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Readers should note that the Morning Report and Weekend News provide a daily sample of independent news reporting about the Air Force and Space Force, and that inclusion of an article does not mean that its content is a completely accurate statement of facts or official policy.

OP NOTE

• Trump Set to Meet Defense Contractors: President Donald Trump is set to meet with Defense Department leaders and military contractors Wednesday to discuss increasing munitions production, U.S. officials said Monday (Article 1). Trump pressed several companies on Monday for investing in defense-production capabilities, including Ford and General Motors.
• VC-25B Dodge Arrives at Andrews: The Air Force's VC-25B Dodge aircraft is set to begin commissioning flights this week after arriving at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Friday (Article 6). Air Force officials and commissioning flights will allow the White House to verify the VC-25B's performance and finalize presidential transport protocols.
• Space Force Launches Victus Haze: The Space Force and Rocket Lab commenced the Victus Haze Tactically Responsive Space mission on Friday, with Rocket Lab launching a satellite into a low Earth-polar orbit just 17 hours after receiving a task order from the Space Force (Article 9). Space Systems Command officials said Guardians will conduct rendezvous and proximity operations with Rocket Lab's Pinta satellite following on-orbit checkout.

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JOINT NEWS
1. Trump summons munitions makers as women gory over low U.S. stockpiles
(Wall Street Journal, 22 Jun 26) – Lara Seligman, Maureen Weingarther and Dave FitzGerald
President Donald Trump will meet with senior Defense Department officials and military contractors Wednesday to discuss increasing munitions production amid concerns about U.S. stockpile levels, sources with knowledge of internal discussions said Monday. Trump pressed defense companies on Monday for building new factories, including Ford and General Motors, which have recently joined the weapons manufacturing business. Deputy Defense Secretary Stephen Feinberg notified defense industry executives earlier this month to prepare for a meeting at the White House. Tom Karako, a senior fellow with the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Defense and Security Department, said the meetings are unlikely to yield anything substantial without an appropriations bill from Congress. In addition, most of the money to boost munitions production is part of a $500 billion reconciliation request from the Trump administration.

2. Executive order jumpstarts Pentagon's quantum sensor projects
(Breaking Defense, 22 Jun 26) – Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.
President Donald Trump signed his executive order on Monday, with one giving the Defense Department two years to field three new types of quantum sensors. "Quantum sensing is how today [for] navigation is free of GPS jamming and spoofing," said Jack Juliey, founder and CEO of SandBox AQ, which has previously tested quantum sensing technology for the Air Force. Executive Order 14815 would require the Defense Department to deploy "at least three next-generation quantum sensor projects to priorities" so that they can be fielded by the end of FY28. The EO directs the Department of Energy to build "at least one" powerful quantum computer for scientific research; the Pentagon would be expected to support that program.

3. Pentagon sends $50 billion loan Congress for loan war
(Associated Press, 22 Jun 26) – Kevin Freking and Lisa Mascaro
The Defense Department is seeking $50 billion from Congress to cover the cost of Operation Epic Fury, two government officials said on background Monday. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.C.) said he expects a supplemental spending request and will "see where the votes are" once he receives the request. But Democrats are unlikely to support the bill, who have sponsored several War Powers resolutions seeking to block the Trump administration from deploying forces to Iran. "I haven't found anyone who wants to do this," said Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii).

AIR FORCE NEWS
4. New 'Bridge' Air Force One arrives at Andrews for commissioning flights
(Air & Space Forces, 22 Jun 26) – Stephen Losey
The Air Force's VC-25B Dodge aircraft is set to begin commissioning flights this week following its unveiling at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Friday. Air Force officials said the commissioning flights will allow the White House to verify the VC-25B's performance and finalize presidential transport protocols. "The safety and security of the commander-in-chief is our highest priority," Air Force Secretary Troy Meink said in a statement. "From the beginning, we meticulously evaluated every requirement to accelerate delivery while maintaining the high standards expected of the presidential mission. This effort proves that the U.S. Air Force can move fast without sacrificing quality, security, or reliability." The Air Force plowed about $400 million from the $2.886 FFA funding program in 2025 to facilitate retrofits to the Qatari-donated aircraft. Boeing is expected to deliver two VC-25B aircraft by summer 2028.

5. Inside the secret struggles of the Air Force's T-7 Red Hawk
(Breaking Defense, 22 Jun 26) – Michael Marrow
The Air Force's T-7 program is ready to accept first warfighters rides to the T-7A Red Hawk to accept them on schedule, according to an internal Air Force presentation viewed by Breaking Defense reporter. Internal Air Force reports indicate that Air Force officials have assessed risk/amount of the T-7 as "high risk" and that attempts to incorporate T-7s into the fleet more quickly could increase the risk to student pilots. One individual with direct knowledge of the T-7 program said they were concerned the government could lose capability due to a failure to enforce the terms of the contract with Boeing. Brig. Gen. Matthew Lund, director of plans, programs, requirements and assessments for the Education and Training Command, said the Air Force is balancing the schedule risk of the T-7's development with the urgent need for an aircraft to replace the 60-year-old T-38 Talon. "The goal is to get the capability to the warfighters as quickly and safely as possible, and the program is confident in the safety of the new aircraft," Lund said.

