

Weekly Report

National Security Division

Week ending 8 November 2019

National Security Strategy:

1. **Protect the homeland, the American people, and the American way of life**
2. **Promote American prosperity**
3. **Preserve peace through strength**
4. **Advance American influence**

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National Defense Strategy:

1. **Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force**
2. **Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners**
3. **Reforming the Department's business practices for greater performance and affordability**

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U.S. Needs WWII-Like Momentum to Advance AI

(National Defense Strategy: reforming the Department's business practices for greater performance and affordability)

To get where it needs to be with artificial intelligence, the United States is going to need government, academia and industry to pull together like it did during World War II so that the technology can advance as quickly as what's needed, Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper said.

Speaking during a conference hosted by the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence in Washington, Esper said that during WWII, "titans of industry" had transformed Detroit into an "arsenal of democracy" to feed the U.S. war effort.

"Mastering artificial intelligence will require similar vision, ambition and commitment," he said. "We need the full force of American intellect and ingenuity working in harmony across the public and private sectors. We need your leadership and vision to ensure we maintain a strategic edge."

During the conference, Esper said China has set a goal for itself of being the world leader in AI by 2030. For instance, their efforts have helped them develop autonomous vehicles, Esper said. He said the People's Liberation Army is moving "aggressively to deploy them across many warfighting domains."

At the same time, he said, China is also investing in low-cost, long-range autonomous and unmanned submarines, as well as exporting advanced military aerial drones.

The U.S. military, he said, "will harness the potential of AI to create a force fit for our time. We believe there is tremendous opportunity to enhance a wide range of the department's capabilities from the back office to the front line, and we will do this while being recognized as the world leader in military ethics by developing principles for using AI in a lawful and ethical manner."

Esper said he places development of artificial intelligence capabilities at the top of the list for technology the department needs, closely followed by directed energy weapons and hypersonics. Advances in AI, he said, have the potential to change the character of warfare far into the future.

"Whichever nation harnesses AI first will have a decisive advantage on the battlefield for many, many years," he said. "We have to get there first."

[Click here to read more.](#)

Missile firing breaks new ground

(National Defense Strategy: Strengthening alliance.....)



In a first for the Royal Australian Navy and the United States Navy, HMAS *Brisbane* has completed a live missile engagement.

Using remote sensor data from USS *Stockdale* and the Cooperative Engagement Capability, the combat system was tested against a range of challenging targets and tactical situations.

The Minister for Defence, Linda Reynolds, said the trials, which were held in the US over the past month, marked a ground-breaking milestone for Australia.

"This missile firing demonstrates the very highest levels of interoperability between our navies," Senator Reynolds said.

"It reaffirms the game-changing technology that the Aegis Combat System brings to our Navy and the advanced capability of the Australian-built Hobart-class destroyers.

"By conducting these trials in the US, our Navy is able to access the world's best expertise, instrumented ranges and analysis capabilities to provide confidence in how the ship will perform in combat."

Cooperative Engagement Capability provides a secure communications capability between Australian and US-equipped ships, aircraft or land forces and allows a unit to detect and, if needed, engage a threat identified by another ship or aircraft.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Russia's ability to hold and capture territory in Europe threatens US and NATO forces

(National Defense Strategy: near peer adversary. Resurgence of Russia)



Russian Msta S artillery vehicles parade through Dvortsovaya Square during the Victory Day military parade in Saint Petersburg on May 9, 2018.

Russian investments since 2000 into ground, missile, artillery and electronic warfare capabilities has modernized the Russian military into highly mobile force capable of capturing and holding territory in Europe, according to a RAND report.

The report titled “[Trends in Russia's Armed Forces](#)” detailed that Russia's experience fighting in Ukraine has shown the country's ability to effectively employ battalion sized elements on the battlefield.

Russia's operations in Syria have afforded it's military valuable knowledge in expeditionary warfare, but the report cautioned that Russia's military forces were more potent operating on the periphery of its border, and had yet to display the ability to conduct large scale division sized operations. Meanwhile, nearly two decades of fighting insurgencies has degraded the U.S. military's ability to fight near-peer competitors, the report stated.

