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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 | MARCH 22, 2019
TOP STORIES

Let's Talk Money

\$23B for Key Intel Program

The Department of Defense has requested \$22.95 billion for the top-line budget of the [Military Intelligence Program](#), the DoD announced Monday. While the

overall fiscal 2020 budget request was released last week, the MIP request typically comes days or weeks afterward. That total includes both base budget and overseas contingency operations funding. No further budget figures or program details will be released for “national security reasons,” per a department statement. [Read the full story here.](#)

\$6.8B Border Wall List

On Monday, the Pentagon released a list of numerous military construction projects worldwide, which total nearly \$6.8 billion, which could be delayed or have funds diverted to fund the southern border wall.

The release of the list by acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan to the Senate Armed Services Committee came a day after acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney went on Sunday network talk shows to state that there was no existing list of projects facing cancellation and "it could be a while" before one was delivered to Congress.

\$35M AF Cyber Program

The Air Force wants to develop a [new program](#) that will cultivate a series of cyber tools which would reportedly give the U.S. offensive cyber capability, according to the White House budget request for FY20.

This project will provide advanced cyber warfare capabilities to the Air Force's cyber mission force personnel, who work on projects for U.S. Cyber Command.

In the service's budget books, the program is named Cyber Mission Force Foundational Tools.

Massive 10-Sub Contract

The U.S. Navy is arranging to sign a massive contract with General Dynamics

Electric Boat and the subcontractor Huntington Ingalls Industries, for the next set of Virginia-class submarines.

The [10-ship contract](#) will include nine of the 84-foot Virginia Payload Module upgrades. The VPM is designed to triple the Tomahawk cruise missile capacity of the Virginia-class subs, a move designed to offset the pending retirement of the Ohio-class guided-missile subs, which have a 154-Tomahawk capacity.

Each Virginia Payload Module sub will have a 40-Tomahawk loadout.

The first Virginia Payload Module ship, SSN-803, will be awarded as part of the block buy and is slated for a 2025 delivery.

Navy Planning to Scrap More Ships

The U.S. Navy is considering canceling six planned service-life extensions on its oldest cruisers, meaning the service will be short six of its current 22 largest surface combatants by 2022, according to defense officials who spoke to *Defense News* on background.

The plan, as it will be proposed to Congress, is to decommission the cruisers Bunker Hill, Mobile Bay, Antietam, Leyte Gulf, San Jacinto and Lake Champlain in 2021 and 2022, foregoing plans for service-life extensions that have previously seen support in Congress.

All the ships will be at or near the end of their 35-year service lives when they are decommissioned, but the Navy has yet to decide on a replacement for the cruisers, which are the largest combatants in the fleet with 122 vertical launch cells. This comes at a time when the Navy needs as many missiles downrange as it can field as it squares off with the threat of Chinese and Russian anti-ship missiles. [Read the full story here.](#)

Now for Some Technology Overhauls...

While on the Topic of Ships:

Facing ever-faster missiles and increasingly complicated air threats from China and Russia, the U.S. Navy is moving toward a [major upgrade](#) to its stalwart Arleigh Burke destroyer fleet.

The service is planning to buy a scaled version of Raytheon's SPY-6 air and missile defense radar to replace the SPY-1D arrays on the Flight IIA destroyers, *Defense News* has learned. The upgrade will bolster the radar sensitivity and sophistication of the Flight IIA Burkes. The move is likely prompted by the Navy's concern about the proliferation of anti-ship cruise missiles with sophisticated evasive maneuvers and ever-increasing speeds, investments that China and Russia make no secret about pursuing.

Furthermore, the Navy is targeting 2021 to install a [High Energy Laser and Integrated Optical-dazzler with Surveillance weapon system](#) aboard a West Coast Arleigh Burke-class Flight IIA destroyer. The 60-kilowatt HELIOS, much more powerful than the 20-kilowatt laser weapon system the Navy tested aboard afloat forward staging base USS Ponce five years ago, is designed to counter small attack boats and small unmanned aerial vehicles.

Last year, Lockheed Martin won a \$150 million contract to develop two of the systems – one for shore testing and a second to be installed on a destroyer. The Navy initially planned for the installation in 2020 for what it is calling the Surface Navy Laser Weapon System Increment 1.

Particle Beam

The U.S. Department of Defense wants to test a [directed energy weapon](#) in space, one that it hopes will someday destroy ballistic missiles moments after launch. The weapon, a so-called neutral particle beam, would be boosted into space and tested from orbit in 2023. [Click here to read the full story by Popular Mechanics.](#)

Star Wars Tech? More on the AI Wingman

A new AI under development, called Skyborg, would act either as a robotic co-pilot or drone wingman, performing important tasks while the human pilot flies and fights the aircraft. Will Roper, the Air Force's assistant secretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, says the Air Force Research Lab is currently building a "completely game-changing" technology.

