



CHINFO NEWS CLIPS

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On This Day In The Navy:

1988 - USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723) is commissioned at Newport News, Va., near its homeport of Norfolk. The Los Angeles-class submarine is currently homeported at Guam with Submarine Squadron 15.

Executive Summary:

Top national news headlines include reports that four people were rescued Sunday from a flooded cave in Thailand where they were trapped for 16 days and will resume the mission today to rescue the remaining nine people, and reports of President Trump preparing to announce his pick for the Supreme Court today. Talks between the U.S. and North Korea appear uncertain following a weekend visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reports the Wall Street Journal. In an account that differed from Secretary Pompeo's, Pyongyang accused the U.S. of "gangster-like tactics" and increasing the "risk of war." According to Reuters, two U.S. warships passed through the Taiwan Strait on Saturday on a voyage that will likely be viewed in the self-ruled island as a sign of support by President Donald Trump amid heightened tension with China. Additionally, USNI News reports that the future USNS Burlington has completed builders trials.

TOP STORIES:

1. North Korean Denuclearization Talks Uncertain After Pompeo Visit

Pyongyang accuses U.S. of 'gangster-like tactics' but says it maintains trust in Trump

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jessica Donati and Andrew Jeong

TOKYO—The path ahead for talks with North Korea appeared uncertain after a weekend visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ended with Pyongyang accusing the U.S. of "gangster-like tactics" and increasing the "risk of war," but saying it retained confidence in President Donald Trump to reach an agreement on denuclearization.

2. U.S. Warships Pass Through Taiwan Strait Amid Heightened Tensions With Beijing

(REUTERS 07 JUL 18) ... Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali, Jess Macy Yu

WASHINGTON/TAIPEI - Two U.S. warships passed through the Taiwan Strait on Saturday on a voyage that will likely be viewed in the self-ruled island as a sign of support by President Donald Trump amid heightened tension with China.

3. Expeditionary Fast Transport USNS Burlington Completes Builders Trials

(USNI NEWS 06 JUL 18) ... Ben Werner

The Navy's next expeditionary fast transport vessel, the future USNS Burlington (EPF-10), completed builders trials at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Ala., and in the Gulf of Mexico.

RIMPAC 2018:

4. Attack Sub USS Hawaii Prepares For RIMPAC Exercises

(HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER 08 JUL 18) ... William Cole

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii -- There wasn't much going on outside the state's namesake submarine, the USS Hawaii (SSN 776), at pier side Thursday, but inside was a beehive of activity as the Virginia-class submarine prepared to get underway for the at-sea portion of Rim of the Pacific exercises.

5. Mariners Prep For Sea Drills As RIMPAC Wraps Up First Week

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 JUL 18) ... Wyatt Olson

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM -- French Navy Lt. Gaetan Lamour faces plenty of challenges as the sole doctor on board a French frigate -- but coping with the isolation at sea isn't something he learned about in medical school.

6. A Tour Of A RIMPAC Ship

(KITV ABC HONOLULU 07 JUL 18) ... Mika Miyashima

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - Twenty-five nations, more than 45 ships and submarines, about 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 27 to Aug. 2 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships between participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans.

7. Sailors, Families Peek Inside Participating Ships At RIMPAC 2018

(HAWAII NEWS NOW 07 JUL 18) ... Austin Westfall

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM – RIMPAC 2018 is in full swing at Joint Base Pearl Harbor- Hickam, and on Saturday, sailors and families got a chance to peek inside some of the participating vessels. The main attraction at the event was the USS Carl Vinson, a 1,000-foot-long, 95,000-ton aircraft carrier — the largest vessel at this year's exercises by far.

INDO – PACIFIC:

8. China Paper Denounces U.S. Navy Ships' Taiwan Strait Passage

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 09 JUL 18)

BEIJING -- A ruling Chinese Communist Party newspaper on Monday denounced the passage of a pair of U.S. Navy ships through the Taiwan Strait as a "psychological game," as the two sides square off over trade and relations with self-governing Taiwan.

9. US Special Ops Help Rescue 4 Members Of Soccer Team Trapped In Cave

(MILITARY.COM 08 JUL 18) ... Richard Sisk

U.S. special operations teams and divers have been part of the Thai-led international rescue effort that led to four boys being pulled to safety from a cave Sunday after being trapped for 16 days.

10. Mustache Diplomacy: Retired Adm. Harry Harris Has New Look For New Diplomatic Role In S. Korea

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 JUL 18) ... Kim Gamel

SEOUL, South Korea — Retired Adm. Harry Harris has a new look to go with his new role as U.S. ambassador to South Korea.

MIDEAST - CENTRAL/SOUTH ASIA:

11. With Much At Stake In Yemen Port, Coalition Puts Advance On Hold

Military and humanitarian obstacles stall push by U.A.E. to retake city of Hodeidah from Houthi forces

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Asa Fitch

AL-KHOKHA, Yemen—The United Arab Emirates paints its battle for the Yemen port city of Hodeidah as pivotal to forcing Houthi rebels to negotiate an end to the three-year war. It is also the biggest test yet of the U.A.E.'s growing military reputation.

12. Suspected US Drone Strike Kills 7 Al-Qaida Members In Yemen

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 08 JUL 18) ... Ahmed Al-Haj

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni tribal leaders say a suspected U.S. drone strike has killed seven alleged al-Qaida militants as they were driving along a road in the country's south.

13. 'Insider Attack' Kills U.S. Service Member In Afghanistan

(NEW YORK TIMES 07 JUL 18) ... Mujib Mashal and Thomas Gibbons-Neff

KABUL, Afghanistan — An American service member was killed and two others were wounded in southern Afghanistan on Saturday in what officials described as an "apparent insider attack."

14. Green Berets And Afghan Commandos Announce Capture Of ISIS Stronghold

(STARS AND STRIPES 08 JUL 18) ... J.P. Lawrence

U.S. and Afghan special operations troops in one of their largest joint operations captured a stronghold that Islamic State fighters claimed as their local capital, military officials said Saturday.

15. Turkey Launches New Round Of Firings

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 09 JUL 18) ... David Gauthier-Villars

ISTANBUL -- Turkey dismissed more than 18,000 state employees, most of them police and military personnel, for alleged ties to terror groups, in an extension of mass purges launched after the 2016 failed military coup as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan prepared to begin a new term with expanded executive powers.

16. Syria Says Israeli Strikes Target Air Base

(AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE 08 JUL 18)

Syria on Sunday accused Israel of targeting an air base in the central Homs province, saying its defences hit a jet involved in the attack.

EUROPE:

17. NATO Feels Strain Of U.S. Demands

European leaders brace for a tense meeting this week with a U.S. president who is imposing tariffs and chiding the allies for not spending more on their own defense

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jacob M. Schlesinger and Bojan Pancevski

When German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Donald Trump shortly after he took office, the new U.S. president opened the meeting by telling her, "Angela, you owe me one trillion dollars."

18. Trump NATO Pressure Paying Dividends In Europe, U.S. Envoy Says

(BLOOMBERG NEWS 08 JUL 18) ... Naomi Nix and Anthony Capaccio

President Donald Trump's pressure campaign on North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies to boost spending for their own defense is paying off, U.S. NATO Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison said.

UNMANNED SYSTEMS:

19. Naval Undersea Warfare Center Is Key Testing Ground For Navy's Underwater Drones

(KITSAP SUN 08 JUL 18) ... Julianne Stanford

KEYPORT, Wash. (AP) — For the past 100 years, Keyport has been home to one of Navy's primary efforts to research, develop and test torpedoes, which earned the small, waterfront community the moniker of "Torpedo Town, U.S.A."

INNOVATION:

20. Evolved Seasparrow Missile Block 2 Successfully Intercepts Aerial Target in First Live Fire Test

(USNI NEWS 06 JUL 18) ... Megan Eckstein

The NATO Seasparrow Project Office recently conducted the first live fire test of the Evolved Seasparrow Missile (ESSM) Block 2 anti-air missile, proving out the missile's new seeker.

COMMENTARY:

21. Why NATO Matters

The allies are looking with dread to this week's summit as President Trump continues his campaign to undermine a decades-old partnership.

(NEW YORK TIMES 09 JUL 18) ... Editorial Board

As Lord Ismay, NATO's first secretary general, somewhat cheekily observed, the trans-Atlantic alliance was created to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in and the Germans down." Seven decades later, those goals have largely been met (yes, the Germans have risen, but in the right ways), and many people — including, evidently, the president of the United States — wonder whether the alliance still has a purpose.

22. Trump's NATO Progress

A stronger alliance can put him in a stronger position against Putin.

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Editorial Board

President Trump will attend a summit of North Atlantic Treaty Organization national leaders this week, and the stakes are unusually high for everyone. He plans to meet Vladimir Putin shortly afterward, and Mr. Trump will be at a disadvantage if he doesn't set the right tone in Brussels.

23. America's NATO Allies Are Stepping Up

Only three members spent 2% or more of GDP on defense in 2014. This year we expect eight will.

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jens Stoltenberg

Brussels, the city I've called home since becoming secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2014, is only a couple hours' drive from some of the 20th century's bloodiest battlefields.

TOP STORIES:

1. North Korean Denuclearization Talks Uncertain After Pompeo Visit

Pyongyang accuses U.S. of 'gangster-like tactics' but says it maintains trust in Trump

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jessica Donati and Andrew Jeong

TOKYO—The path ahead for talks with North Korea appeared uncertain after a weekend visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ended with Pyongyang accusing the U.S. of “gangster-like tactics” and increasing the “risk of war,” but saying it retained confidence in President Donald Trump to reach an agreement on denuclearization.

Mr. Pompeo characterized the talks very differently, saying the two sides had “good-faith, productive conversations which will continue in the days and weeks ahead.” Speaking to reporters at a Sunday briefing in Tokyo, he added: “If requests were gangster-like, the world is a gangster.”

He said the talks had yielded progress on key matters such as a timeline for denuclearization and concrete steps that North Korea could take to show commitment to the process.

The divergent accounts demonstrated the difficulty in translating the broad goal of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula that resulted from June’s summit between Mr. Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un into specifics that would be acceptable to both sides. The Trump administration wants Mr. Kim to abandon his nuclear ambitions while Mr. Kim seeks relief from sanctions that have hammered his nation’s economy as well as a de-escalation of what he perceives as the threat to his regime by the U.S. military presence in South Korea.

Officials previously involved in talks with North Korea said the impasse was a familiar negotiating tactic and that Pyongyang was attempting to take control of the process. In this case, the reversal sent a clear message that North Korea wouldn’t act without significant concessions by the U.S.

“The pace of discussions and negotiations are being dictated by North Korea,” said Joseph Yun, a former U.S. special representative for North Korea policy at the State Department, who retired earlier this year.

It isn’t the first time North Korea has attacked the U.S. to gain leverage since entering into discussions with the Trump administration. Pyongyang issued a sharply worded statement ahead of planned U.S. military exercises with South Korea that briefly prompted Mr. Trump to withdraw from the summit in Singapore, which ultimately went ahead as planned.

But the unclear road ahead for talks effectively put the onus back on the White House to determine what happens next, including decisions such as whether to increase sanctions to force North Korea’s hand, persist with negotiations among working-level staffers from each side, or return to a more belligerent rhetoric that characterized the two nations’ relations last fall.

“I don’t think it’s the end,” Mr. Yun said. “That is determined by President Trump.”

The White House referred calls seeking comment to the State Department, which pointed to Mr. Pompeo’s statements.

Related issues on the table such as immediately repatriating the remains of U.S. soldiers killed during the Korean War in 1950-1953, destroying a North Korean weapons-producing facility and the speed of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula also became entangled in the

dissonance after North Korea characterized the Pompeo meetings as “regrettable.”

“The U.S. side came up only with its unilateral and gangster-like demand for denuclearization,” the statement said. “All of which run counter to the spirit of the Singapore summit meeting and talks.”

It added: “We maintain our trust in President Trump.”