And it also warned that Russia's modernization effort poses a serious challenge to U.S. and NATO forces in a conventional fight, and the alliance should continue to study and monitor trends in Russia's growing military capabilities.

“Of great concern to Russia's neighbors and to NATO are Russia's enhanced capabilities to invade and hold territory in neighboring countries on short notice,” the report reads.

“Russian capabilities have improved to the point that a hypothetical Russia strike against the Baltic states or other U.S. NATO allies would pose a serious challenge to NATO,” the report stated.

Key investments in lighter and more mobile armor, ground based missile and long range fire systems, and electronic war and cyber capabilities have turned the Russian military into a highly mobile unit in Europe capable of conducting “combined-arms maneuvers at the formation level” that “pose serious challenges to U.S. or NATO units in a conventional conflict,” the report said.

“In short, Russian Ground Forces place greater emphasis than NATO forces on ground-based fires, including at extended ranges,” the report said.

“Air defense, electronic warfare, and indirect fires capabilities stand out as the areas where the Russian military has emphasized both quality and quantity,” the report reads.

Russia’s fight in Ukraine has been a litmus test for its modernization effort for the military.

Russia and Ukraine are currently engaged in a high-end fight involving electronic warfare, cyber and long range fires, while the U.S. and NATO watch from the bench.

The RAND report warned that the U.S. has dismantled many of the forces and tools needed for the near-peer fight in Europe as America has focused much of its attention on low-intensity conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa.

“Russia has rotated over 30 Brigades and regiments through the Donbas in the last few years, and they have gained valuable combat experience,” retired Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, the former commander of U.S. Army Europe, told Military Times.

Hertling said that Russia’s electronic warfare capabilities in Ukraine were interesting, but he explained that “indicators of improved Russian force mobility, siege warfare technique, artillery strike capability and use of proxy forces are things that we need to examine.”

“Increasing numbers of contract soldiers, a more professional NCO corps, improved training, more exercises and, increasingly, combat operations in Ukraine and Syria, have resulted in broad improvements to the quality of Russian units,” the Rand study reads.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Please access link below linking to the Australian Minister of Defence (MINDEF) remarking on Friday, 1 November 2019 at the Hudson Institute Washington D.C. As the National Commander prepares for his engagement in the Indo-Pacific region these key areas for our allies will be focus conversations which The National Commander will listen, hear and advocate to our U.S. Senior Leaders.

[Transcript – Minister of Defence](#)

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.hudson.org/Transcript%20-%20Linda%20Reynolds.pdf>

POW/MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency made 6 new announcements. Click on the links to read more:

News Releases

November 6, 2019

[*Marine Accounted for from World War II \(Van Zandt, J.\)*](#)

[*Marine Accounted For From World War II \(Kocopy, M.\)*](#)

[*USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II \(Jacobson, H.\)*](#)

November 4, 2019

[*Marine Accounted For From World War II \(Cooper, T.\)*](#)

[*Soldier Accounted For From Korean War \(Knight, H.\)*](#)

[*Soldier Accounted For From Korean War \(Crisp, G.\)*](#)

Staff Activities

- This week staff continued to developed briefing and sponsor pages for National Security Commission programs. These sheets will be used by the Marketing Division to seek corporate donors to fund The American Legion's National Security programs that promote community
- Tuesday, staff members attended a briefing on Capitol Hill "Partial Disagreement: *A New U.S. Strategy for Economic Competition with China.*" Featured speakers were US. Representative Charles Boustany and Professor of Politics and International relations Aaron Friedberg. Discussions focused around how China continues to leverage economic as a form of power in negotiations and near-peer role of power
- Last Week Gold Star Coordinator attend the Florida American Legion Convention. Presenting to members the role and strides the Gold Star Coordinator has made to build a program and one united voice of Gold Star programs which use the voice of many.

Freddy Gessner, Acting Director, National Security Division