[According to C4ISRNET](#), Roper compared Skyborg to R2-D2 of *Star Wars* fame, Luke Skywalker's trusty droid that nestled behind the cockpit in the X-Wing fighter. In the movies, Luke can issue voice commands to R2-D2, asking the droid for navigation info or to repair the starfighter while he flies. [Read more.](#)

Hypersonic Defense

With the Pentagon making hypersonic weapons a priority, Northrop Grumman is throwing its hat into the ring in an attempt to claim space in the still-early hypersonic defense market.

The company last week launched a new campaign website focused on hypersonic defense as part of a broader push into the business area, where the Pentagon expects to spend more than \$10 billion in the next five years to develop offensive and defensive capabilities.

[Hypersonic defense](#) is significantly behind hypersonic offense, something Kenn Todorov, vice president of missile defense solutions and the lead for Northrop's counter-hypersonic efforts, acknowledged in a March 19 interview. That means there is a lot of room for experimentation in how to tackle the issue.

Plywood Drones?

The Marines are currently in the process of testing out a low-cost drone that can deliver supplies to its ground forces with great accuracy. The catch? It is made out of plywood and aluminum!

LG-1K, developed by Logistic Gliders Inc under contract with DARPA and the U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, is meant to be a very low-cost drone capable of being released from fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters. The LG-1K can carry up to 700 lbs of supplies. It's now flown twelve missions demonstrating its ability to glide—in some cases autonomously—to a landing zone with GPS precision. [Read the full story here.](#)

Offutt Air Force Base

Like large portions of Nebraska, [Offutt Air Force Base](#) personnel are battling flood waters which started to creep onto the installation March 15. An increase in water levels upstream due to a record-setting snowfall this winter, in addition to a huge drop in air pressure earlier in the week, has overwhelmed the southeastern side of the base with water from the Missouri River and Papio Creek.

The home of [Strategic Command](#) has since been forced to [cancel](#) the 55th

Wing, 2019 Defenders of Freedom Air & Space Show, set to take place in June.

The [airshow](#) is supposed to be an annual affair, but the event was canceled in 2013, 2015 and 2017 due to budget cuts, operational demand and construction to one of its runways, according to the *Omaha World-Herald*. The 2018 open house featured both the F-22 Raptor and F-35A Lightning II demonstration teams.

The sheer importance of this base, being home to the U.S. Strategic Command, which oversees the Pentagon's nuclear deterrence and global strike capabilities, raises a serious concern regarding the vulnerability of key military installations when it comes to catastrophic weather. The calamity likely will cost many times more to repair than it would have cost to prevent. Much like Tyndall AFB in Florida, the DoD is now faced with spending loads of money to reconstruct, at the hands of mother nature. [Read more here.](#)

B-52s Deployed

U.S. Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bombers are flying “[simultaneous training flights](#)” over Europe and the Pacific Ocean this month.

Recently six nuclear-capable B-52 bombers were sent to Europe for “theater integration and flying training” exercises with regional allies and NATO partners—a move viewed as sending a strong message to Russia, which is celebrating the five-year anniversary of its military annexation of Crimea.

A bomber task force of B-52 Stratofortresses, airmen and support equipment

from the 2nd Bomb Wing based out of Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, arrived at RAF Fairford late last week and has been participating in various training missions across Europe, according to the service. [Read more here.](#)

The sorties are a coordinated effort by European Command, Indo-Pacific Command and Strategic Command, U.S. officials said in a press release issued to “promote transparency and communicate our intentions.”

Russia’s [Defence Ministry](#) said earlier on Thursday that it had scrambled two Sukhoi SU-27 fighter jets to intercept a U.S. B-52 strategic bomber which radar systems indicated was flying toward Russia’s borders, albeit at a considerable distance. The ministry said the fighter jets had returned to base after the B-52 changed course and headed in the opposite direction. It did not say when the incident occurred.

Quick Hits

Unlikely Renaissance

With the introduction of the F-35, many believed the age of the F-15 Eagle was over. It turns out that the old bird may have a new and important role it can still play in guardianship of American air dominance. The Air Force will likely use the jet as a [missile-slinging partner](#) for the stealthy, but less well-armed, F-35.

An important facet of this plan is that the F-15 has the capability to carry a larger array of weapons than the internal bays of the Lightning II, including perhaps a future breed of hypersonic missiles.