Mr. Pompeo said ahead of the trip to North Korea that he aimed to fill in details of the nuclear deal signed in Singapore, such as a timeline and key steps, including when Pyongyang will provide a list of its nuclear assets and other weapons. After the meeting and Pyongyang’s statement, he signaled a hardening stance, saying the U.S. was “maintaining maximum” pressure on North Korea.

Mr. Trump stopped using the phrase “maximum pressure” last month to avoid provoking Mr. Kim and acknowledged that China wasn’t enforcing economic sanctions as strictly as before.

“Sanctions remain in place, and we will continue to enforce them with great vigor,” Mr. Pompeo told reporters on Sunday.

Pyongyang also played down Washington’s recent decision to cancel joint military exercises with South Korea. While the U.S. has advertised this as “a big concession,” it isn’t comparable to the irreversible nuclear plant dismantling carried out by North Korea, it said.

The South Korean presidential office maintained its positive outlook on North Korean denuclearization. A spokesman said Saturday he believed Messrs. Trump and Kim would iron out the multiple problems that are bound to arise during talks, using the trust they built at their summit last month.

“Chairman Kim and President Trump have demonstrated deep mutual trust recently. That was on display at their summit in Singapore,” he said.

“North Korea’s response is typical and doesn’t seem different from the past,” said Wi Sung-lac, former South Korean nuclear envoy. “It’s too early to say that it’s the beginning of the end of the current round of talks. But I think we have a rough road ahead.”

U.S. allies in the region fear that their interests may be sidelined in the U.S.-North Korea negotiations. After Pyongyang, Mr. Pompeo arrived in Tokyo on Saturday to discuss the results with South Korean and Japanese officials, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Both countries are U.S. allies with crucial interests in the outcome of the process.

While attention on North Korea’s nuclear program has largely focused on its pursuit of intercontinental ballistic missiles, Japan is within striking distance of the regime’s shorter-range weapons.

Mr. Abe has called for the international community to maintain a hard line on North Korea, although Japan has had a less visible role in the process than others in the region such as South Korea and China.

The weekend talks between Mr. Pompeo and General Kim Yong Chol, one of the North Korean leader's top lieutenants, have been the highest-level engagement between the two countries since the Singapore summit June 12.

Doubt over North Korea's commitment to its nuclear promise in Singapore was already emerging before the trip. Satellite imagery published in reports last week showed North Korea is rapidly expanding a weapons-manufacturing plant that produces solid-fuel missiles and has upgraded its main nuclear research facilities.

Pyongyang is also working on a submarine capable of launching a nuclear-armed ballistic missile, according to a senior South Korean lawmaker.

Mr. Pompeo said the satellite reports had been raised during his meetings in North Korea and that the two parties had discussed how to implement the agreement made at the Singapore summit.

"No one walked away from that; they're still equally committed, Chairman Kim is still committed," he said, hours before the North Korean statement.

The lengthy statement issued by Pyongyang on Saturday warned Washington against old methods that raise "cancerous" issues that "amplify distrust and risk of war." Such an approach could shake North Korea's "unwavering determination to denuclearize," it said.

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2. U.S. Warships Pass Through Taiwan Strait Amid Heightened Tensions With Beijing

(*REUTERS 07 JUL 18*) ... Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali, Jess Macy Yu

WASHINGTON/TAIPEI - Two U.S. warships passed through the Taiwan Strait on Saturday on a voyage that will likely be viewed in the self-ruled island as a sign of support by President Donald Trump amid heightened tension with China.

"Two U.S. Navy ships conducted a routine transit through the international waters of the Taiwan Strait on July 7-8 (local time)," Captain Charlie Brown, a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Fleet, told Reuters in a statement.

"U.S. Navy Ships transit between the South China Sea and East China Sea via the Taiwan Strait and have done so for many years," Brown said.

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the destroyers Mustin and Benfold carried out the passage.

Earlier on Saturday, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said the ships were moving in a northeastern direction, adding that the situation was in accordance with regulations.

Washington has no formal ties with Taiwan but is bound by law to help it defend itself and is the island's main source of arms. China regularly says Taiwan is the most sensitive issue in its ties with the United States.

The passage through the Taiwan Strait, the first such one by a U.S. Navy ship in about a year, follows a series of Chinese military drills around the island that have stoked tensions between Taipei and Beijing.

"The US is aggravating Taiwan Strait tensions," state-controlled Chinese tabloid The Global Times, which is run by the People's Daily, said on Twitter.

"The PLA Navy must have monitored the situation and has it under control, a military affairs expert said after two US Navy vessels sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Saturday," it added.

"This demonstrates the problem of meeting with Kim at the beginning, making a unilateral concession and declaring victory. It reduces U.S. leverage in the negotiation," said Abraham Denmark, Asia director at Washington-based think tank the Wilson Center. "This is a rejection of U.S. demands for unilateral denuclearization by North Korea, and a clear message that the U.S. will need to give up more to make progress."

Another potential stumbling block is the repatriation of U.S. soldiers killed during the Korean War.

Mr. Trump told a rally in Minnesota on June 21 that the transfer of more than 200 sets of remains had already taken place, as per the summit agreement. But weeks later, Defense Department officials were still waiting for the promised remains at the border with empty coffins and no explanation for the delay.

When asked about the remains on Saturday, Mr. Pompeo demurred on a timeline for the repatriation, saying the Defense Department would meet the North Koreans for a discussion about the process on July 12.

"The repatriation of remains will take place at the border and that process will begin to develop over the days that follow," he said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/north-korean-denuclearization-talks-uncertain-after-pompeo-visit-1531072498>

China claims Taiwan as its own and has never renounced the use of force to bring under its control what it sees as a wayward province. Taiwan has shown no interest in being governed by the ruling Communist Party in Beijing.

The move comes as a U.S.-China trade fight is seen as dragging on for a potentially prolonged period, as the world's two biggest economies flex their muscles with no sign of negotiations to ease tensions.

Reuters first reported last month that the United States was considering sending a warship and had examined plans for an aircraft carrier passage, but ultimately did not pursue that option perhaps because of concerns about upsetting China.

The last time a U.S. aircraft carrier transited the Taiwan Strait was in 2007, during the administration of George W. Bush, and some U.S. military officials believe a carrier transit is overdue.

U.S. overtures towards Taiwan, from unveiling a new de facto embassy to passing the Taiwan Travel Act, which encourages U.S. officials to visit, have further escalated tension between Beijing and Taipei.

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis discussed the delicate issue of Taiwan during his trip to China last month.

"The U.S. sending military ships through the Taiwan Strait is both a demonstration of its continuing support to Taiwan and of its willingness to exercise its maritime rights in China's periphery," said Abraham Denmark, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia under President Barack Obama.

China has alarmed Taiwan by ramping up military exercises this year, including flying bombers and other

military aircraft around the island and sending its carrier through the narrow Taiwan Strait separating it from Taiwan.

In recent months, China's air force has held military maneuvers near the island, which Taipei has called intimidation.

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3. Expeditionary Fast Transport USNS Burlington Completes Builders Trials

(USNI NEWS 06 JUL 18) ... Ben Werner

The Navy's next expeditionary fast transport vessel, the future USNS Burlington (EPF-10), completed builders trials at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Ala., and in the Gulf of Mexico.

During the week of trials, Austal tested ship systems such as fire protection equipment, according to a Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) news release. Burlington spent two days underway, testing communications and navigational systems, ship propulsion and maneuverability. Burlington conducted a series of high-speed turns to demonstrate its stability and agility, according to the release.

"Burlington performed very well and is well on the way towards her delivery as the next Expeditionary Fast Transport vessel to the Navy," Capt. Scot Searles, the Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager within the Program Executive Office for Ships, said in the statement. "The testing results achieved this week are a testament to the combined efforts of industry and Navy."

This recent contractor testing comes after Burlington was christened in late February and launched on March 1.

The next step for Burlington will be acceptance trials, scheduled to begin later this month, where the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) will inspect the ship and certify Burlington as being ready for delivery to the Navy.

For Austal, Burlington's progress means the shipbuilder is nearing the end of building the EPF in the U.S. The final two

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RIMPAC 2018:

4. Attack Sub USS Hawaii Prepares For RIMPAC Exercises

(HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER 08 JUL 18) ... William Cole

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii -- There wasn't much going on outside the state's namesake submarine, the USS Hawaii (SSN 776), at pierside Thursday, but inside was a beehive of activity as the Virginia-class submarine prepared to get underway for the at-sea portion of Rim of the Pacific exercises.

More than 10 sailors crowded the control room, checking workstations. Groups of sailors passed in narrow halls completing final tasks. Four large inflatable rafts -- each weighing over 200 pounds -- were rolled up and stuffed through a topside hatch for special operations troops.

MK-48 torpedoes -- each weighing 3,520 pounds -- are also loaded through one of those narrow hatches at an angle, but the Hawaii, one of five submarines participating in this year's RIMPAC, won't be shooting any during the exercise.

The Hawaii will be the hunter and the hunted, with nations including India, New Zealand, Canada and others

China's hostility toward Taiwan has grown since Tsai Ing-wen from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party won presidential elections on the island in 2016.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-usa-defence/us-warships-pass-through-taiwan-strait-amid-china-tensions-idUSKBN1JX0QY>

fast transports contracted, the future USNS Puerto Rico (T-EPF-11) and USNS Newport (T-EPF-12), are under construction as part of a \$431-million contract. Total orders for the class are worth roughly \$2.7 billion, according to the company's financial statements.

Austal expects to deliver to the Navy the last fast transport in 2020, unless a potential EPF-13 is awarded. Currently, funding for a 13th is being considered by congressional appropriators, Michelle Bowden, an Austal spokeswoman, told USNI News.

However, Austal's Australian-based shipyard is using the EPF design as the basis for what calls a High Speed Support Vessel, currently being built for the Royal Navy of Oman. Austal is creating this class of ship for export markets, according to Austal's financial reports.

The Navy has been experimenting with expanding uses for the EPF. Last month, during the multinational Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercise, USNS Carson City (T-EPF-7) conducted high-latitude operations and mine countermeasures missions -- both firsts for the class. The Navy has also considered using the EPF as an afloat command center or to host unmanned platforms for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

<https://news.usni.org/2018/07/06/34918>

looking to sharpen their anti-submarine warfare skills with ships, aircraft and helicopters.

It's all going to start Monday and Tuesday, with nearly 50 ships heading out to sea from Pearl Harbor through the rest of the month.

USS Hawaii

Virginia-class submarine

- Commissioned: May 5, 2007
- Length: 377 feet
- Displacement: 7,800 tons
- Crew: 140
- Dive depth: Greater than 800 feet
- Armament: Tomahawk missiles in 12 vertical launch tubes, MK-48 torpedoes, four tubes
- That includes the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) and its escorts -- which always have submarines, both foe and friend, on their minds.

Cmdr. John C. Roussakies, who commands the Hawaii, said he expects his sub and crew of about 140 to traverse "a couple thousand miles" around the island chain during the exercise.

In addition to the Hawaii, the submarines Illinois and Olympia from Pearl Harbor will participate, with the Olympia expected to fire a Harpoon missile from one of its torpedo tubes to demonstrate an anti-ship cruise missile capability.

Foreign-nation subs include the Rankin from Australia, which will fire a torpedo to sink a ship, and the Park Wi from South Korea.

"The main purpose of RIMPAC is developing that interoperability," Roussakies said, adding that "it's a big ocean out there, and we cannot do the job ourselves."

The fact that South Korea and Australia sent diesel submarines all the way to Hawaii is no small feat, and "it shows their commitment in developing that capability," the sub commander said.

The USS Hawaii will provide anti-submarine warfare training for the fleet, "and at some point we'll probably do simulated attacks," he said.

Asked how the Hawaii will do in the war games, Torpedoman 1st Class Gabriel Baltezar, 27, from Fontana, Calif., said, "Obviously, it's the (USS) Hawaii. It's the war canoe. We're going to win. That's what it is. We're a submarine -- that's what we do."

