russia, into prosecuting cybercriminals using sanctions or travel visa restrictions. It also recommends that international law enforcement team up to hold cryptocurrency exchanges liable under money-laundering and “know thy customer” laws.

The executive order also seeks to fill in blind spots in the nation's cyberdefenses that were exposed in the recent Russian and Chinese cyberattacks, which were staged from domestic servers inside the United States, where the National Security Agency is legally barred from operating.

“It's not the fact we can't connect the dots,” Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, who heads both the National Security Agency and the Pentagon's Cyber Command, told Congress in March, reviving the indictment of American intelligence agencies after Sept. 11. “We can't see all the dots.”

The order will set up a real-time information sharing vessel that would allow the N.S.A. to share intelligence about threats with private companies, and allow private companies to do the same. The concept has been discussed for decades and even made its way into previous “feel-good legislation” — as Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, described a 2015 bill that pushed voluntary threat sharing — but it has never been implemented at the speed or scale needed.

The idea is to create a vessel to allow government agencies to share classified cyberthreat data with companies, and push companies to share more data about incidents with



the government. Companies have no legal obligation to disclose a breach unless hackers made off with personal information, like Social Security numbers. The order would not change that, though legislators have recently called for a stand-alone breach disclosure law.

Thomas Fanning, the chairman and chief executive of Southern Company, one of the nation's largest energy firms, said in an interview last week that the existing structure was slow and broken: The country now needs real-time command

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## CAPABILITIES (ACQUISITION AND INNOVATION):

### 29. Navy Calls For Shipyard Improvements In Pursuit Of 355-Ship Goal

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 MAY 21) ... Caitlin Doornbos

WASHINGTON — The United States must repair and modernize its four public shipyards and advance its shipbuilding and maintenance capabilities to maintain its strategic advantage against a growing Chinese navy, the vice admiral who oversees Navy shipyards told lawmakers Thursday.

“Our ability to deploy combat ready ships and submarines starts in our public and private sector shipyards and ship-repair facilities around the globe,” Vice Adm. William Galinis, who leads the Naval Sea Systems Command, told members of the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on readiness during a hearing on ship and submarine maintenance.

Since releasing its Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan in 2018, the Navy has asked to repair and update the nation's four aging shipyards, which would assist in its pursuit of its congressionally mandated goal of a 355-ship fleet.

The plan calls for dry dock repairs, restoring and moving shipyard facilities, and replacing aging and deteriorating equipment at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Washington and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii, according to Naval Sea Systems Command.

Originally built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, “the Navy's public shipyards are not efficiently configured to maintain and modernize nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines,” according to the command's website.

The 355-ship goal was made law in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act to help the Navy maintain its global presence, especially as China becomes increasingly aggressive at sea. For instance, since 2012, China has been claiming and militarizing small islands and reefs in the Western Pacific in attempts to further its South China Sea territorial claims, which are not recognized by international law.

Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, said last week that the Navy must maintain its presence overseas because the Chinese navy might be “beginning to treat Taiwan like Hainan island — as if it's actually theirs.”

“At what point will they think that they are in a position for advantage to potentially move?” Gilday said. “We have to have forward forces forward in order to cause enough doubt in

centers, like it built during the Cold War to see incoming missile attacks.

“A real-time view of that battlefield that allows Cyber Command to see my critical systems at the same moment and the same time I see them,” he said. “Sharing isn't fast enough. It's not comprehensive, and you can't rely on it on matters of national security.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/09/us/politics/biden-cyberattack-response.html>

the minds of [Chinese] President Xi [Jinping] that today is not the day.”

A fleet of 355 ships would about match the current size of the Chinese navy, which the Pentagon estimates to be about 350 ships compared to the U.S. fleet of 296.

China has “long had much more shipbuilding capacity than we have,” Galinis said, which helped the nation surpass the U.S. as the largest navy in the world.

But that goal might not be attainable without increasing the U.S. shipbuilding and maintenance capacity — both in the public and private sectors, said Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif.