As discussed in last week’s EIB, Air Force Vice Chief of Staff O’Shaughnessy

described the AF's plan to use the two fighters to complement each other.

[Read about the F-15s unlikely renaissance here.](#)

The World Watches as Venezuela Burns

The [Chief of Staff](#) for interim president Juan Guaidó has reportedly been arrested by Maduro's regime. Mr. Guaidó has demanded the immediate release of his chief of staff Roberto Marrero, whose whereabouts are unknown.

As of Thursday, nearly 1,000 Venezuelan troops have fled to Colombia to avoid arrest back home, according to the Colombian foreign ministry, which recognizes Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president. In one case, Venezuelan troops used armored cars to smash through barriers on a border bridge and reach Colombia.

Estimates are that up to [90 percent](#) of Venezuelan troops oppose Maduro but refuse to take action out of fear that counterintelligence agents may have infiltrated their ranks or that family members would face reprisals.

Additionally, in the past week, American imports of Venezuelan oil have ground to a prompt halt. The United States imported exactly zero barrels of crude from Venezuela last week, according to government statistics. That's never happened since the U.S. Energy Information Administration began tracking this weekly metric in 2010. Before the sanctions, the United States was Venezuela's No. 1 oil customer. And the Venezuelan government relied on oil exports for 90% of its revenue. [Read the full story here.](#)

China Helping North Korea Evade UN Sanctions

In this [shocking development](#) (not really) it appears the authoritarian regime which is North Korea is doing its utmost to evade UN sanctions limiting its

petroleum imports to 500,000 barrels per year and the UN imposed an export ban on North Korean coal—which is a major source of government revenue.

According to the UNSC findings, between 1 January and 30 May 2018, tankers of the DPRK had called at Chinese ports at least 89 times, likely to deliver refined petroleum products illegally procured via ship-to-ship transfers including Chinese crewed vessels. Read more about what North Korea is doing in the [UNSC report](#) from March 5.

Google and China

As stated before, the divide between Silicon Valley and the U.S. government has long been a problem. For the sake of our national security, the two sides have to ‘kiss and make up.’ It was one thing for Google to abandon the DoD’s Project Maven, however this latest development is troubling.

Gen. Joseph Dunford is leading the charge now, delivering [sharp warnings](#) to U.S. tech companies. He says their artificial intelligence work in China is strengthening the ruling Communist Party and eroding America’s military advantage. Next week, the Joint Chiefs chairman says, he’s going to tell Google executives directly.

Last week, Dunford told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Google’s AI venture in China was of “direct benefit” to the People’s Liberation Army. Google defended its work as benign because it does not work directly with China’s military—a premise the Marine general rejected on Thursday.

So why does Silicon Valley shudder at the thought of working with the DoD—on the premise of human rights accords—but work with the Chinese government?

This Day in History

1622: Native Americans attack a group of colonists in the [James River area](#) of Virginia, killing 350 residents.

1664: Charles II gives large tracts of land from west of the Connecticut River to the east of Delaware Bay in North America to his brother [James, the Duke of York](#).

1765: [The Stamp Act](#) is passed, the first direct British tax on the American colonists.

1775: British statesman [Edmund Burke](#) makes a speech in the House of Commons, urging the government to adopt a policy of reconciliation with America.

1790: [Thomas Jefferson](#) becomes the first U.S. Secretary of State.

1820: American naval hero [Stephen Decatur](#) is killed in a [duel](#).

1834: [Horace Greeley](#) publishes *New Yorker*, a weekly literary and news magazine and forerunner of Harold Ross' more successful *The New Yorker*.

1894: The first Stanley Cup Championship [game](#) is played between Montreal and Ottawa.

1904: The first color photograph is published in the *London Daily Illustrated Mirror*.

1915: Russian forces take the Austrian garrison at the [fortress](#) of [Przemysl](#).

1933: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs a bill legalizing the sale and possession of beer and wine, effectively [ending prohibition](#).

1935: Persia is [renamed](#) Iran.

1946: First U.S. built [rocket](#) to leave the Earth's atmosphere reaches a 50-mile height.

1968: President Lyndon Johnson names [General William Westmoreland](#) as Army Chief of Staff.

1974: The Viet Cong propose a new truce with the United States and South Vietnam, which includes general elections.

1990: A jury in Anchorage, Alaska, finds Captain Hazelwood not guilty in the [Valdez oil spill](#).

