

From: [Craig Quigley](#)
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Subject: EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | AUGUST 24, 2018
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Ladies & Gentlemen, below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.

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EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | AUGUST 24, 2018

TOP STORIES

Sgt. John Chapman

On Wednesday, Chapman posthumously became the first member of the Air Force since the Vietnam War to receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor in combat. In a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, President Trump credited him with fighting to the death and then handed a frame holding the award to Chapman's widow, Valerie Nessel.

The ceremony brought to a close a years-long discussion of whether Chapman had been appropriately recognized for his valor. The Air Force combat controller, already wounded, was alone in his last hour after Navy SEALs fighting alongside him withdrew under fire to assist wounded colleagues, the Air Force found in 2016. The SEALs thought he was dead, they later said. On the basis of Chapman's actions early in the battle, he

posthumously was awarded the Air Force Cross — second only to the Medal of Honor — in 2003 for actions that included charging up a steep hill under fire in the battle and killing at least two militants inside a bunker on top. Read the full story [here](#).

Littoral Combat Ship Program's First Big Test

Four [littoral combat ships](#) are on track to be available to deploy in 2019, the head of the U.S. surface navy told Defense News in an interview. Though it's unclear when the ships will deploy, the hulls will be through their maintenance and the crews through their training phases, ready to become productive members of the fleet next year, Vice Adm. Richard Brown said Aug. 16.

“We are on track with the 2016 review of the LCS...and I think we will see the first deployments next year and then happening continuously after that,” said Brown, who heads Naval Surface Force Pacific. “I will have the ships through their maintenance, and the blue crews and gold crews through their basic phase to support deployments next year. So, that's really exciting – something we've been driving towards for a long time.”

Deploying the LCS next year will be a major test of the reorganized program birthed after a disastrous nine-month span between late 2015 and 2016 that saw mechanical breakdowns on four of the six LCS then in service, some caused by sailor errors. The deployments will be closely watched as the oft-criticized program looks to shake off years of criticism and start performing missions that have been under-served since the last small surface combatants – the Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates – left the service in 2015. More [here](#).

Bolton's Warning to Russia

President Donald Trump's national security adviser said Thursday that he pressed top Russian officials about meddling in the U.S. election process, while saying Russians will face no new U.S. sanctions if they stop such interference. John Bolton spoke to The Associated Press in an interview at the U.S. mission in Geneva between morning and afternoon meetings with his Russian counterpart, Nikolai Patrushev, a follow-up meeting to the summit

between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki last month.

“I’m going to make sure that they understand how strongly we feel about this,” he said, adding that he would “tell them how firm the position of the U.S. is that there is no election meddling.” Bolton told reporters later: “I made it clear that we wouldn’t tolerate meddling in 2018, and we were prepared to take necessary steps to prevent it from happening.” Click [here](#) for more.

Microsoft Corp said on Monday that it had recently [thwarted hackers](#) associated with the Russian government attempting to steal user information from conservative groups that promote democracy and advocate for cybersecurity. The company’s digital crimes unit (DCU) acted on a court order last week, disrupting and transferring control of a total of six internet domains created by a group known as Strontium, also known as Fancy Bear or APT28, which is associated with the Russian government, the company said in a blog posted late on Monday night.

Tensions with China

Senior U.S. and Chinese officials embarked on a second day of [trade talks](#) Thursday with expectations low of any meaningful progress as Beijing and Washington traded their latest round of tit-for-tat tariffs. The world’s two largest economies on Thursday each imposed tariffs on imports worth some \$16 billion, taking the total value of goods hit as a result of the trade war with China to \$100 billion. Expectations are low for any meaningful progress in the talks led by U.S. Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs David Malpass and Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen. Analysts point out that the Trump administration is also showing no signs of softening in its hard line toward Beijing.

China will soon take part in unprecedented [joint military exercises in Russia](#), sending 30 aircraft, 900 tanks and 3,200 personnel to its neighbor’s far east. Russia’s drills, held every four years, are the largest since the early 1980s, and the inclusion of Chinese troops, a first, is seen as a major geopolitical shift. Moscow and Beijing each want to send a signal to Washington with military cooperation—though it’s China, not Russia, that the U.S. now considers its main threat.

