

From: [Craig Quigley](#)
To: [Craig Quigley](#)
Subject: EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 14, 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 | SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

TOP STORIES

Pentagon Budget

The U.S. Congress is poised to pass the defense budget on time for the first time in a decade. A bipartisan group of House and Senate lawmakers formally announced a deal Thursday for a \$674 billion defense appropriations bill, packaged with funding for the departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Labor and other government agencies.

A joint conference committee finished reconciling the two chambers' bills, teeing up a compromise report to pass before the start of the fiscal year, Oct. 1. If successful, it would avert a partial government shutdown. But most details of the bill were not immediately released, such as how it reconciled competing visions for the JSTARS ground surveillance/command and control plane, and a divide on the number of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. The final bill is expected

to be made public before the end of the week. [Read more here.](#)

Trump's Warning to Iran

The White House condemned the Islamic Republic for rocket attacks on U.S. facilities in Baghdad and Basra. Such attacks have been common—but it's not always clear who exactly is driving them. Shia militants in Baghdad are always prepared to attack U.S. facilities: They have encased pipes, which are aimed in the direction of the U.S. Embassy, in the ground near east Baghdad's soccer pitches, Michael Knights, an expert on Iraq at the Washington Institute, claimed.

One thing that is new, however, is how the U.S. reacted this time: by condemning Iran directly for its influence over Shia militias in Iraq. Such attacks were common prior to 2014, and past administrations called out the Islamic Republic for it, but for the past four years the U.S. and Iran-backed Shia militia have had a common goal: defeating ISIS, which they more or less achieved last year.

The statement is part of a larger U.S. pressure campaign on the Islamic Republic that picked up speed last May when President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the multilateral nuclear agreement with Iran. Since then, the U.S. has reimposed sanctions on the country and plans to go ahead with a more crippling set of restrictions in November targeting Iran's lucrative oil-export revenue. Full story [here.](#)

The Military Prepares for Florence

The military effort activated to support relief and search-and-rescue operations after Hurricane Florence hit the East Coast has swelled to [more than 7,000 troops](#), with thousands more standing by on ready-to-deploy orders, the commander of U.S. Northern Command said Thursday. Speaking to reporters at the Pentagon, Air Force Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy said Florence, which has prompted more than one million evacuations in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, will be met with comprehensive and wide-ranging military relief efforts from every side, including from the ocean,

where two amphibious ships are following hard in the wake of the storm.

"The USS Kearsarge and USS Arlington, which will literally chase Florence in, have Navy and Marine personnel in addition to life-saving assets to include 16 helicopters, and six MV-22 [Ospreys]," O'Shaughnessy said. The amphibious assault ship Kearsarge and amphibious transport dock Arlington, both sortied from their Norfolk, Virginia, homeport ahead of the storm, have a light special-purpose Marine air-ground task force aboard ready to engage in disaster-relief efforts, O'Shaughnessy said. Of the 7,000 troops currently tapped for storm response, about 4,000 are National Guard and another 3,000 are active duty.

Manafort Plea

Paul Manafort, the former chairman of President Donald Trump's campaign, pleaded guilty Friday to federal charges and agreed to cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

The deal enables Manafort, who was convicted of tax and bank fraud charges by a federal court jury in Virginia, to avoid a second trial in the District of Columbia. The agreement makes Manafort the latest member of President Trump's inner circle to cooperate with the investigation that has loomed over his presidency. And it suggests that investigators still have other targets in their sights. Manafort's plea deal follows agreements that Mueller's team had already reached with Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn and Manafort's former deputy Rick Gates. [Full story here.](#)

Navy Pilot Recognized and More

A Navy pilot who took out a Syrian attack jet that was dropping bombs on friendly forces last year — the service's first air-to-air kill since the end of the Cold War — was [recognized for his heroism](#) this weekend. Lt. Cmdr. Mike "MOB" Tremel, an F/A-18E Super Hornet pilot with the Strike Fighter Squadron 87, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on Saturday during the Tailhook Association's annual conference. The medal is awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement during aerial flights. Tremel is credited

with shooting down a Syrian Su-22 Fitter attack jet over Raqqa on June 18, 2017.