See more at [historynet.com](#) and [history.com](#)

Look Ahead

Monday, March 25

12:00 PM EDT

Seminar: The East-West Center in Washington

Topic: Foreign Affairs
East-West Center in Washington, 1819 L St. NW

1:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Brookings Institution

Topic: Commerce

Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Falk Auditorium

2:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Atlantic Council

Topic: Environment

Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

4:00 PM EDT

Book Discussion: The Cato Institute

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue NW, F.A. Hayek Auditorium

5:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Atlantic Council

Topic: Defense

Atlantic Council, 1030 15th St. NW, 12th Floor

Tuesday, March 26

7:30 AM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities

1722 I St. NW, AMO Third Floor Training Complex

9:00 AM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: Veterans' Family/Caregiver/Survivor Issues

Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Room 230

9:30 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Army Budget

Senate Armed Services Committee

G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Foreign Affairs Committee

Topic: Combating Corruption in the Americas

House Foreign Affairs Committee, Western Hemisphere Subcommittee

2172 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: U.S. Leadership in Advanced Manufacturing

House Science, Space and Technology Committee, Energy Subcommittee |

House Science, Space and Technology Committee, Research and Technology

Subcommittee

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Small Business Committee

Topic: Small Business Runway Extension Act Implementation
House Small Business Committee, Contracting and Workforce Subcommittee
2360 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
Topic: Veterans' Programs Budget
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
418 Russell Senate Office Building

10:30 AM EDT

Hearing: House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Topic: Pending Legislation
House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
Subcommittee
1300 Longworth House Office Building

2:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Center for Strategic and International Studies
Topic: Foreign Affairs
CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

2:30 PM EDT

Hearing: Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Topic: Ukraine's Progress/Russia's Malign Activities
Senate Europe and Regional Security Cooperation Subcommittee Committee
419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

7:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Women's Foreign Policy Group

Topic: Foreign Affairs

Residence of the Ambassador of Qatar, 211 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, Va.

Wednesday, March 27

12:00 AM EDT

Ceremony: The White House

Topic: Defense

White House

7:30 AM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities

1722 I St. NW, AMO Third Floor Training Complex

9:00 AM EDT

Meeting: Defense Department; Office of the Secretary; Defense Undersecretary
for Personnel and Readiness

Topic: Pharmacy Therapeutic Class Reviews

Naval Heritage Center Theater, 701 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

9:00 AM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department

Topic: Veterans' Family/Caregiver/Survivor Issues

Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 140 Conference Room

10:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Heritage Foundation

Topic: Defense

Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Lehrman Auditorium

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Budget Committee

Topic: Defense Budget

House Budget Committee

210 Cannon House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Topic: EPA health Hazards of Chemicals Program

House Science, Space and Technology Committee, Environment

Subcommittee | House Science, Space and Technology Committee, Oversight

Subcommittee

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

10:00 AM EDT

Hearing: Senate Armed Services Committee

Topic: Navy Shipbuilding Programs

Senate Armed Services Committee, SeaPower Subcommittee

232A Russell Senate Office Building

1:00 PM EDT

Discussion: The Center for a New American Security

Topic: Foreign Affairs

CNAS, 1152 15th St. NW, Suite 950

1:00 PM EDT

Hearing: House Foreign Affairs Committee
Topic: U.S. Foreign Policy/State Department Budget
House Foreign Affairs Committee
2172 Rayburn House Office Building

2:30 PM EDT

Hearing: Senate Armed Services Committee
Topic: Military Space Operations
Senate Armed Services Committee, Strategic Forces Subcommittee
222 Russell Senate Office Building

7:00 PM EDT

Book Discussion: Politics and Prose Bookstore
Topic: Homeland Security
Politics and Prose, 5015 Connecticut Avenue NW

Thursday, March 28

7:30 AM EDT

Meeting: Veterans Affairs Department
Topic: VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities
1722 I St. NW, AMO Third Floor Training Complex

8:30 AM EDT

Summit: Fedscoop
Topic: Government Operations
The Newseum, 555 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

8:30 AM EDT

Summit: Nextgov and Defense One

Topic: Defense

Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City, 1250 South Hayes St., Arlington, Va.

9:00 AM EDT

Discussion: The Washington International Trade Association

Topic: Trade

WITA, Meridian Suites, Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade
Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

2:00 PM EDT

Briefing: The Council on Foreign Relations

Topic: Foreign Affairs

6:30 PM EDT

Lecture: The George Washington University Elliott School of International
Affairs

Topic: Foreign Affairs

GWU Elliott School, 1957 E St. NW, Harding Auditorium, Room 213

Friday, March 29

8:00 AM EDT

Meeting: Commerce Department; National Institute of Standards and
Technology

Topic: NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Have a great weekend!