Chief Petty Officer Gerardo Hernandez, 30, from Los Angeles, said there will be a lot of ships on the surface, "and they are all looking for us, so it's just a matter of trying to exercise as much of our capabilities just as much as we're trying to help the other nations and other ships exercise theirs."

Virginia subs have a reconfigurable torpedo room that can accommodate a large number of special operations forces and all their equipment on deployments. The class also has a large lock-in/lock-out chamber for divers.

Roussakies said the Hawaii will take on about 30 troops, including a "handful" of U.S. Army Rangers and Indonesian, Indian, Philippine, South Korean and Japanese special

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5. Mariners Prep For Sea Drills As RIMPAC Wraps Up First Week

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 JUL 18) ... Wyatt Olson

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM -- French Navy Lt. Gaetan Lamour faces plenty of challenges as the sole doctor on board a French frigate -- but coping with the isolation at sea isn't something he learned about in medical school.

"You can feel really alone because the Pacific Ocean is so vast," said Lamour, a crewmember on the *Prairial*, one of the 41 vessels now in Hawaii for the biennial Rim of the Pacific exercise.

"You really feel on your own during all those weeks," he said. "Finally, when you arrive at RIMPAC you see all the ships, the sailors, all the medical providers, and it really feels great. Like a family, we do the same jobs."

As RIMPAC winds up its first week, many of the 25,000 personnel who have gathered in Hawaii and Southern California spent this initial "ashore" phase getting to know their international counterparts as much as they did sharing

operators for practice exiting the lockdown chamber on the surface, inflating the rafts, fitting on the 80-pound motors and heading to the White Plains beach area.

"It sounds like it should be easy, but it's a lot of work," Roussakies said. It took five to six sailors to carry each raft onto the sub, and the vessel will be "rocking and rolling" on the surface, he said.

The actual submarine threat in the Pacific is growing.

"From a joint commander perspective, I need more submarines," former Adm. Harry Harris, then head of U.S. Pacific Command, told the House Armed Services Committee last year.

Harris said the U.S. submarine force deals with "the Russian submarine threat, the Chinese submarine threat, and they're also involved in surveillance missions and other kinds of missions."

About 230 of the world's 400 foreign submarines were in the Indo-Asia-Pacific, with about 160 of those belonging to China, Russia and North Korea, Harris said. Potential adversary submarine activity has tripled since 2008, he said.

China and Russia are significantly improving their submarines, but Harris said there was "no comparison between a U.S. Virginia-class submarine and anything that China can field."

The 377-foot Virginia-class subs can dive to more than 800 feet and operate at more than 29 mph submerged. The subs have improvements to operate in littoral, or nearshore, environments.

"Do we have an edge? Sure. But there's a lot of competition out there," Roussakies said. Today, better technology can be obtained, "and the gaps in technology can be closed very rapidly," he said. "We have the edge today, but we have to stay on guard. ... There's a lot of work to keep that edge."

Pearl Harbor is home to six newer Virginia-class subs and about a dozen older, but still capable, Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/07/08/attack-sub-uss-hawaii-prepares-rimpac-exercises.html>

information, or training for upcoming amphibious and at-sea drills.

"I think for all of RIMPAC, there is a social and networking aspect to the exercise -- and that's not by accident," said Lt. Cmdr. Johnathan MacDonald with the Royal Canadian Navy, who is serving as a medical planner for the exercise. "It really allows us during the first week, when we get on ground, to meet one another -- the partners we will be working with."

"This is my first RIMPAC, and it's been an extraordinary experience so far," he added. "I've never personally experienced any such military opportunity where there are so many different nations involved."

MacDonald coordinated exchanges of medical personnel between three ships on Monday and Tuesday -- including aboard the Australian HMAS Adelaide, where medical personnel demonstrated the challenges of moving an injured patient through the ship's narrow passages, ladders and stairs.

"It's potentially small challenges that can grow into bigger ones when a patient is injured on one end of the ship and needs to be moved to the surgical area," he explained.

The French Navy's Lamour was one of 12 medical specialists to present topics at a two-day symposium ending Friday -- which included presenters from the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Japan, United States, Singapore, South Korea, India, Canada and United Kingdom.

During RIMPAC's ashore phase, ship crews also receive training on sighting and protecting marine mammals.

Meanwhile, troops at Marine Corps Base Hawaii spent the week training with counterparts from partner nations such as Australia, Chile, the Philippines, and Japan. The training included small-unit insertions via parachute and rubber raft, urban-clearing operations, and small-arms live fire.

Music has also provided a chance for the international mariners to mingle with each other, as well as with members of the public.

Musicians from the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, Indonesian Navy and the U.S. Pacific

Fleet performed together Sunday at the Defense Department-owned Hale Koa hotel on Waikiki Beach, while American grunge rockers Stone Temple Pilots performed for an international audience at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on the Fourth of July.

Another opportunity for interaction in the opening days of the exercise came during the inaugural Innovation Fair, which [Return to Index](#)

6. A Tour Of A RIMPAC Ship

(KITV ABC HONOLULU 07 JUL 18) ... Mika Miyashima

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - Twenty-five nations, more than 45 ships and submarines, about 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 27 to Aug. 2 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships between participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans.

RIMPAC 2018 is the 26th exercise in the series that began in 1971. Island News got a look inside Australia's HMAS Adelaide, Just under 800 feet long, it's the largest ship in Australia's navy and can hold up to 110 military vehicles, 12 helicopters, and nearly 1,500 people on board.

Captain Jon Earley, Commanding Officer of the HMAS Adelaide, says, "HMAS Adelaide is a landing helicopter dock, or LHD. The Australian navy has two of them. Adelaide is the second one that has been built, and we are the last ship amongst a whole stack of other navy ships that have come across here to participate in RIMPAC 2018.

"For us to be here is a real privilege. Australia really does take this seriously in terms of the training opportunities but more importantly the international and regional engagement

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drew 2,000 visitors to Pearl Harbor-Hickam during its two-day run on June 29 and 30.

During the fair, exhibitors representing 22 countries shared cutting-edge concepts and emerging technologies, focusing on innovations in sonar, power and fuel, underwater drones, and virtual reality.

"This Innovation Fair provided an ideal platform for our international participants to experience face-to-face interactions with partners-at-sea," said Cmdr. Brett Elko, who is assigned to the Third Fleet, in a Navy statement.

Despite the opportunities for global partnership and cross-cultural socialization, the influx of thousands of mariners to Oahu during RIMPAC does bring some inconvenience for Honolulu residents.

Flyovers by helicopters and jets are routine throughout the exercise, and increased traffic near Pearl Harbor often causes delays for drivers.

The Navy also notified residents that electromagnetic activity generated by the presence of so many ships can affect remotely controlled garage-door openers, by either making them open spontaneously or preventing remotes from working temporarily.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/07/07/mariners-prep-sea-drills-rimpac-wraps-first-week.html>

we get to have with our fellow partners around the rim of the pacific."

Captain Earley says the ship is used for humanitarian aid and relief from natural disasters like hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanoes. "We can move aid, personnel, stores, water, food, and medical facilities from the ship to the shore. What we're doing in RIMPAC this time is practicing those evolutions."

This year's program includes missile, anti-submarine, gunnery, air defense operations, and amphibious, mine clearance, diving, and salvage exercises. "By doing these sort of exercises here it builds trust, it builds confidence that we as a multinational force - if called upon by a nation in trouble - can come together and help them as a united force," says Captain Earley.

Some of the other countries participating in RIMPAC include Brazil, France, Germany, Canada, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Earley concludes, "In terms of room to maneuver and access, it's excellent. With due regard to the environment as well; we are very in-tune to the pristine ways of what Hawaii is and we'll make sure to leave it in the same state we found it."

<http://www.kitv.com/story/38594107/a-tour-of-a-rimpac-ship>

7. Sailors, Families Peek Inside Participating Ships At RIMPAC 2018

(HAWAII NEWS NOW 07 JUL 18) ... Austin Westfall

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM – RIMPAC 2018 is in full swing at Joint Base Pearl Harbor- Hickam, and on Saturday, sailors and families got a chance to peek inside some of the participating vessels. The main attraction at the event was the USS Carl Vinson, a 1,000-foot-long, 95,000-ton aircraft carrier — the largest vessel at this year's exercises by far.

“We’re very proud of it, we like to say we’re America's favorite carrier,” said Lt. Com. Tim Hawkins, public affairs officer of the Carl Vinson. “We have a lot of pride in what we do and the mission we’re called to do.”

The ship responds to national crises and provides opportunities in areas with difficult access. The carrier can carry up to 70 aircrafts at a time.

The Carl Vinson was also the vessel that transported the body of Osama bin Laden to its burial at sea in 2011.

There are over 40 other vessels at RIMPAC this year, and as the event progresses, things like gunnery, missile, anti-submarine and air defense exercises will be performed.

Another participating ship is the INS Sahyadri, a Indian stealth frigate.

When asked how it feels to fire the medium-range gun on his ship, Indian Navy Cmdr. Amit Kumar Sinha described a sense of accomplishment.

“It takes a lot of training, a lot of hard work, and part of everybody on board,” he said. “When you hear the missile going, when you hear the guns firing, and when you see them hitting the target the way you wanted it to, it gives you a lot of satisfaction.”

There are plenty of ships at RIMPAC capable of assisting in offensive action, but others serve a different purpose.

Another large vessel parked just off the Aloha State is the HMAS Adelaide, one of the largest ships ever built for the Royal Australian Navy.

The ship, which leads Australia’s five participating vessels this year, is fitted with defensive systems and weaponry. But the Adelaide’s primary mission is transport.

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“Our main job is to move people, equipment, machinery, whatever it may be from the sea to the shore, and the shore back to the sea,” said Captain Jonathan Earley. “We are the floating airport and seaport.”

The Captain said he’s excited to be at RIMPAC for the training opportunities.

“It builds confidence that we, as a multinational force, if called upon by a nation in trouble, can come together and help them as a united force,” Earley said.

Australia is a regular at the exercises, which take place in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California every two years.

The U.S. Navy also displayed a vessel with a different objective, the USNS Mercy, a hospital ship that is nearly 900 feet long.

“The Mercy is a ship that brings health and peace and safety to people in harm's way,” said Lynelle Boamah, executive officer of the ship. “Our primary mission is to support the warfighter in combat situations.”

Boamah says the ship also goes into the Asian Pacific to provide training, disaster preparedness, and sometimes even humanitarian relief.

“We treat everything from trauma patients to the walking wounded,” Boamah said.

The Mercy will be practicing with manikins during their RIMPAC drills.

Out of all the different ships and nations that make up RIMPAC 2018, one common idea was shared.

In the ocean, we’re very small, so in order for us to cover the world, you got to do it with partners, you got to have allies,” Hawkins said. “It takes exercises like these, it’s constant work, constant trust building, and that’s what we do here.”

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/38594264/heres-a-look-at-some-of-the-ships-at-rimpac-2018>

INDO – PACIFIC:

8. China Paper Denounces U.S. Navy Ships’ Taiwan Strait Passage

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 09 JUL 18)

BEIJING -- A ruling Chinese Communist Party newspaper on Monday denounced the passage of a pair of U.S. Navy ships through the Taiwan Strait as a "psychological game," as the two sides square off over trade and relations with self-governing Taiwan.

The Global Times said in an editorial that the U.S. was adding to tensions by sailing the Japan-based guided missile destroyers USS Mustin and USS Benfold through the 160-kilometer (100-mile)-wide strait that divides Taiwan from mainland China.

Though such missions are not uncommon, both Taiwan and the U.S. made unusual public confirmations of the ships' passage over the weekend.

Washington is "sending political signals by sending warships through the Taiwan Strait," said the editorial, headline "U.S. psychological game in Taiwan Strait."

China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory to be conquered by force if necessary, has criticized recent U.S. moves to strengthen relations with the administration of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen. Those include the opening of a new office complex for the American Institute in Taiwan, which operates as Washington's de facto embassy on the island in the absence of formal diplomatic ties that were cut when the U.S. switched recognition to China in 1949.