Marines are loading bombs onto the F-35B and dropping them over the desert as ground troops prep for combat missions during the Joint Strike Fighter's [first-ever deployment to the Middle East](#). About 4,500 Marines and sailors with the Essex Amphibious Ready Group and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit are putting their combat skills to the test this month in the Horn of Africa. They're participating in a two-week-long Theater Amphibious Combat Rehearsal that includes everything from quick-reaction force drills, deck-landing qualifications, simulated recovery of downed pilots and aircraft, and counter-mine training.

American fighter jets intercepted four Russian military aircraft flying in international airspace west of Alaska this week, officials said. Two Russian Tu-95 "Bear" bombers and two Su-35 "Flanker" fighter jets entered what is known as the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone on Tuesday, NORAD said in a statement Wednesday. NORAD did not say how close to American airspace the Russian aircraft flew nor in which direction. It said the intercept happened Tuesday at 10 p.m. ET. Russian state media said the American jets escorted its aircraft for around 40 minutes and never came closer than 100 meters, according to Reuters. In recent years, Russia has been accused of flying dangerously close to U.S. aircraft and ships in Eastern Europe's Black Sea, and repeatedly violating the airspace of U.S. NATO allies in the Baltics. [More here.](#)

Look Ahead

Monday, September 17

7:00AM: [Air Force Association conference](#), Day 1

Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

1:30PM: [CSIS discussion on national security with DIA director](#)

1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

6:00PM: [CSIS discussion on food insecurity as a security challenge](#)

CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Ave. NW

Tuesday, September 18

12:00AM: [Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting on ambassador, UN and IMF nominations](#)

419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

7:30AM: Air Force Association conference, Day 2
Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

9:00AM: [CSIS panel on the U.S.' role in space situational awareness](#)

CSIS Headquarters

Wednesday, September 19

6:30AM: [Association of the U.S. Army breakfast with Lt. Gen. John Murray](#)

AUSA Conference & Event Center, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA
22201

7:30AM: Air Force Association conference, Day 3
Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Friday, September 21

8:00AM: [Mitchell Institute discussion on nuclear weapons stockpile](#)

Capitol Hill Club 300 First St. SE

Have a great weekend—stay safe!

From: [Craig Quigley](#)
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EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 21, 2019

TOP STORIES

An Astronomical Price Tag

The U.S. Air Force says it will cost [\\$13 billion over five years](#) to create a Space Force. A noted budget estimate disagrees. “This is the highest estimate I think you could possibly come up with,” said Todd Harrison, director of Defense Budget Analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington.

Specifically, Harrison questioned figures presented in a Sept. 14 memo sent from Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson to Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan. In that memo, Wilson wrote that an additional 13,000 people would be needed for a Space Force, a sixth branch of the military ordered by President Trump.

The proposal recommends that a Space Force Secretariat, headquarters staff, Space Force troop contingent and a Space combatant command be established and funded before any space personnel from the other military branches are transferred into the Space Force. Wilson also pushed back on a recent Pentagon proposal to create a senior civilian defense post to oversee the creation of a Space Force, calling it a detour and saying it "is not in line" with President Donald Trump's intent to create a new military branch focused on space. [Read more.](#)

Defense Appropriations Passed by Senate

The Senate on Tuesday passed a short-term spending bill that would keep the government running through Dec. 7, aiming to avert a government shutdown and put off a fight over funding for President Trump's border wall until after the midterm elections.

The short-term bill came attached to a massive budget package containing full-year 2019 funding for the Pentagon as well as for the Labor, Education and Health and Human Services departments. GOP leaders designed the package to combine key Republican and Democratic priorities in an attempt to garner overwhelming bipartisan support. The package also aims to satisfy Trump's desire for more military spending. The 93-to-7 vote came less than two weeks ahead of a Sept. 30 deadline when government funding will expire unless Congress and/or Trump intervene.

The House is expected to take up the bill next week, but it remains uncertain whether Trump will sign the measure. Click [here](#) for full story.

Iran the Incumbent Wins Terror Race

Iran remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, the Trump administration said Wednesday in an annual report that also highlighted another drop in terrorist attacks worldwide. The State Department's annual survey of global terrorism accused Iran of intensifying numerous conflicts and trying to undermine governments throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Iran's "terrorist affiliates and proxies," the report said, "demonstrated a near-global terrorist reach."