China's displays have prompted other Asian nations to cooperate more closely and initiate joint drills of their own. This week, Japan said it would send a large helicopter carrier and escort ships to the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, with the fleet making stops in the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and India, and conducting joint military exercises along the way. For more click [here](#).

The Manafort and Cohen Debacle

Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer and fixer, pleaded guilty to campaign-finance violations and other charges, saying Mr. Trump directed him to arrange the payment of hush money to adult film star Stormy Daniels and a former Playboy model to influence the election. The guilty plea was part of a double dose of bad news for Mr. Trump: it came at almost the same moment that his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort was convicted in Alexandria, Va., of eight financial crimes in the first trial to come out of special counsel Robert Mueller's sprawling Russia investigation. The jury said it could not reach a verdict on 10 of the 18 counts with which Manafort was charged. Judge T.S. Ellis declared a mistrial on those counts.

Cohen's account appears to implicate Mr. Trump himself in a crime, though whether – or when – a president can be prosecuted remains a matter of legal dispute. Read more [here](#).

Look Ahead

There does not appear to be much occurring in D.C. next week, so sit back and take it easy while you can!

Have a great weekend!

From: [Craig Quigley](#)
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Ladies & Gentlemen, below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group. Have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend!

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EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | AUGUST 31, 2018
TOP STORIES

John McCain

John McCain lost his hard fought battle against brain cancer on Saturday, August 25th. He is remembered as a war hero who lived through 5.5 years of torture and internment at the hands of the North Vietnamese – despite receiving and refusing the opportunity to leave imprisonment early because of his father's position in the Navy. He is remembered as an accomplished statesman and senator who believed in America and proclaimed there was nothing our country could not accomplish. John McCain was a tough man who was known for his bi-partisanship in a time where that became regrettably uncommon.

Sen. John McCain was [eulogized](#) Thursday as a "a true American hero" — and

a terrible driver with a wicked sense of humor and love of a good fight — as 3,500 mourners crowded into an Arizona church to pay their final respects to the maverick politician. Former VP Joe Biden's stirring eulogy was part of a number of tributes to the late senator before his body left Arizona for the last time. Along with family members and friends, more than 30 current and former senators (Republicans and Democrats alike), Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, local officials, Arizona sports stars and Arizonans alike paid their respects. Biden's tribute followed one from Arizona Cardinals star Larry Fitzgerald, who drew laughs with stories of his "unlikely" friendship with McCain, as well as from former Arizona Attorney General Grant Woods. Two of McCain's children — Andrew and Bridget — spoke at the memorial, a school choir performed "Amazing Grace," and the recessional was set to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "My Way."

After Thursday's church service, a military aircraft was scheduled to take McCain's body back east to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol on Friday, a funeral service at the Washington National Cathedral on Saturday, and burial at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland on Sunday. Read more [here](#).

North Korea

President Trump left the Singapore summit with praise for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, heralding a new era of peace and prosperity for the country, as well as the end of the nuclear threat from Pyongyang.

But Pyongyang has kept its nukes, and appears in no hurry to discard them. Now U.S. patience has worn thin. Trump promised Kim that the U.S. would officially end the Korean War, which has technically been running since June 1950, as part of the peace and denuclearization process, Vox reported on Wednesday.

But the U.S. has maintained that a peace treaty can only come after steps towards denuclearization, while North Korea pushes for the reverse. Read [more](#).

President Trump appears to be blaming China for derailing a U.S.-North Korea rapprochement, implying that it's placing "tremendous pressure" on

Pyongyang as a result of ongoing trade disputes between Washington and Beijing. [In a quartet of tweets on Wednesday](#). Trump issued what he called a White House statement saying he "feels strongly that North Korea is under tremendous pressure from China because of our major trade disputes with the Chinese Government." [More](#).

South Korean Military Drills

Just days after a planned high-level summit between the U.S. and North Korea was called off, the Pentagon's top official said Tuesday that no decision has been made to cancel major joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea planned for 2019.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis told reporters that there are "no plans, at this time, to suspend any more exercises" on the Korean Peninsula, a sign that the department is expecting to go forward with major events that North Korea has historically decried as provocative.