The U.S. Congress recently passed a law encouraging higher-level government contacts between the sides and closer cooperation between their militaries is also being emphasized.

Such developments come amid rising frictions over what the U.S. considers unfair trading practices by China, the world's second-largest economy.

The administration of President Donald Trump imposed a 25 percent tax on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports on Friday. China is retaliating with taxes on an equal amount of U.S. products, including soybeans, electric cars and pork.

A former Japanese colony, Taiwan split from China amid civil war in 1949 and China cut off relations with Tsai's

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9. US Special Ops Help Rescue 4 Members Of Soccer Team Trapped In Cave

(*MILITARY.COM 08 JUL 18*) ... Richard Sisk

U.S. special operations teams and divers have been part of the Thai-led international rescue effort that led to four boys being pulled to safety from a cave Sunday after being trapped for 16 days.

Divers who entered the Tham Luang cave complex Sunday morning emerged nine hours later at about 5:40 p.m. local time with two boys, described as among the weakest of the group of 12 boys aged 11 to 16 and their soccer coach who went on an adventure outing after practice last month.

Two more boys were pulled from the cave a short time later from where they had been marooned by floodwaters more than two miles from the cave entrance, the Thai Navy SEAL official Facebook page said.

At a news conference, Chiang Rai provincial Gov. Narongsak Osatanakorn said that five Thai Navy SEALs and 13 foreign divers were involved in the rescue of the four boys. It was not immediately known if a U.S. diver was among them.

The rescued boys were fitted with full-face masks for oxygen and had to travel more than a half-mile underwater in the struggle to reach safety along the 2.4-mile escape route, the governor said. Each of the rescued boys had two divers with them at all times during the operation.

He said the rescue operation was pausing for about 10 to 20 hours to check the escape route again for safety before being resumed.

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10. Mustache Diplomacy: Retired Adm. Harry Harris Has New Look For New Diplomatic Role In S. Korea

(*STARS AND STRIPES 07 JUL 18*) ... Kim Gamel

SEOUL, South Korea — Retired Adm. Harry Harris has a new look to go with his new role as U.S. ambassador to South Korea.

Harris, who was in charge of U.S. forces in the Pacific before retiring from the Navy, decided it was time for a change after being clean-shaven for most of his military career.

"I had a mustache when I was a junior officer," he said Saturday after arriving in Seoul to take up his post. "I thought that it would be a nice break from wearing the uniform as a flag officer through now wearing the uniform of a diplomat, or trying to fit in one."

"So, it's a little bit different, but I think it is a good break," he added.

Harris landed in Seoul at about the same time that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ended a two-day visit to North Korea aimed at following through on the June 12

government after her 2016 inauguration because she refuses to recognize the island as a part of China.

Despite the lack of diplomatic relations, the U.S. remains Taiwan's chief international ally and American law requires the government to respond to threats to the island.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/07/09/china-paper-denounces-us-navy-ships-taiwan-strait-passage.html>

The rescue operation is racing time and the weather during Thailand's rainy season. Rescuers fear more flooding in the cave, and a weather front is approaching.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted Sunday morning, "The U.S. is working very closely with the government of Thailand to help get all of the children out of the cave and to safety. Very brave and talented people!"

Last week, as hopes for rescue were fading, divers found that the boys and their coach had survived and were trapped on a ledge deep inside the cave.

"We were thrilled when the children and their coach were discovered alive," U.S. Air Force Capt. Jessica Tait, a spokeswoman for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, told ABC News at the time.

She said members of the 353rd U.S. Special Operations Group and U.S. military pararescue teams, survival specialists, divers and medical personnel are on the ground in support of the Thai-led international rescue effort.

"This is probably some of the most difficult diving there is" in the rescue operation, she said, "and this is the rainy season" with constant fears of more flooding and perilous currents.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/07/08/us-special-ops-help-rescue-4-members-soccer-team-trapped-cave.html>

summit between President Donald Trump and leader Kim Jong Un.

Harris kept his remarks focused on the importance of the longstanding U.S.-South Korean alliance.

"Our presidents have been in regular contact as we work together to persuade North Korea to chart a new course," he told reporters during a brief press conference at Incheon International Airport.

He declined to comment on ongoing talks between the two countries over sharing the costs of the 28,500 U.S. troops based on the divided peninsula.

"I don't want to get ahead of the process and I don't want to discuss the opening stances if you will in public," he said, standing next to his wife, Bruni Bradley.

South Korean media have reported that Seoul has rejected a demand by Washington to help pay for the deployment of

strategic assets such as bombers and aircraft carriers to the region.

Harris led the U.S. Pacific Command, now known as the Indo-Pacific Command, from 2015 until May, when he ended his 40-year Navy career.

He had been due to become the U.S. ambassador to Australia but was instead nominated by Trump to the post in Seoul on May 23. He was confirmed by the Senate last week.

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MIDEAST - CENTRAL/SOUTH ASIA:

11. With Much At Stake In Yemen Port, Coalition Puts Advance On Hold

Military and humanitarian obstacles stall push by U.A.E. to retake city of Hodeidah from Houthi forces

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Asa Fitch

AL-KHOKHA, Yemen—The United Arab Emirates paints its battle for the Yemen port city of Hodeidah as pivotal to forcing Houthi rebels to negotiate an end to the three-year war. It is also the biggest test yet of the U.A.E.'s growing military reputation.

But the U.A.E. has now suspended the advance after confronting land mines, drones, snipers and humanitarian challenges, prolonging a drawn-out campaign in a broad contest for regional domination that pits the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Muslim Arab nations against Shiite-dominated Iran.

The U.A.E., working on the ground with Emirati-trained Yemeni brigades, wants the port out of Houthi hands as soon as possible, saying it generates up to \$40 million a month for the Houthi government that rules over the Yemeni capital, San'a. The brigades are regrouping amid political talks aimed at averting what aid groups warn would be a catastrophe if food and medical supplies can't move through the port.

For the battle-hardened thousands of Yemeni forces advancing from the south, however, land mines—many of them encased in fiberglass and painted to look like rocks—have been the most difficult problem.

“Land mines are destroying our tanks and vehicles,” said Brig. Gen. Sheikh Abdel Rahman al-Laji, the commander of the third brigade of the Giant Brigades, one of the coalition-aligned Yemeni forces fighting in Hodeidah.

Frequent Houthi attacks along the windswept, largely barren coastal road to Hodeidah, passing through al-Khokha, where the U.A.E. maintains a forward base, have presented another challenge.

Iran, Gulf Arab officials allege, has long used Hodeidah's port to ship weapons to the Houthis. They accuse Iran of nurturing the group as a proxy akin to Hezbollah in Lebanon or Shiite militias in Iraq that Tehran supports monetarily and militarily. United Nations experts have determined that some of the ballistic missiles that the Houthis use to harass Saudi Arabia originated in Iran.

Iran denies arming the Houthis. There are no Iranian military personnel known to be in Yemen, as there are in Syria.

Some Western officials said they suspect Tehran's military assistance to the Houthis is intended to draw Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. into a costly conflict.

The U.A.E. is one of the smallest nations in the region but one with the biggest military ambitions. With an active-duty

Harris is filling a position that had been vacant since the previous ambassador, Mark Lippert, left after Trump took office in January 2017.

<https://www.stripes.com/mustache-diplomacy-retired-adm-harry-harris-has-new-look-for-new-diplomatic-role-in-s-korea-1.536491>

military of just 63,000, the U.A.E. has rapidly expanded its footprint across the Arabian Peninsula and eastern Africa. It has a string of bases in Somalia and Eritrea and along the Yemen coast. In 2016, Emirati-backed forces defeated al Qaeda in the southern Yemen city of Al Mukalla.

While Saudi Arabia is leading the coalition fighting the Houthis in Yemen, the U.A.E. is managing the Hodeidah battle. The U.A.E. sees Hodeidah as a potential milestone that will shift the momentum of a protracted conflict; it is also a test of the country's ability to train, equip and deploy local forces to achieve its military goals.

Hodeidah “is the largest combat operation the U.A.E. has ever coordinated anywhere in the world,” Michael Knights, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who has studied the U.A.E.'s military development closely. “This is the sort of thing people thought only the Americans can do.”

After more than three years of fighting, the coalition and its Yemeni allies have gained territory but nothing close to full victory. More than 10,000 people have died in fighting, according to the U.N. More than three million have fled their homes, including over 120,000 as a result of the Hodeidah battle, the U.N. says; over 22 million—about four out of five people in Yemen—are in need of aid.

The Hodeidah port serves as the gateway for about three-quarters of Yemen's aid and almost all of its commercial food shipments. U.A.E. officials said a slow advance gives Hodeidah's 400,000 inhabitants the best chance of survival, with a step-by-step operation that allows the city's port to stay open and receive aid, with pauses to allow for diplomatic efforts toward a peaceful Houthi withdrawal.

Aid groups have pleaded with the coalition not to assault the city, and the U.S. has given only tepid support to its ally's plan, in large part because of the danger to human life.

The coalition hopes its staged conduct of the operation will alleviate some of those concerns, while allowing more time for peace talks conducted by the U.N.'s Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths.

The U.A.E. has 50,000 metric tons of food aid ready to be brought into the city, the U.A.E.'s foreign ministry told the U.N. last month. The Emiratis are arranging minesweepers, cranes and other equipment to repair the port after its capture.

That goal has been delayed, however, as the Houthi fighters have been able to scatter to avoid airstrikes and their

snipers have hidden in Yemeni farmland to attack coalition forces.

They have also deployed drones to spy on and attack coalition-aligned forces. While the Yemeni forces were able to shoot down some drones, others succeed in dropping explosives that led to casualties and damaged equipment.

“We have been fighting them for a long time,” said Gen. Abdel Rahman, the U.A.E.-allied Yemeni military commander. “But this is the first time they’ve used such weapons.”

Gen. Abdel Rahman also said that as his forces reached the outskirts of Hodeidah, Houthi fighters positioned themselves in civilian areas and put military vehicles within the grounds of hospitals and in residential areas.

Loai al-Shami, a Houthi spokesman, said the coalition was the side putting civilians in danger by trying to take over the airport and seaport of the city. “When they failed to capture them and inflicted heavy casualties, they alleged that they slowed it down because of civilians,” he said.

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12. Suspected US Drone Strike Kills 7 Al-Qaida Members In Yemen

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 08 JUL 18) ... Ahmed Al-Haj

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni tribal leaders say a suspected U.S. drone strike has killed seven alleged al-Qaida militants as they were driving along a road in the country’s south.

The tribal leaders said on Friday that the operatives were killed when an unmanned aircraft targeted their vehicle in the southern province of Shabwa. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, as the Yemeni affiliate is known, has long been considered the global

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13. ‘Insider Attack’ Kills U.S. Service Member In Afghanistan

(NEW YORK TIMES 07 JUL 18) ... Mujib Mashal and Thomas Gibbons-Neff

KABUL, Afghanistan — An American service member was killed and two others were wounded in southern Afghanistan on Saturday in what officials described as an “apparent insider attack.”

The United States military, announcing the death in a statement, did not provide further details. The wounded service members were in stable condition, the military said. The name of the soldier who was killed was being withheld so the next of kin could be notified.

An American military officer familiar with the attack said it had occurred at a small base in Tarinkot, a town in Uruzgan Province, where roughly 150 soldiers who are stationed in Kandahar often rotate through to train Afghan soldiers. The outpost is one of several in the country where the Army’s Security Force Assistance Brigade is stationed. The unit — tasked with training and assisting the Afghan National Army — is one of the leading elements of the Trump administration’s new strategy in Afghanistan.

The death, the third American military fatality in Afghanistan this year, was a reminder that United States soldiers remain in the line of fire, although the war is now largely fought by Afghan security forces backed by American air power.

It also offered a reminder that insider attacks, also known as green-on-blue attacks, have been a recurring problem in

Coalition forces captured the airport last month, but Houthi-run media have since shown Houthi forces again in control of parts of the facility.