“The Navy has operated at an untenable pace, sustaining the global presence it maintained 25 years ago with a much smaller fleet today. Rigorous and timely maintenance means we can have more ships at sea at any given time,” the congressman said. “As the administration contemplates a larger fleet of naval vessels, we must consider whether an already struggling shipyard enterprise has the capacity to sustain them.”

The testimony Thursday came a week after lawmakers in the House and Senate introduced the Supplying Help to Infrastructure in Ports, Yards, and America's Repair Docks Act of 2021, or SHIPYARD Act, which would provide \$21 billion in 20 years to support the Navy's 2018 plan and another \$4 billion to private shipyards that support the Navy's fleet.

Updating the shipyards would benefit the construction of new ships and also help the Navy maintain its ships throughout their service lifetimes, Galinis said.

“Nearly 70% of our fleet at sea today will still be in service in 2030,” he said. “Our ability to effectively maintain these ships and submarines is critical to delivering on Navy our nation needs.”

Though the fate of the SHIPYARD Act remains undecided, Garamendi said Congress would write “certain timeframes in which we expect you to achieve goals” into the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets annual spending and policy priorities for the Pentagon. He also asked Galinis to provide five-year plans on the service's needs to update the shipyards.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/navy-calls-for-shipyard-improvements-in-pursuit-of-355-ship-goal-1.672703>

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### 30. Construction Is Underway For A New Navy Vessel Named USS Idaho, The First In 100 Years

(IDAHO STATESMAN 07 MAY 21) ... Jacob Scholl

BOISE, Idaho — In the coming years, the Gem State will have a new military vessel donning its name.

The U.S. Navy is in the process of constructing the USS Idaho, a nuclear attack submarine that will go on active service after a commissioning ceremony in the summer of 2023. Construction first began for the submarine in August, according to Richard Colburn, a retired U.S. Navy captain and the chairman of the USS Idaho Commissioning Committee.

It has been more than 100 years since a U.S. Navy commissioned a vessel with Idaho's name, as a BB-42 Battleship was launched in 1919.

That ship, known as "The Big Spud," set sail in World War II and was used in the Pacific Ocean in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, according to Colburn. The old battleship was also present for the formal surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945, the official end to the war.

"It's been a very long time since a ship has been named Idaho," Colburn said Thursday.

The new USS Idaho will be much different than the last. A Virginia-class submarine, the USS Idaho will cost around \$2.6 billion and is scheduled to be in service for three decades, according to the commissioning committee. The submarine will be 377 feet long and will have 120 enlisted crew members and 14 officers.

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Colburn and the committee are raising funds to pay for the submarine's 2023 commissioning ceremony, as well as habitability improvements for the crew and support programs for crew and their families.

"When you step on the submarine we want it to look like Idaho and we want them to take part of Idaho with them," Colburn said, and that's part of what the committee is trying to do.

Though the commissioning date is two years away, the committee is looking forward to having a ship commemorating Idaho in the waters.

Colburn said the new sub will be one of the most advanced underwater vessels once it is launched.

Among the different points of discussion regarding the new USS Idaho is its nickname. The possible monikers, Colburn said, range from the more orthodox to a play on the prior ship's name.

"We've offered the moniker of 'The Gem of the Fleet' that the ship would use," he said. Another suggestion? "The Fully Loaded Big Spud."

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/construction-is-underway-for-a-new-navy-vessel-named-uss-idaho-the-first-in-100-years-1.672668>

## ENVIRONMENTAL/INSTALLATIONS:

### 31. Navy Confirms New 1,000-Gallon Fuel Release At Red Hill

(STAR-ADVERTISER 08 MAY 21) ... William Cole

The Navy has confirmed that an approximately 1, 000-gallon fuel leak was detected May 6 at the troubled Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, a World War II-built facility that came under criticism following a 27, 000-gallon fuel release in 2014.

Navy Region Hawaii said in an email that "personnel responded to and contained a reported fuel release, initially assessed at approximately 1, 000 gallons, from a pipeline at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility Thursday night. As designed, the fuel release went into a containment system in the tunnel where the pipeline is located, and the fuel was recovered. There appears to be no release into the environment."