The number of worldwide terrorist attacks dropped by 23 percent last year compared with 2016, according to the report, a change largely due to gains against the Islamic State group in Iraq. The number also had declined in 2016 over the previous year. The report comes as the Trump administration is toughening its stance against Iran. The U.S. withdrew from the landmark nuclear accord with Iran earlier this year and has begun to dismantle sanctions relief granted under the 2015 deal. Re-imposing sanctions is one part of a larger effort by the U.S. to cut Iran off from funds used to support proxy forces and support other "malign activity" in the region, including terrorism, according to administration officials. [Link to full story.](#)

Fort Trump?

The U.S. is considering a permanent military presence in Poland, something the Eastern European country has sought for more than a decade. Poland has openly courted a [permanent U.S. presence](#) since President George W. Bush was in office, and that administration had considered the possibility of using one of Poland's military bases as part of its missile defense system and locating ground-based interceptors there. Those talks eventually fell through.

The Polish leader discussed that [proposal](#) with the U.S. President at the White House on Tuesday, trying to get traction for an idea his government has been pushing for months to deter any possible Russian aggression. The Polish government has even been willing to pay — to the tune of \$2 billion.

First of Fallen Soldiers Identified

It was announced Thursday that Army Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel, 32, of Vernon, Indiana, and Army Pfc. William H. Jones, 19, of Nash County, North Carolina, were the first two of the missing-in-action to be identified from among the 55 cases of remains returned by North Korea in August.

"These HEROES are home, they may Rest In Peace, and hopefully their

families can have closure," Trump said in a Tweet.

The tweet came ahead of a White House ceremony Friday for the annual National POW/MIA Recognition Day for the more than 7,000 U.S. service members still missing from the 1950-53 Korean War, out of a total of 90,000 still missing from all the nation's wars. The families of McDaniel and Jones were expected to be at the White House event. [Full story here.](#)

Friendly Fire

"Russia on Tuesday accused Israel of indirectly causing a Russian military plane to be shot down near Syria's Mediterranean coast, and threatened to retaliate against Israel for what it described as a hostile act," via Reuters.

"Russia's Defence Ministry said the [Il-20 reconnaissance aircraft](#), with 15 Russian service personnel on board, was brought down by anti-aircraft batteries of Moscow's ally, Syria, in a friendly fire incident. "But the ministry said it held Israel responsible because, at the time of the incident, Israeli fighter jets were mounting air attacks on Syrian targets and had only given Moscow one minute's warning, putting the Russian aircraft in danger of being caught in the cross-fire."

[An Israeli delegation](#) led by its air force chief this week presented Moscow with its findings on the incident, "including recordings of the conversations between the Israeli air force and the Russian air force component in Syria," said the Israeli official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

"We proved how the Syrian reckless anti-air fire was the direct cause of hitting the Russian aircraft. They fired quite recklessly and irresponsibly and unprofessionally into the air long after our planes were no longer there," the official said. More than 20 Syrian anti-aircraft missiles were fired during the incident.

Look Ahead

Sunday, September 23

7:00PM: [Global Security Exchange tech conference](#), Day 1
Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109

Monday, September 24

6:30AM: Global Security Exchange tech conference, Day 2
Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109

Tuesday, September 25

6:30AM: Global Security Exchange tech conference, Day 3
Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109

8:00AM: [Mitchell Institute discussion on missile defense](#)
Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St. SE

9:30AM: [Senate Armed Services Committee hearing to confirm nominees](#)
G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

1:30PM: [Stimson Center discussion on foreign assistance](#)
1211 Connecticut Ave. NW

Wednesday, September 26

7:00AM: Global Security Exchange tech conference, Day 4
Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109

9:00AM: [Nuclear weapons in the new cyber age: Report of the cyber-nuclear weapons study group](#)
1776 Eye Street, NW Suite 600 Washington, DC

10:00AM: [House Armed Services Committee hearing on the impact of national defense](#)
2141 Rayburn House Office Building

2:30PM: [Senate Armed Services subcommittee hearing on cyber operational readiness](#)
SH-216 Hart Senate Office Building

3:30PM: [House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on Syria](#)
2123 Rayburn House Office Building

Thursday, September 27

7:00AM: Global Security Exchange tech conference, Day 5
Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109

12:00PM: [Aspen Institute discussion on the Space Force](#)

The Aspen Institute, 2300 N Street NW

3:30PM: [House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on the military review board](#)

2322 Rayburn House Office Building

4:00PM: [Atlantic Council discussion on the work of women in national security](#)

1030 15th St. NW

Friday, September 28

9:00AM: [House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on C-130 mishaps](#)

HVC 210

Have a great weekend!