A coalition spokesman didn’t respond to a request for comment about the situation at the airport.

Mr. Shami said the Houthis had slowed the coalition’s advance by cutting its supply routes and surprising coalition forces with drone and rocket attacks.

Video distributed by Houthi media this month showed drones carrying out surveillance and dropping bomblets on positions on the Red Sea coast. One of the drones appeared to be a scaled-down variant of an Iranian drone that coalition forces have intercepted in the past.

Saleh al-Batati in Aden, Yemen, contributed to this article.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/with-much-at-stake-in-yemen-port-coalition-puts-advance-on-hold-1531047600>

network’s most dangerous branch and has attempted to carry out attacks on the U.S. mainland.

Yemen was plunged into civil war more than three years ago. Al-Qaida and an Islamic State affiliate have exploited the chaos to expand their presence in the country.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/07/08/suspected-us-drone-strike-kills-7-al-qaida-members-in-yemen/>

Afghanistan, carried out by Afghan security forces loyal to the Taliban or harboring grievances against American troops. About 150 troops from the American-led coalition have been killed in such attacks during the nearly 17-year-old war, according to data from the United States military, with the number of the attacks peaking in 2012.

The assault on Saturday is the first insider attack of 2018 against American troops, roughly 14,000 of whom are stationed in Afghanistan. In 2017, there were three such attacks on American forces and one against Romanian troops. In June of that year, three United States soldiers were killed in Nangarhar Province when an Afghan commando opened fire at a small outpost used in the battle against Islamic State militants.

In 2012, the Pentagon established the Guardian Angel program, under which American units in Afghanistan assigned personnel to shadow their comrades — often armed and in body armor — when they trained alongside Afghan troops. In some parts of Afghanistan, where the American military has increased its training efforts in an attempt to curb a resurgent Taliban, at least one Guardian Angel soldier follows every adviser during training missions with the Afghans.

The American forces, which once numbered about 100,000, have drawn down to a smaller training and advising mission. The military also maintains a counterterrorism

mission, and a robust campaign of airstrikes in support of the Afghan forces.

Afghan forces, stretched thin as violence escalates across the country, have been suffering large numbers of casualties.

In addition to the Taliban, which have proven resilient, a new element of the Islamic State has emerged in pockets of Afghanistan, particularly in the east.

The coalition government in Afghanistan has also struggled with public unrest, as it remains bogged down by infighting and faces opposition protests.

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14. Green Berets And Afghan Commandos Announce Capture Of ISIS Stronghold

(STARS AND STRIPES 08 JUL 18) ... J.P. Lawrence

U.S. and Afghan special operations troops in one of their largest joint operations captured a stronghold that Islamic State fighters claimed as their local capital, military officials said Saturday.

No Americans or Afghan troops were killed in the offensive, which the U.S. military said killed 167 fighters from the Islamic State group – also known as ISIS or Daesh – and involved a complex multipronged attack on Gurgoray, a town purported to be the group’s capital in Deh Bala district in Nangarhar province.

“This area, two months ago, was controlled by Daesh,” Brig. Gen. John W. Brennan Jr., commander of NATO forces in eastern Afghanistan, said at a special operations outpost in Deh Bala. “We pushed them into the mountains, so they cannot harm the people here.”

The U.S. and Afghan offensive involved five Special Forces teams and three Afghan commando companies. In total, 600 members of the U.S. Army Special Forces, also known as Green Berets, participated in the mission, which began in April and continued into June, a U.S. military officer said.

Checkpoints manned by U.S. Special Forces, Afghan commandos and police now rise high above the valleys of Deh Bala, while American fighter-bombers continue to blast the Gurgoray Valley to stifle movements there by ISIS remnants.

Nangarhar province is one of the few places Americans continue to fight alongside Afghan forces in battle, and it has also been the deadliest spot for U.S. servicemembers, with a third of American combat deaths occurring there last year.

Sgt. 1st Class Mihail Golin, a Green Beret, died during a foot patrol in Nangarhar in January and was the first U.S. combat death of 2018 before the death of another servicemember in an insider attack Saturday.

The finger-like mountain ridges and wheat-filled valleys of Deh Bala district in Nangarhar have long provided shelter to insurgents – the Taliban, al-Qaida and now ISIS.

The district’s center lies 21 miles south of Jalalabad, the provincial capital where ISIS claimed recent deadly suicide attacks, and 11 miles west of Aachin, where the U.S. military in April 2017 dropped the largest bomb in its arsenal, “the mother of all bombs,” on an ISIS cave network.

Due to its location on the border with Pakistan, Deh Bala served as a key supply route for ISIS.

“ISIS was using this site as a site to prepare and stage high-profile attacks,” said Lt. Col. Joshua Thiel, commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group.

Mujib Mashal reported from Kabul, Afghanistan, and Thomas Gibbons-Neff from Washington. Najim *Rahim* contributed reporting from Mazar-i-Sharif.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/07/world/middleeast/insider-attack-kills-us-service-member-in-afghanistan.html?ref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fworld>

Examples of attacks staged in the region include a bombing that killed 12 at a gathering of key religious gathering in June and another bombing that killed eight at a cricket match last year, Thiel said.

When ISIS first arrived in the area, reportedly around 2014, the militant group used its money reserves to convince locals to join them. U.S. and Afghan officials said the group then began taxing and extorting locals, killing those who did not comply and selling off the region’s trees and minerals.

The militant group beheaded a police officer following an attack two months ago, said Ghulam Sakhi, commander of the 200 Afghan Local Police in the district.

“In the beginning, ISIS seemed really nice,” Sakhi said through a translator. “All the people liked them. They were good with the people, but then by the time they were beheading people, people realized they were not good people.”

A team of Green Berets and Afghan commandos arrived in Deh Bala and dug into a position on a ridge overlooking the Gurgoray Valley on April 28, Thiel said.

This position, Observation Post Krakken, was east of Gurgoray and fired down into the valley as other U.S. and Afghan forces built up a larger base, Camp Blackbeard, near the Deh Bala district center.

“They put the capital under fire for about 30 days as they built up this space,” Thiel said while at Camp Blackbeard.

Machine gun and mortar fired rose up from Gurgoray and valley below OP Krakken, and U.S. airstrikes pounded the valley as ISIS fighters dug in. Afghan soldiers fasted during the day and ate only at night during the offensive, which overlapped with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Thiel said.

Then helicopters filled with Green Berets and Afghan commandos landed on ridgelines to the northwest of Gurgoray on May 30 and built outposts overlooking Gurgoray. This maneuver placed ISIS fighters under attack from both west and east, Thiel said.

ISIS fighters had built their defense to guard against an attack from the east, through the valley leading from OP Krakken to Gurgoray, Thiel said. Militants emerged from their positions and attacked the Green Berets and Afghan commandos to their west. Heavy airstrikes called in by Afghan commandos killed more than 100 ISIS fighters.

These Afghan commandos to the west of Gurgoray pushed on the capital. Meanwhile, two companies of commandos and Green Berets attacked from the east and cleared the valley, Thiel said.

The pincer movement trapped ISIS fighters and led to the capture of the city by June 9, Thiel said.

U.S. troops found ISIS fighters from 10 different nationalities in Gurgoray, Thiel said. Troops also found booby traps and the mutilated bodies of two beheaded women, U.S. and Afghan official said.

ISIS has lost about half of its territory in recent months, Thiel said. The military said ISIS has been driven out from Kot and Achin provinces as well and that their new stronghold has moved to Tora Bora.

Green Berets and Afghan commandos continue to man OP Krakken, and Thiel said a U.S. medical team remains in the area to treat injuries from mines, many of which were left by ISIS in the valley. Afghan security forces are patrolling the area and installing checkpoints.

Many families – estimated as many as 400 families – in the area fled due to ISIS, said Rezwanullah Basharmal, governor of Deh Bala district. A few families have now returned to plant wheat.

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15. Turkey Launches New Round Of Firings

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 09 JUL 18) ... David Gauthier-Villars

ISTANBUL -- Turkey dismissed more than 18,000 state employees, most of them police and military personnel, for alleged ties to terror groups, in an extension of mass purges launched after the 2016 failed military coup as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan prepared to begin a new term with expanded executive powers.

An emergency decree published in the Official Gazette listed the individuals, saying they had been "removed from public duty" over their alleged links to organizations that "act against national security."

The list, which was reviewed during a cabinet meeting convened by Mr. Erdogan last month, included nearly 9,000 police officers, over 6,000 military personnel and about 1,000 employees from the justice ministry.

The decree was released on the eve of a ceremony in Ankara, Turkey's capital city, during which Mr. Erdogan is

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16. Syria Says Israeli Strikes Target Air Base

(AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE 08 JUL 18)

Syria on Sunday accused Israel of targeting an air base in the central Homs province, saying its defences hit a jet involved in the attack.

"Our air defences are responding to an Israeli aggression and intercepting a number of missiles targeting the airport, hitting one of the attacking planes and forcing the rest to leave the airspace," the official SANA news agency quoted a military source as saying.

Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP that a missile bombardment killed an unspecified number of "Iranian and pro-regime fighters" at the T-4 base and was "likely to be Israeli".

In addition to the Syrian army, Iranian fighters and Lebanese Hezbollah troops are also stationed at the air base, according to the Observatory.

"Once all the checkpoints are back, they'll come back," Basharmal said.

Residents of the area fear that once the elite troops withdraw from the region, the regular security forces there will allow the area to fall back into enemy hands.

"We know that our security forces have always showed bravery to capture areas from Daesh or Taliban, but after a while these areas go back in their hands again," Israrullah Murad, a member of Nangarhar's provincial council, said.

The district's Afghan Local Police commander, Sakhi, said the operations against ISIS in the region now means locals – including the Taliban – can return.

"All the people feel very happy about the elimination of ISIS," Sakhi said through an interpreter. "As soon as ISIS is finished, the Taliban will come back. They were scared of ISIS."

Zubair Babakarhail contributed to this story.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/green-berets-and-afghan-commandos-announce-capture-of-isis-stronghold-1.536605>

due to be sworn in for a new five-year mandate following his victory in the June 24 presidential election.

With his re-election, Mr. Erdogan has gained more executive power over legislation and the judiciary due to constitutional changes voters approved last year.

Although the decree didn't name any particular organization, authorities have been targeting two groups in recent months: supporters of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric residing in the U.S. and once an ally of Mr. Erdogan, whom the president accuses of fomenting the failed coup, and sympathizers of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Mr. Gulen denies playing any role in the coup attempt.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkey-dismisses-over-18-000-civil-servants-for-alleged-terror-links-1531045849>

The facility has previously been targeted by repeated strikes Damascus blamed on Israel.

An Israeli military spokeswoman declined to comment on the latest incident, saying: "We do not comment on reports in the foreign media".

Syrian state outlets published a video of a flash in the dark sky, claiming it showed the air defences responding to the bombardment.

Since the start of Syria's civil war in 2011, Israel has repeatedly targeted positions of the Syrian army and Lebanon's Shiite movement Hezbollah backing it inside the country.

Israel usually does not claim the strikes, but has long said it will not allow Iran to establish a military presence in Syria.

On April 9, missiles targeted the T-4 air base in the central province of Homs, killing up to 14 fighters, including seven Iranians.

Moscow, Tehran and Damascus accused Israel of carrying out those raids.

The air base was also hit on February 10, after Israel accused Iranian forces at the T-4 base of sending a drone into Israeli territory.

After bombing Iranian units in Syria in retaliation, an Israeli F-16 was shot down by Syrian anti-aircraft fire.

Israel then carried out what it called "large-scale" raids on Syrian air defence systems and Iranian targets, which reportedly included T-4.

Israel seized a large swathe of the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in 1981, in a move never recognised by the international community.

The two countries are technically still at war.

In May there was an unprecedented escalation between Israel and Iran in Syria, with the Israeli army claiming it hit

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dozens of Iranian military targets across the border in response to what it said were rockets fired by Iranians at the occupied Golan Heights.

Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu said last month that Israel would "not tolerate the Iranian military entrenchment in Syria".

"The consequences are not merely to the Iranian forces there but to the Assad regime as well," he said.

Sunday's strikes coincided with regime progress, backed by Russian support, in the nearby southern province of Daraa.

After a blistering military operation and a ceasefire deal with rebels, government forces are reestablishing control over the entire southern province on the border with Israel.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/syria-says-israeli-strikes-target-air-204141914.html>

EUROPE:

17. NATO Feels Strain Of U.S. Demands

European leaders brace for a tense meeting this week with a U.S. president who is imposing tariffs and chiding the allies for not spending more on their own defense

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jacob M. Schlesinger and Bojan Pancevski

When German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Donald Trump shortly after he took office, the new U.S. president opened the meeting by telling her, "Angela, you owe me one trillion dollars."

It was his estimate of a 14-year gap between what Germany spent on its own defense and what it had promised to spend under arrangements with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, according to an official briefed on the session.

Now, as NATO leaders prepare for a summit this week, Mr. Trump's European counterparts are girding for a meeting with a U.S. president who is taking aim at elements of the trans-Atlantic alliance he insists place unfair burdens on the U.S.

Since the post-World-War-II era the alliance has entwined security, through NATO, and the economy, through trade pacts. Mr. Trump has invoked a Cold War-era U.S. law to brand some imports from Europe as a threat to American security, the first time the law has been invoked against U.S. allies. Using that justification, he has placed tariffs on European steel and aluminum and threatened more against cars. The moves sparked European retaliation against U.S. industries.

The president also says the security umbrella the U.S. spread across Europe during the Cold War allows allies to benefit without paying their full share as set by NATO goals.

"I'm going to tell NATO, you got to start paying your bills," Mr. Trump said at a rally in Great Falls, Mont., Thursday evening. "The United States is not going to take care of everything."

At a meeting in Quebec last month, Mr. Trump jostled with European leaders not only on trade but also on immigration, Russian relations, terrorism and other matters, and then walked away from a joint statement prepared by the group. European officials worry about a new round of discord at the NATO summit that opens on Wednesday in Brussels.

The postwar order has been jolted many times before, over security and economics. Lyndon Johnson placed tariffs on Volkswagen pickups, retaliating for European curbs on U.S. chicken. France left NATO in 1966. George W. Bush drew Continental condemnation for his own steel tariffs and the Iraq invasion. Barack Obama criticized NATO allies over their military budgets.

But many Europeans fear a deeper split this time because no previous American president has so openly questioned the trans-Atlantic alliance's value.

White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said administration officials have been in regular contact with European allies and are "working together to improve policies and resolve discrepancies to ensure that all Americans have access free, fair and reciprocal trade."

Uncertainty about Washington's commitment is prodding Europeans to spend more on their military and to hash out market-opening concessions. It is also emboldening opponents of European unity inside the Continent and on its borders, while prompting the region's leaders to look for alternative markets and allies.

Donald Trump "should not be underestimated," European Council President Donald Tusk told European heads of government at a gathering last month. "He is systematic, consistent and has a method to undermine what the European values are in respect to trans-Atlantic relations," Mr. Tusk said, according to people who attended. Mr. Tusk is a former Polish prime minister whose own government has been more supportive of Mr. Trump than others in the region.

Many European leaders received letters in June, on White House stationery and bearing Mr. Trump's signature, telling them of the president's "growing frustration" with their military spending levels and his expectation they redouble efforts when they next meet.

His plans to follow the NATO meetings with a private sit-down with Russia's Vladimir Putin, the alliance's biggest foe,

stoked fears among European leaders that Mr. Trump may make concessions to the Russian leader.

“The U.S. is now being viewed in Europe as evolving from a strategic partner to a strategic problem,” said Dan Price, a free-trade supporter who ran international economic policy in the George W. Bush White House and now runs a consulting firm advising multinational companies. For the whole postwar era, “Europe trusted that the U.S. would defend its interests and values. That fundamental trust is regrettably eroding.”

Trump officials say the hand-wringing is overdone, and the president, for all his rough language, has done more to support Europe than his predecessor did. The Obama administration, despite soothing words, “went for its first six years in office with an approach to Europe that systematically disengaged—we withdrew the last U.S. tanks from Europe, we pivoted to Asia, we reset relations with Russia,” said A. Wess Mitchell, the State Department’s top official for trans-Atlantic affairs.

The Trump administration has sought to expand a U.S. government program aiding Eastern European countries resisting Russia, has encouraged NATO membership for former Soviet states Ukraine and Georgia, and is building a new NATO command center. “Judge us by our actions,” Mr. Mitchell said.

Trump advisers say the president is willing to apply an unusually high level of pressure on allies—and in the process convey ambiguity about how far the U.S. will go—to rebalance the economic relationship. “Our job is to reassure Europeans, but I think first and foremost it’s to make sure that Americans remain stakeholders” in the alliance, Mr. Mitchell said.

Or, as one person familiar with administration deliberations put it: “Uncertainty is better than a one-sided guarantee.” When Europeans worry more about the American commitment, “you’re more likely to get a result. That’s the art of the deal.”

Over the course of Mr. Trump’s term, he has rankled Europe on many issues, from abandoning the Paris climate and Iran nuclear deals to indicating initial ambivalence about NATO’s self-defense mission. The trade spats in particular have stoked Europe’s concerns about relations with this administration.

Europeans are frustrated by uncertainty about how its decisions are made. Confusion surfaced around Mr. Trump’s March 1 announcement of the metals tariffs. Allies were invited to negotiate exemptions, and they initially did so with U.S. Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer, during a Brussels meeting on March 10. EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom then flew to Washington for meetings and found the administration had since put Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in charge.

Europeans say Mr. Trump’s understanding of trans-Atlantic economic relations is based on an incomplete and distorted use of the data. They complain his assertion that Europe has a \$151 billion trade surplus with the U.S. counts only goods, ignoring, among other things, his own government’s estimate of a U.S. \$51 billion surplus in services.

They proposed in Quebec a joint study of facts and figures, to try to show Mr. Trump that his assumptions are

mistaken and to establish common ground. That has further irked Washington. “The whole European strategy is to have endless commissions and discussions, without coming to grips with reality,” said Mr. Ross. “We don’t need a hundred more. What we need is action.”

The sides are also locked in a stalemate over tactics. The EU has said it won’t negotiate any trade concessions with U.S. until Mr. Trump promises to remove the metals tariffs and take away the threat of further penalties. The U.S. refuses to give away the leverage of existing and threatened tariffs without European action. “You take this gun away from us, we sit together as friends and equals, and we discuss,” Ms. Malmstrom said in a news conference.

That impasse has persisted through more than a dozen rounds of talks between Ms. Malmstrom and Mr. Ross in person, on the phone or via videoconference from March to June. Ms. Malmstrom repeatedly hinted at concessions Europe could make—on accepting U.S. limits on European steel exports, and on acceding to Mr. Trump’s demands of lower car tariffs—if the U.S. took away the threat, according to European officials. Mr. Ross said Europe had to take the first step, and that the promises were too vague. Ms. Malmstrom “made clear that she had no mandate,” he said.

The Europeans retaliated against the U.S. metals tariffs in late June by imposing tariffs on more than \$3 billion worth of U.S. goods. The U.S. is now threatening tariffs on car imports.

A core U.S. strategy is to find and expand cracks in European unity, and play countries off against each other. The way one U.S. official put it is, “Trump wants to...smoke everyone out and see what the real red lines are.”

At the White House in April, Mr. Trump suggested to visiting French President Emmanuel Macron that France leave the EU, after which the U.S. would offer France its own trade agreement, according to European officials.

Four days later, Mr. Trump told a visiting Ms. Merkel, “Angela, you are the president of Europe, you need to get the Europeans to do a deal. These other countries will come to your doorstep if you negotiate something between us,” according to an official in the room. She demurred.

The White House spokeswoman said the president “wants a better deal. If he can’t get it done through the EU then we can do individual deals.”

Pessimists worry Mr. Trump’s high-pressure negotiating strategy poses the risk of a miscalculation and a full-blown trans-Atlantic trade war disrupting global commerce, or of further moves by Mr. Putin to destabilize Europe.

There are optimists on both sides of the Atlantic who believe the parties can reach amicable deals on trade and defense spending. On NATO burden sharing, in “the last year and a half, the number of European countries who have stepped up, the number spending 2% [of GDP] or committing to spending 2% by 2024, has tripled,” said Mr. Mitchell.

On trade, optimists note that Europe has started to float concessions and Mr. Juncker plans a July 25 meeting with Mr. Trump to discuss their disagreements. In addition to suggesting a possible reduction in auto tariffs, the Europeans have started discussions on ramping up purchases of U.S. natural gas, a priority export for Mr. Trump.

In his April White House meeting with Ms. Merkel, Mr. Trump told her: “Angela, you need to stop buying gas from

Putin,” according to the official in attendance, a reference to a natural-gas pipeline between Russia and Germany.

Ms. Merkel said she would like to diversify gas purchases and promised to persuade her EU partners to make that part of any trade deliberations, the official said. EU leaders have since agreed to try to find ways to cooperate with the U.S. on energy, hinting at the possibility of facilitating more U.S. liquefied natural gas sales on the Continent.

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18. Trump NATO Pressure Paying Dividends In Europe, U.S. Envoy Says

(BLOOMBERG NEWS 08 JUL 18) ... Naomi Nix and Anthony Capaccio

President Donald Trump’s pressure campaign on North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies to boost spending for their own defense is paying off, U.S. NATO Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison said.

Separately, the U.S. envoy said she’s concerned that Russia is trying to “flip” Turkey and other American allies to its column.

“NATO really is making progress, and they are doing it really at President Trump’s insistence,” Hutchinson said on “Fox News Sunday.” “It’s very clear, and he’s been very direct about the Europeans needing to do more for their own security.”

Hutchison, a former Republican senator from Texas, took up her NATO role in August. She spoke ahead of a potentially testy summit of North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations to be held in Brussels July 11-12.

The U.S. has been seeking an increased commitment by alliance members to increase defense spending. In the past few weeks, Trump has sent sharply worded letters to the leaders of several European countries, including Germany, Italy and Norway, as well as to Canada, warning that the U.S. was losing patience.

“It will become increasingly difficult to justify to American citizens why some countries continue to fail to meet our shared collective security commitments,” Trump said in a letter addressed to Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg seen by Bloomberg News.

In 2014, NATO members pledged to spend at least two percent of economic output on defense by 2024. Estimated 2017 defense spending as a percentage of GDP was 1.2 percent in Germany, Europe’s biggest economy. Only five NATO members -- the U.K., Estonia, Poland and Greece, as well as the U.S. -- were forecast to have met the two percent target in 2017.

Some diplomats fear the president will threaten to pull troops out of Europe without more spending on defense, despite U.S. denials. Separately, doubts about Trump’s commitment to European security has pushed EU leaders to boost defense cooperation.

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“We’re going to go through some bumps in the road, but the target is elimination of tariffs or other barriers,” said Mr. Ross. “The net effect will be much more freedom and more global trade.”

Emre Peker, Valentina Pop and Vivian Salama contributed to this article.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/summit-looms-for-a-strained-nato-alliance-1531080102>

Although Hutchison said threats by Trump to impose tariffs on European cars haven’t come up in the context of NATO, the president has accused European members of the military alliance of denying U.S. companies fair trade access.

“Change is Coming!”

“We protect Europe (which is good) at great financial loss, and then get unfairly clobbered on Trade. Change is Coming!” Trump said on Twitter in June in posts that specifically called out Germany. “The U.S. pays close to the entire cost of NATO-protecting many of these same countries that rip us off on Trade (they pay only a fraction of the cost -- and laugh!)”

Germany’s defense minister last week rebuffed Trump’s twinning of trade and European defense spending ahead of the NATO summit. It was “immature” to link the two topics, Ursula von der Leyen said.