The Navy said it is investigating the cause of the release and "is fully committed to environmental stewardship and continues to work closely with federal and state agencies, " including the Hawaii Department of Health and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "to protect the environment as we operate the Red Hill facility."

But David Kimo Frankel, an attorney for the Sierra Club of Hawaii, said in a news release, "It's not surprising that the Red Hill tanks leaked. They have a long history of leaking. And the Navy itself said there was a 27.6 % chance of the tanks leaking up to 30, 000 gallons of fuel every single year."

"It's only going to get worse from here. The tanks need to be drained," Frankel said.

Studies have detected petroleum contamination in the groundwater beneath the tanks, according to the Sierra Club.

Since its construction in the 1940s, it is believed that the tanks have leaked more than 178, 434 gallons of fuel, the organization said.

"This latest leak proves, once again, that the 78-year old Red Hill fuel tanks are deteriorating and pose a serious threat to drinking water for hundreds of thousands of Oahu residents. It's time to retire the tanks, " Hawaii Peace and Justice's Kyle Kajihiro said in a Sierra Club statement.

The Department of Health is conducting a "contested case " hearing to determine what terms the Navy needs to follow to continue to operate the tanks.

Opening arguments were made on Feb. 1 debating the merits of awarding a five-year state operating permit for the Navy to continue storing up to 187 million gallons of fuel at Red Hill.

While the Sierra Club believes the 20 tanks should be relocated and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply maintains they should be moved or rebuilt with secondary containment, the Navy said the tanks and monitoring have improved greatly.

"Since 2014 the Navy has a different facility, both in its physical construct and how it's operated and monitored each and every day, " Navy lawyer Karrin Minnot said during the hearing.

Twice a year the tanks are tested for leaks using a method certified by third-party verifiers, Minnot said.

"The Navy's procedures for inspections and repairs at Red Hill go above and beyond the industry standards, " she said.

But Frankel previously said that from the beginning, the underground fuel tanks leaked. Tank 16 was leaking 546 gallons a day in 1949, he said.

"The Red Hill tanks cannot be, and are not operated, in a manner that is protective of our (groundwater), " Frankel said. "There is a practical alternative : build new tanks above ground in a safe location (and ) relocate the fuel—just as the Navy did on the mainland."

Military officials say the fuel supply is a crucial—and massive—war reserve for the Pacific that would be hard to replicate with above-ground tanks. The cost would be in the billions of dollars.

The Defense Department has invested over \$200 million and plans to spend over \$400 million more "to ensure the facilities remain safe, " Minnot said.

Located 2.5 miles from Pearl Harbor, Red Hill has 20 vertically arrayed 250-foot-tall underground storage tanks that were constructed between 1940 and 1943, with each tank capable of holding 12.5 million gallons.

In response to a 27, 000-gallon fuel spill in 2014 from Tank 5, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state Health Department negotiated an ongoing administrative order on consent requiring the Navy to make fuel safety improvements.

Much of the concern centers on the tanks' location 100 feet above the water supply aquifer, which lies in saturated volcanic rock.

In 2018 the Health Department amended its underground storage tank rules to, among other things, require previously

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exempt field-constructed tanks such as Red Hill to follow state requirements.

The Navy applied for a five-year permit, and the Sierra Club and Board of Water Supply requested a contested case hearing. The permit and consent order are separate procedurally.

Both actions have focused on the age and construction of Red Hill, a single-wall tank system of quarter-inch-thick welded steel plates backed by 2 to 4 feet of concrete.

Minnot, the Navy lawyer, said evidence shows that "the continuing operation of Red Hill is protective of human health and the environment."

The 2014 fuel release "was certainly unfortunate, but it was not from corrosion, or deterioration of the Red Hill tanks, " she said.

The contractor error that led to the release "would not be possible under the new and improved tank inspection, repair and maintenance protocol " that was approved by the state Health Department and EPA in 2017, Minnot said. Officials also faulted "ineffective response and oversight."