6. Air Force technical sergeants see highest promotion rate in 5 years
(Task & Purpose, 22 Jun 26) – Matt White
Over 26 percent of eligible staff sergeants were selected for promotion in the 2026 cycle, Air Force officials said Monday. The official list of promotees is set to be released on Thursday. In total, 6,669 staff sergeants were selected, about 1,000/NCOs fewer than last year while representing a higher percentage. Service officials announced earlier this month that 20.8 percent of eligible technical sergeants were selected for promotion to master sergeant in the 2027 cycle.

7. Flu cases rise to 222 at Texas base in outbreak blamed on Hegseth scrapping of vaccine mandate
(The Hill, 22 Jun 26) – Ellen Mitchell
Over 220 Air Force trainees at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, have contracted influenza during a recent outbreak following Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's decision to April to rescind the influenza vaccine mandate. Air Force officials said last week that the 37th Training Wing is coordinating with the 59th Medical Wing at JBSA-Randolph to "isolate and treat symptomatic trainees." Hegseth said in his April announcement rescinding the vaccine mandate that service members "were forced to choose between their conscience and their country, even when those decisions proved so threat to our military readiness." Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the decision a mistake at the time. "When I was on active duty and a concern, I faithfully took my flu shot every year," Wicker said, adding that the flu vaccine mandate made the armed forces healthier.

8. Italian officials ship US beer celebrations amid Trump-Meloni spat
(Stars and Stripes, 22 Jun 26) – Chad Garland
Italian officials have announced plans to ship Independence Day festivities at Aviano Air Base, Italy, following a disagreement between President Donald Trump and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Alessandro Barco, mayor of Pordenone, said his city's decision not to attend was "made with regret, not hostility." Michelangelo Agresti, president of the local business association, said he would not attend due to Trump's "public denigration" of Meloni, the Pope and other European leaders. Trump remarked on on Italian TV network that Meloni had "begged" him for a photo at the G7 meeting in France; Meloni said Trump's statements were "completely fabricated." Festivities at other bases in Italy are expected to continue, with 1,500 Italian guests planning to attend a celebration in Cecchina Edolo.

SPACE FORCE NEWS
9. Space Force mission goes from orders to launch in less than 17 hours
(Air & Space Forces, 22 Jun 26) – Courtney Albon
Rocket Lab and Space Systems Command launched the Victus Haze Tactically Responsive Space mission on Friday, launching a satellite into low Earth orbit in under 17 hours. Following launch complete, the Space Force will complete on-orbit checkout and vehicle commissioning for the Pinta satellite, then begin conducting rendezvous and proximity operations. Space Systems Command officials said Monday. The RPO scenarios are designed to demonstrate space domain awareness capabilities, SSC officials said. A spokesperson for Firefly Aerospace said the company will continue to actively support the Space Force in future TacRS missions, including a future mission that will land on Victus Haze, Victus Dawn and Victus Haze Lt Col. Lincoln Miller, system program manager for Space Safari, said Victus Haze's success could lead to "rapid production and fielding of follow-on vehicles" from both Firefly and Rocket Lab.

10. A US military exercise in space got underway with barely anyone noticing
(Ars Technica, 22 Jun 26) – Stephen Clark
The Space Force updated its catalog of space objects on Saturday to reflect the launch of the Victus Haze Pinta satellite. The catalog lists the satellite in a low Earth-polar orbit, where it is expected to rendezvous with Tess Assembly's Jackal satellite for rendezvous and proximity operations. "Jackal has been fully commissioned and is prepared for its next phase of mission," a Tess Assembly spokesperson said. Space Systems Command officials said in 2024 that the Victus Haze demonstration will prepare the Space Force to conduct rapid operations in response to adversary aggressors in orbit.

11. New report looks at US options for potential escalating conflict in space
(Air & Space Forces, 22 Jun 26) – Todd Smith
A report from the Mitchell Institute's Spacepower Advantage Center of Excellence this week summarizes a workshop in January in which dozens of experts studied how new threats in space could affect U.S. military and civilian capabilities. "China has been thinking about countering our ability to deliver effects from space since the 1990s," and retired Col. Charles Galbreath, the Spacepower Center's director and senior resident fellow for space studies. "They've been investing in weapon systems—from direct ascent to jammers and cyberattacks, co-orbital systems—for a lot longer than the United States has been recognizing that space is a warfighting domain." Among the report's findings, the authors warn that low intensity conflicts and cooperation among U.S. adversaries could both increase the risk of hostile action in space. They advise the United States to engage in properly calling out adversary actions in space, which will depend on space domain awareness and strategic communication.