A country’s defense contribution shouldn’t be measured only as a percentage of GDP, but also in terms of troops and hardware, she said in an interview with Bloomberg Television in Berlin. Still, Chancellor Angela Merkel, in a weekly podcast on Saturday, said Germany would increase defense spending in its 2019 budget, suggesting Trump’s jawboning is paying off.

From the two-day NATO meeting in Brussels, Trump heads to the U.K. and then to a one-on-one meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on July 16.

On Russia, Hutchison said there are signs Moscow is trying to court NATO member Turkey, where President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was re-elected in June and is moving to further consolidate power -- including an ongoing purge of thousands of people from government jobs.

“I do think Russia is trying to flip Turkey; they’re trying to flip many of our allies,” Hutchison said. “They want to destabilize the strongest defense alliance in the history of the world, and that’s NATO.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-08/trump-nato-pressure-paying-dividends-in-europe-u-s-envoy-says>

UNMANNED SYSTEMS:

19. Naval Undersea Warfare Center Is Key Testing Ground For Navy's Underwater Drones

(KITSAP SUN 08 JUL 18) ... Julianne Stanford

KEYPORT, Wash. (AP) — For the past 100 years, Keyport has been home to one of Navy's primary efforts to research, develop and test torpedoes, which earned the small, waterfront community the moniker of "Torpedo Town, U.S.A."

Now, Keyport's Naval Undersea Warfare Center is becoming the modern testing ground for a new type of technology that silently operates in the depths — unmanned undersea vehicles, which are known as UUVs.

Those unmanned undersea vehicles are essentially "pre-programmed, small submarines," said Cmdr. Scott Smith, commanding officer of the Navy's newly formed Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron 1.

The squadron's UUVs range from 10-inch torpedo-shaped tubes to large submersibles more than 80 inches in diameter. Many of the UUVs used at Keyport are commercially available, from companies like Bluefin Robotics or Riptide Autonomous Solutions.

The squadron has been tasked with developing the tactics, techniques and procedures that will shape how the Navy will use the unmanned undersea vehicles.

Eventually, the Navy will use UUVs for a variety of missions. Today, they are capable of reducing the risk to divers in the water and extending sensory capabilities for underway submarines, Smith said.

"We'll use UUVs in those areas that are too dangerous to put a manned vessel, and on the other side, we'll use UUVs where it's just too mundane for a long-term mission to keep a sailor out there," Smith said.

"Those are really the two places I see UUVs working, but we'll never replace the manned systems. In my mind, we'll always need submarines out there doing what submarines do."

The Navy currently doesn't operate unmanned undersea vehicles from submarines, but Smith foresees a potential for rapid growth with the platform.

"Five years down the road," Smith said, "I'd like to see two UUVs on every submarine in the fleet."

The squadron has already tested its expertise and training with a few real-world situations. It has helped to recover a lost item in Sinclair Inlet that fell over the side of a patrol boat. It assisted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police track down a misplaced piece of equipment in the Nanoose Range near Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

In another instance with significantly higher stakes, a team of six of the squadron's sailors deployed in December to assist with the international search and recovery efforts of the Argentinean navy's lost submarine, A.R.A. San Juan, in the south Atlantic Ocean. The submarine disappeared Nov. 17 with 44 crew members aboard.

Although efforts to locate the submarine's whereabouts have been unsuccessful, the crew was able to provide assistance in the early days of the search efforts with the UUVs' capability to perform side-scanning sonar, which uses sonar echoes to create images of large areas of the seafloor.

In the past year, the squadron has grown from 28 sailors with a handful of operational UUVs to 35 sailors and more than a dozen UUVs. By next fall, Smith said the squadron's

manpower will almost double in size and, by fiscal year 2023, it is projected to quadruple from its current size.

With that growth, Smith said the Navy is interested in adding billets that could bring subject matter experts to the squadron, such as meteorologists who could analyze sea conditions for operational planning or operational specialists from the surface community.

"We recognize there's going to be UUV operations from all facets of the Navy and we don't want to stovepipe ourselves just into submarines," Smith said.

Unlike its aerial counterparts, once an undersea drone is launched, it can't be controlled by an operator on the ground. That means before launch, a UUV's entire mission protocol has to be coded in advance of getting underway.

"Once they go underwater, you can't control them with any type of Wi-Fi or signals," Smith said. "Within about 2,000 yards, you can do acoustic; you can put beeps and bops into the water with very, very small messages, to tell them to come up to the surface or to tell them to abort."

Operations typically start with a mission briefing early in the morning, and their execution can take anywhere from 15 minutes to 30 hours.

For the most part, the UUV's size determines the length of time it can be in the water and what type mission it will be sent on.

"We're limited by power. So if you want a long duration, long stay time with a heavy use payload, you're not going to get that from a small one," Smith said.

While underway, smaller UUVs are typically used to gather imagery, survey sea conditions or extend the sensor reach of sub. Larger unmanned undersea vehicles can take on more complex missions, such as acting as an independent sensor on its own mission.

Getting the UUV into the water is the easy part, but at the end of the mission, recovery can prove to be more difficult, Smith said.

"Once you find the UUV, you have to get close enough that you can snare it or hook it without getting too close to damage the side of the boat," Smith said.

Smaller ones typically require a two-man lift. Medium ones require a specialized trailer — Smith calls it a modified boat trailer. Sailors in immersion suits escort the UUV into the trailer.

After recovering the UUV, crews bring back the data they collected.

For some of the squadron's sailors, being a part of the work to develop the Navy's UUV policies has been a key part of their career.

"It's exciting, something I've just heard whispers of, and now to be able to be hands-on with it is really exciting," said Electronics Technician 1st Class Andrew Hanashiro.

Hanashiro, who has been with the squadron for four months, said the best part of working with the UUVs is to get them out on the water the water for training.

"I just have stars in my eyes every time I see these vehicles," he said.

Electronics Technician 1st Class Eric Maculanlan has been with the squadron for more than four years. He was on the cusp of deciding to get out of the Navy when he learned about the possibility of working with the UUVs.

"It was new to me. It sounded like something fun to do," he said. "It's a lot different aspect and view of the Navy and what happens in the Navy other than being on a submarine with operational life."

Last fall, the Navy decided to formally establish the squadron, and it began operating on Oct. 1.

The squadron is a part of Submarine Development Squadron 5, which is the operational command that oversees the Seawolf-class nuclear-powered fast attack submarines USS Seawolf, USS Connecticut and USS Jimmy Carter.

Keyport is the natural place to locate the new command, said Capt. Doug LaCoste, commanding officer of NUWC Keyport.

"The goal is that (they'll be able to) leverage some of the knowledge that Keyport has in recovering these UUVs that we call torpedoes, which we've done for decades," LaCoste said.

In one instance, one of the squadron's undersea vehicles crushed its nose cone after colliding with an uncharted rock out in the water near Keyport during a training exercise.

Without the shore installation's assistance, it would have taken months to obtain a replacement nose cone from the manufacturer and get the UUV back in working order. Instead, the UUV was back in business a few days later after Keyport was able to 3D print a replacement nose cone in about a day, Smith said.

Smith said the installation's proximity to the water makes it an ideal place for testing the squadron's tech.

"We can pick a UUV right up and you and I can carry it out to the water right out there and put it in," he said.

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The squadron is housed in Keyport's Barb Hall, which is named after the legendary World War II-era Gato-class submarine USS Barb.

The Barb is credited with an impressive wartime record, with 12 war patrols. The sub sank five Japanese warships and damaged or sank 34 merchant ships. Most notably, the submarine is credited with "sinking" an enemy supply train after crew members snuck ashore Japanese soil and set up explosive charges on the train track.

"The idea is that the Barb did new and different things, things that were outside of the box," LaCoste said. "That's the idea of bringing UUVRON here."

As the squadron's size and mission grows, LaCoste said Keyport was looking forward to continuing to support the Navy's development of the technology.

"It's going to grow, and what I want to do is to be ready for the growth," LaCoste said. "As UUVRON develops the tactics to be able to operationally use UUVs, we need to have the infrastructure, we need to be able to test them out here locally and provide feedback."

With that expansion, Smith said it was important for the squadron to continue to build upon Keyport's reputation as a considerate neighbor to those who live in the community around the installation.

"We want to make sure everyone on the water knows what we're doing and make sure that we're respectful to the recreational boaters right to be out on the water," Smith said. "I think that's important for people to know that the military cares and my sailors certainly do."

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/naval-undersea-warfare-center-is-key-testing-ground-for-navy-s-underwater-drones-1.536616>

INNOVATION:

20. Evolved Seasparrow Missile Block 2 Successfully Intercepts Aerial Target in First Live Fire Test

(USNI NEWS 06 JUL 18) ... Megan Eckstein

The NATO Seasparrow Project Office recently conducted the first live fire test of the Evolved Seasparrow Missile (ESSM) Block 2 anti-air missile, proving out the missile's new seeker.

The ESSM Block 2 successfully intercepted a BQM-74E aerial target with its active guidance seeker-head, the main technology that distinguishes Block 2 from the in-service semi-active homing ESSM that finds its target via radar and midcourse data uplinks from the ship that fired the missile. Block 2 will have both active and semi-active guidance systems.

"This flight test is critical to demonstrating the technology for the ESSM Block 2," Capt. Bruce Schuette, project manager for the NATO Seasparrow Project, said in a July 5 news release.

"I am very proud of the entire NATO Seasparrow Project Team, from our industry partners to our field activities and test facilities, for all the extensive work that went into making this event a success."

The recent test follows two June 2017 Controlled Test Vehicle flight tests to prove the missile's ability to launch.

Four additional live fire tests will follow, ahead of starting production of the Block 2 missile.

Raytheon was awarded a \$77-million contract on May 18 to begin the transition from ESSM Block 2 engineering, manufacturing and development (EMD) into low-rate manufacturing, fabricating and production.

Once in production, ESSM Block 2 would help the U.S. Navy and its 11 other NATO Seasparrow Project partners address increasingly sophisticated anti-ship cruise missile threats. According to the Navy, the current ESSM "provides reliable ship self-defense capability against agile, high-speed, low-altitude anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), low velocity air threats (LVATs) such as helicopters and high-speed, maneuverable surface threats." Adding the active seeker would help the missile better go after current and future threats, according to the news release.

The currently fielded ESSM proved itself effective in combat in October 2016, when guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG-87) fired one ESSM and two Standard Missile-2s to intercept anti-ship cruise missiles fired by Iran-backed

Houthi forces in Yemen. Mason is the only ship in the U.S. Navy to ever fire an ESSM in combat.

The U.S. Navy and its NATO partners also demonstrated the ESSM's usefulness in a massive collective self-defense exercise last fall, when "the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG-75) successfully detected, tracked and intercepted a medium-range ballistic missile target with a Standard Missile-3 Block IB guided missile. Simultaneously, the Spanish frigate SPS Alvaro de Bazan (F101) fired an Evolved SeaSparrow Missile (ESSM) against an incoming anti-ship cruise missile, while the Netherlands frigate HNLMS Tromp (F803) fired ESSMs

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against a pair of incoming anti-ship cruise missiles. This was the first time NATO's smart defense concept was demonstrated with ships serving as air defense units protecting naval ballistic missile defense units."

The ESSM Block 2 will likely be employed from the Navy's future frigate for self-defense or to defend logistics ships the frigate may escort. The Block 2 missile could also be fielded on any ship with a Mk 41 Vertical Launching System, which can fit a quad-pack of ESSMs in one VLS cell.

<https://news.usni.org/2018/07/06/evolved-seasparrow-missile-block-2-successfully-intercepts-aerial-target-in-first-live-fire-test>

COMMENTARY:

21. Why NATO Matters

The allies are looking with dread to this week's summit as President Trump continues his campaign to undermine a decades-old partnership.

(NEW YORK TIMES 09 JUL 18) ... Editorial Board

As Lord Ismay, NATO's first secretary general, somewhat cheekily observed, the trans-Atlantic alliance was created to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in and the Germans down." Seven decades later, those goals have largely been met (yes, the Germans have risen, but in the right ways), and many people — including, evidently, the president of the United States — wonder whether the alliance still has a purpose.