The Navy has long maintained that the water from the Red Hill shaft down-gradient from the fuel farm, and which supplies Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, is completely safe to drink.

The Navy "is fully compliant with every one of Hawaii's underground storage tank regulations, " Minnot said.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/08/navy-confirms-1000-gallon-fuel-release-red-hill.html>

## COMMENTARY:

### 32. In The South China Sea, Beijing's Claims To Power Signal Danger Ahead

(WASHINGTON POST 07 MAY 21) ... David Von Drehle

"War is God's way of teaching Americans geography," wrote Ambrose Bierce, whose bitter insights were shaped in large part by a terrible war. As a soldier in the Civil War, Bierce witnessed scenes of slaughter over what was, in important ways, a fight to control rivers. You can read it in the names of the great Union armies: the Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Potomac, the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland. The battle over slavery was also a battle to preserve free commerce from east to west on the Ohio River and from north to south on the Mississippi.

A defining question for the coming century is whether Americans can learn geography before it drags us into another potentially disastrous conflict. The place to start is the South China Sea.

Through this crowded waterway passes roughly one-third of the world's international shipping, worth some \$5 trillion per year. From its fertile fisheries comes approximately 10 percent of the world's annual catch. The sea is the lifeline of multiple major economies, including China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. At its eastern edge, the sea connects Asia to the Americas; at its western edge, to the Middle East and Europe. Daniel Yergin, author of "The New Map" — a tour de force of geopolitical understanding — sums it up thus: "Those waters are ... fraught with risk."

Bai Meichu, an early-20th-century Chinese geographer, appreciated the power of his field. "Building the nation is what learning geography is for," he explained. In 1936, he demonstrated that maxim by publishing a map of the South China Sea. Along with observable coastlines to mark national boundaries, Bai's map included a theoretical line of nine dashes reaching out from China to scoop up the atolls, reefs and shoals speckling the sea — and, by claiming these, to assert control of surrounding waters.

Known as the "nine-dash line," this cartographic blitzkrieg has come to be official Chinese policy. Beijing claims sovereignty over nearly the entire sea. And thanks to the nation's extraordinary economic growth, China is gaining the naval and political power necessary to back up its claims.

Over the past dozen years, the South China Sea has been the scene of nearly constant friction. In December, while Americans were distracted by holidays and an attempt to hijack the election, China angrily charged the United States with violating its territory and boasted that its navy had chased a U.S. destroyer, the USS John S. McCain, out of disputed waters claimed by China east of Vietnam.

By all indications, the incident was entirely ginned up. The McCain was engaged in a "freedom of navigation operation," in which the United States asserts rights of passage — not only for U.S. ships but for vessels from all nations —

by sailing through international waters. Navy brass insisted the ship wasn't expelled. It was just passing through.

But the timing and belligerence of China's claim is an omen of danger ahead. While Americans were involved in a domestic political crisis that would produce, days later, a mob assault on the Capitol, China bragged to the world that it had sent the U.S. Navy packing. Beijing sees opportunity in our overheated politics.

China's many neighbors — and the world — are relying on the United States to maintain free passage through this critical waterway. China wants the United States out because that would tip the balance of regional power to China and put Beijing in a position to assert authority over Taiwan.

God forbid we need a war to learn the importance of this hot spot. Our best hope to prevent that dreaded outcome is to build a solid international front in favor of an open sea. The mechanism exists: After decades of argument, the Senate must wake up to a changed reality and ratify U.S. membership in

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the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. Two generations of conservative senators have objected to the treaty as an over-broad limitation on U.S. sovereignty. That was fine when the U.S. Navy was the only game in town. But China is building a navy capable of competing with the U.S. fleet, which means the time has come for the United States to secure as many partners and allies as possible.

U.S. ratification of the Law of the Sea treaty — formally aligning U.S. policy with the rest of the international community — would make clear that the rising conflict in the South China Sea is not simply a power play between China and the United States. It's a confrontation between China and the world — a world that depends on a free and open South China Sea.

Geography teaches that. Nine dashes sketched on an old map cannot undo the lesson.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/05/07/south-china-sea-conflict-danger/>