"We will work very closely, as I've said, with the Secretary of State, and what he needs done, we will certainly do to reinforce his efforts, but at this time there is no discussion of further suspensions," Mattis said. Not long after Mattis's comments, President Trump tweeted that "war games" with South Korea are still on hold – unless he changes his mind. For more information, click [here](#).

Next-Generation Layer of Defense

The Air Force [awarded](#) Northrop Grumman a contract worth as much as \$47 million for an analysis of system and payload requirements for a new missile warning satellite system in polar orbit. Specifically, the contract will be used for the Next Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared Polar (OPIR) space vehicles 1 and 2. Work will be performed in Redondo Beach, California, and is expected to be completed by June 25, 2020, according to a contract announcement.

The OPIR polar space vehicles will be part of a five-satellite constellation that

will augment the legacy Space-Based Infrared Satellite (SBIRS), which operates as the U.S. military's early warning system. During the fiscal year 2019 budget release, the Air Force announced its plans to cancel the 7th and 8th SBIRS satellites in favor of reallocating funds towards OPIR systems.

Click [here](#) for more.

Navy Re-establishes 2nd Fleet

Russian naval activity has surged on and below the North Atlantic and through the Arctic Circle in recent years. With the 2nd Fleet disbanded since 2011, the job of matching and countering Russian operations in those regions has fallen almost solely on the 6th Fleet, whose responsibilities were already stretched between European and North African waterways.

NATO is bolstering its efforts by creating the Joint Force Command-Norfolk, the alliance's counterpart to the [2nd Fleet](#), which is set to break ground in the coming weeks. Representatives from several NATO nations who will be based at the command attended Friday's ceremony. Both establishments will spearhead U.S. and allied efforts to counter Russian operations in the Atlantic, with Washington and Brussels keeping a wary eye on Moscow's fleet amid rising concerns about the prospect of an event similar to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Officials say an increase in Russian submarine activity in the Atlantic, combined with reports that Moscow is testing a long-range, nuclear-powered missile in the Barents Sea are signs that it is pushing to expand its operational boundaries in both regions.

No Relenting on Sessions

The willingness of Republican senators to turn on Attorney General Jeff Sessions is the result of a furious lobbying campaign from President Trump, who for the past 10 days has been venting his anger at Sessions to "any senator who will listen," as one GOP Senate aide put it.

Though some members of Congress have continued to strongly advise, in

public and private, this week that [President Donald Trump shouldn't fire Attorney General Jeff Sessions](#) especially ahead of the midterm elections because of the political fallout he—and the party—could face.

The president, who has spent a year and a half fulminating against his attorney general in public, finally got traction on Capitol Hill thanks to the growing frustration of a handful of GOP senators with their former colleague – most importantly, Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley and South Carolina's Lindsey Graham, who have been irritated by Sessions' opposition to a criminal justice reform bill they support, according to interviews with more than a half-dozen congressional GOP aides, Trump advisers and Republicans close to the White House. Full story [here](#).

Look Ahead

Tuesday, September 4

-10:30AM: 2018 Intelligence and National Security Summit |
201 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD 20745

Wednesday, September 5

-7:30AM: Defense News conference |
1250 S Hayes St., Arlington, VA 22202

-9:30AM: Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on foreign influence in social media |
G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

-10:00AM: House Veterans' Affairs subcommittee hearing on reusable medical equipment |
334 Cannon House Office Building

-10:00AM: Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on NATO |
419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

-2:00PM: The Henry L. Stimson Center discussion on NATO |
Stimson Center, 1211 Connecticut Avenue NW, Eighth Floor

-5:00PM: CSIS national security leadership award ceremony and lecture |
1616 Rhode Island Ave NW

Thursday, September 6

-2:00PM: House Veterans' Affairs subcommittee hearing on VA housing |
334 Cannon House Office Building

-4:00PM: CNAS discussion with Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson |
1152 15th Street NW, Suite 950

Friday, September 7

-8:00AM: Wilson Center Canada Institute discussion on U.S.-Canada space
cooperation |
6th Floor, Woodrow Wilson Center

RIP John S. McCain (1936-2018)

A true American hero.