It does. It remains the most successful military alliance in history, the anchor of an American-led and American-financed peace that fostered Western prosperity and prevented new world wars. No one has proposed anything credible to improve upon it. But as the allies gather in Brussels this week for their annual meeting, many are wondering whether the American president is intent on wrecking it.

Born after World War II, NATO linked America and Europe not just in a mutual defense pledge but in advancing democratic governance, the rule of law, civil and human rights, and an increasingly open international economy.

The alliance was the core of an American-led liberal world order that extended to Asia and relied on a web of international institutions, including the United Nations and the World Bank.

American military protection gave the allies space to develop their economies and pluralistic societies. Despite compromises and occasional failures, the experiment was broadly successful.

During its existence, NATO has often been strained as the security and political environment evolved. After the Cold War, it found a new purpose, defending Muslims in the Balkans, and after 9/11, helping the United States fight terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa and elsewhere.

Former Communist countries swelled the alliance from 12 members to 29, with others knocking on the door even now, concerned about an aggrieved and aggressive Russia.

Across seven decades NATO has invoked its Article 5 mutual defense commitment only once: to rally to the defense of the United States after the attacks of 9/11. Even today, the armed forces of 39 countries are serving, and sometimes dying, with American troops in Afghanistan.

More than 70 (NATO and non-NATO) countries are part of the U.S.-led fight against the Islamic State; two dozen countries have joined a global counterterrorism initiative.

In short, NATO remains central to major American national security initiatives in a world shaken by the rise of an increasingly assertive China, the expansion of competing power centers from India to Saudi Arabia, the surge of migration from the Middle East and Africa and the dislocations caused by globalization.

Yet NATO is being weakened from within — by members' failure to spend enough on defense; by the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism, especially in Turkey, Hungary and Poland; and perhaps most of all, by President Trump, who seems to prefer President Vladimir Putin of Russia to America's European allies.

NATO has always depended on leadership from the United States, the world's biggest economy and most lethal military power. Mr. Trump not only doesn't want to lead the West, he has denigrated the alliance, bullied its leaders and accused NATO and the European Union of exploiting American largess.

At a rally in Montana last week, he complained that while the United States is protecting Europe, "they kill us on trade."

"We're the schmucks that are paying for the whole thing," the president said. "I'll see NATO and I'll tell NATO, 'You've got to start paying your bills.'"

While his predecessors often pressed the allies to raise their military budgets, Mr. Trump has a singular view of NATO as a transactional relationship in which members pay for protection.

Many allies can do more to reach the target level of spending 2 percent of their annual G.D.P. on defense by 2024. Faced with the Russian threat and Mr. Trump's pressure, they are making real progress toward this goal, for which the president can take some credit.

But NATO is not a golf club, and money, the only thing Mr. Trump prizes, is just one, narrow measure of the costs and benefits of belonging. This president has shown no understanding of the power of partnership, and the reciprocal

nature of its bonds, in an alliance that stands for something far bigger than paying your dues on time.

Mr. Trump is burning up all the credit the United States has accrued with our allies across decades by attacking the basis of this alliance, if not the very idea of any alliance — thus, deliberately or not, doing the bidding of Mr. Putin in his quest to divide the West.

“NATO can withstand four years under Trump,” one former NATO ambassador said in an interview. “I don’t think we’ll withstand eight.”

Given the legacy of Republican support for national security and democratic allies, one might expect that Republican congressional leaders would speak up. But, cowering before Mr. Trump, they have been virtually silent as he has undermined America’s alliances.

The NATO meeting is expected to approve significant new steps to contain Russia, which most of the allies, and most of Mr. Trump’s senior advisers, recognize as a threat,

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22. Trump’s NATO Progress

A stronger alliance can put him in a stronger position against Putin.

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Editorial Board

President Trump will attend a summit of North Atlantic Treaty Organization national leaders this week, and the stakes are unusually high for everyone. He plans to meet Vladimir Putin shortly afterward, and Mr. Trump will be at a disadvantage if he doesn’t set the right tone in Brussels.

That tone should be a united front between America and its allies, within a NATO committed to and capable of deterring new threats. This doesn’t mean Washington must always avoid raising uncomfortable truths within the alliance. It does mean Mr. Trump should recognize how NATO benefits America, and how it can help him avoid the diplomatic traps into which his predecessor fell.

The good news is that Mr. Trump is doing better on this score than many of the pearl-clutchers among foreign-policy worthies will admit. He has taken a particularly aggressive stance on defense spending among NATO members, most recently in a series of testy letters reportedly sent to other national leaders. Allies have pledged to spend at least 2% of GDP, a promise they repeated at the 2014 Wales summit. Mr. Trump is continuing a long tradition of bipartisan frustration in Washington when they don’t meet that pledge.

But Mr. Trump should also give credit where it’s due, especially when he can claim part of the credit for success. Inflation-adjusted defense spending among non-U.S. NATO members has increased each year since 2014, and at an accelerating rate that likely will deliver the largest annual spending growth since the Cold War this year. More than half of NATO’s 29 members are on track to meet their 2% pledge by 2024, compared to four or five in a typical year before 2014. Mr. Trump’s win here is keeping up the pressure for more burden sharing as memories of Russia’s 2014 invasion of Crimea fade.

NATO also is making important progress on the capabilities that new money buys. Since 2015 the alliance has ramped up investment in a spearhead force capable of deploying up to 5,000 troops to trouble spots within 48 hours. Now the challenge is how to mobilize larger forces if needed, and Mr. Trump has an opportunity to lead real progress.

even if the president does not. These measures include establishing two new military commands, expanding cyberwarfare and counterterrorism efforts and approving a new plan to speed the reinforcement of troops and equipment to Poland and the Baltic States to deter Russian aggression.

Sooner rather than later, NATO is also going to have to decide what to do with Turkey and the other countries that are eroding the fabric of the alliance by repudiating democratic principles.

At this week’s gathering, the result that matters most is a firm and convincing commitment to a strong NATO, ready to contribute to stability today, and to adapt to future challenges. With no coherent vision of his own to make Americans, and democracy generally, more secure in a world without NATO, Mr. Trump would do well to make that commitment, and honor the friends we have.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/opinion/editorials/why-nato-matters.html>

Defense ministers last month signed off on a new “four 30s” commitment—that by 2020 NATO Allies should be able to deploy 30 troop battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 warships within 30 days. By encouraging his peers to give this plan their final endorsement, Mr. Trump can signal that the alliance is committed to being an effective deterrent.

Movements of troops across borders within NATO can still face considerable legal and bureaucratic obstacles, and cutting this red tape requires cooperation from defense ministries and interior ministries across Europe. In addition to his focus on spending, Mr. Trump could help America and the alliance by demanding firm commitments to fix this problem, perhaps with a deadline.

All of this would help Mr. Trump as he prepares to face off with Mr. Putin. The weakness in Mr. Trump’s NATO diplomacy so far, and it’s a big one, has been his willingness to denigrate the alliance, even to the point of suggesting America might withdraw from it.

Maybe that’s meant to scare other members into meeting their financial commitments, but when Mr. Putin hears the same comments they sound like a weak and fracturing West. His strategic goal is to crack the alliance so he can have a freer hand to dominate Eastern Europe and reassemble at least a de facto version of Greater Russia. He could then use his military leverage to influence diplomatic and economic decisions across Europe.

Mr. Putin snatched Crimea and invaded Ukraine because he learned over time that President Obama had no stomach for confrontation. Mr. Trump presumably isn’t eager to be humiliated in similar fashion. That is more likely to happen if he agrees to ease sanctions in return for Russian promises of good behavior, even as Mr. Putin concludes that NATO would struggle to respond to harassment of its eastern members.

Ronald Reagan knew better. His successful diplomacy with Moscow—which ended the Cold War—started with a strong commitment to Europe and friendly relations with Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Schmidt and then Helmut Kohl. His model of a willingness to negotiate, but only from a

position of strength, can serve Mr. Trump well. A start will be to talk up, and expand on, NATO's progress while renewing his commitment to the alliance.

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23. America's NATO Allies Are Stepping Up

Only three members spent 2% or more of GDP on defense in 2014. This year we expect eight will.

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 08 JUL 18) ... Jens Stoltenberg

Brussels, the city I've called home since becoming secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2014, is only a couple hours' drive from some of the 20th century's bloodiest battlefields.

Many of them, such as Bastogne and Nijmegen Bridge, were the sites of outstanding acts of valor by American soldiers. Europeans will always be grateful for the sacrifices those men made to bring freedom back to our shores.

NATO was created in 1949 to ensure that none of us will ever have to live through another world war. The result of the alliance has been an unprecedented period of peace and security for the citizens of North America and Europe.

The U.S. has had close allies and friends in NATO that no other world power can match. Together, the alliance's 29 countries represent half the world's economic and military might.

But for all NATO has achieved, we cannot be complacent. Facing the most complex and dangerous security environment in a generation, we must invest more in our collective defense. In an unpredictable world, we must do what is necessary to keep our nations safe.

All NATO allies understand this. At our 2014 summit, each nation agreed to stop cutting defense budgets, increase expenditures, and move toward spending 2% of their respective gross domestic products on defense within a decade.

That pledge is being kept. After many years of decline, allies have ended the cuts and started to increase national defense spending. Last year NATO allies boosted their defense budgets by a combined 5.2%, the biggest increase, in real terms, in a quarter of a century. Now 2018 will be the fourth consecutive year of rising spending.

In 2014, only three allies—the United States, the United Kingdom and Greece—met the 2% target. This year, we expect that number to rise to eight, adding Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. Furthermore, a majority of allies have plans to meet their 2% commitments by 2024, while the rest are moving in the right direction. There is still a long way to go, but NATO members have turned the corner on defense spending.

President Trump has been outspoken on this issue, and I thanked him for his leadership when we met at the White House in May. The upswing in NATO defense spending over the past year and a half demonstrates that his efforts are making a difference.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-nato-progress-1531088542>

NATO's credibility as an alliance—in each other's eyes, and in those of our potential adversaries—relies on sharing the defense burden fairly. Ahead of our summit on July 11-12 in Brussels, I have been carrying that message with me every time I meet with allied leaders.

Increased spending is only one part of the equation, however. Allies are also directing that money where it will matter. When NATO leaders signed on to the 2% guideline, they also pledged to put at least 20% of their defense budgets toward major new equipment, such as fighter planes, tanks and warships. Accordingly, NATO countries have added \$18 billion in spending on equipment since 2014.

At the same time, NATO forces are doing more—in more places and in more ways—to strengthen our shared security. They're training Afghanistan's security forces how to bring stability to their country and create the conditions for peace and reconciliation. That's why NATO has increased its troop numbers there to 16,000, up from 13,000 last year. Over the past decade, NATO countries have provided more than \$2 billion for the Afghan army. At the coming summit, I expect allied leaders to extend their funding beyond 2020.

NATO has also been training Iraqis, and at the coming summit we will launch a new mission to build on those efforts. Hundreds of NATO soldiers will help to train Iraqi forces to secure their country and make sure Islamic State does not return.

From the Balkans to the North Atlantic, from the Black Sea to the Baltic, American and European soldiers, sailors and airmen are working together through NATO to keep our nations safe. They do so because we have common interests, history and values, and because the ties that bind us run deep.

That's why NATO allies invoked Article 5, our mutual-defense clause, after 9/11—the first and only time we have done so. It's why hundreds of thousands of European and Canadian troops have served shoulder-to-shoulder with Americans soldiers in Afghanistan. More than 1,000 of them have made the ultimate sacrifice.

It's no secret that there are differences among NATO countries on serious issues such as trade, climate change and the Iran nuclear deal. But we have always managed to overcome our differences before. Two world wars and a Cold War have taught a simple yet powerful lesson: United, we are stronger and safer.

Mr. Stoltenberg is the secretary-general of NATO.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/americas-nato-allies-are-stepping-up-1531074241>