12. Report: Kennedy Space Center not ready for one of super heavy rockets
(Ars Technica, 22 Jun 26) – Eric Berger
NASA's infrastructure at Kennedy Space Center is approaching the limit of its capabilities due to increased launch demand, according to a new report by NASA's Inspector General Office. Demand from super heavy platforms, including SpaceX's Starship and Blue Origin's New Glenn, are expected to heavily stress NASA's infrastructure, some of which it shares with Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. Nitrogen supplies can't support simultaneous launches of a New Glenn rocket from Space Launch Complex 36 and a United Launch Alliance Vulcan Centaur rocket from SLC-41, the report states. A $25 million project to construct a new generic nitrogen system for existing launch capacity is currently unfunded, and demand is only expected to increase. The report notes that budgets for launch-related infrastructure construction and maintenance have decreased between 11 and 27 percent, adjusted for inflation.

13. Space Force to test new more dress uniform this fall
(Task & Purpose, 22 Jun 26) – Patty Nieberg
The Space Force's more dress uniform, worn by Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman during an Air Force Weapons School ceremony last week, will enter formal wear testing this fall, a Department of the Air Force spokesperson said. "The Space Force is continuing to work with industry partners to determine production requirements and the timeline for service-wide availability," the spokesperson said. "Guardians who volunteered and were selected as wear testers have recently completed their more dress fittings." DAF officials said in January that Guardians will have 12 months to purchase more dress uniforms before a mandatory wear date takes effect.

OP INTEREST
14. Venezuela has to allow nuclear inspectors into country
(The Hill, 22 Jun 26) – Filip Timotija
Vice President JD Vance said Monday that Iran will allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors back into the country as it negotiates an end to its conflict with the United States. "Letting in the inspectors is a big deal," Vance said. "But again, we're going to see what they actually let the inspectors do once they're in the country. That's going to continually be a part of our negotiations." IAEA inspectors could contact their work on cases on this week. Iran's parliament passed a law last year ending inspections following U.S. and Israeli strikes against Iran's three primary nuclear enrichment facilities in Operation Midnight Hammer. Vance said negotiations made progress on negotiations over the weekend, establishing mechanisms to dismiss the Strait of Hormuz and a process for technical negotiations.

15. Top intelligence agency begins mass firings under new Trump appointee, sources says
(NBC News, 22 Jun 26) – Katherine Doyle, Dan De Luce and Dinesh Gorgeyan
Acting Director of National Intelligence Bill Pulte has begun purging staff at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, a source told multiple news outlets Monday, claiming. "The deep state firings have begun." President Donald Trump said he has asked Pulte "to execute the immediate and needed downsizing of the office, reviewing staff to their home agencies." The ODNI was established after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to monitor terrorist threats and pool information from multiple intelligence agencies. Democrats on the Senate and House Intelligence committees warned Pulte against firing or relocating ODNI staff, particularly without first consulting with Congress. ODNI attributed about 10 percent of its workforce in 2025 and was looking to increase that amount to 30 percent under former DNI Tulsi Gabbard.

16. Senate defense bill seeks to attract cyber talent, limit civilian layoffs
(Federal News Network, 22 Jun 26) – Anastasia Obis
The Senate Armed Services Committee's FY27 National Defense Authorization Act would limit the Defense Department's ability to reduce its workforce and establish a program to retain high-performing supervisory employees. One provision would prohibit the Pentagon from using FY27 funds to conduct reductions in force or to otherwise freeze or delay hiring. "If you look big picture at the number of civilians that the department employs, these civilians are carrying out some fundamental missions for the department, whether it's caring for active duty Soldiers and their dependents, managing weapon systems and facilities, providing logistics support—there's a range of activities," said Kristy Williams, the Government Accountability Office's director of defense capabilities and management. The legislation would also require the DOD to disclose whether vacant positions are eligible for remote work and whether applicants can apply for exceptions to the return to office mandate.

17. China retaliates against US with defense company sanctions
(Newsweek, 22 Jun 26) – John Feng
China imposed export restrictions on 30 American companies on Monday, including two rare earth companies, in retaliation for the Defense Department's addition of Chinese technology companies to its watch list of military-linked firms. Officials with China's Commerce Ministry said the move was a response to the United States' "malign practice" and would safeguard Chinese national security. The DOD added two Chinese electric car companies to its 12600 list of firms linked to the People's Liberation Army modernization earlier this month, as well as the Baidu search engine and the e-commerce company Alibaba, both of which are developing AI agents.

18. Chinese spacephone enhances object tate orbit, according to commercial space surveillance
(SpaceNews, 22 Jun 26) – Andrew Jones
A Chinese spacephone has released an object into orbit during its ongoing fourth mission, according to civilian space surveillance company LeoLabs. LeoLabs officials said Monday that they had detected an unknown object near the Shenfeng spacecraft on Sunday. The object was not in the Space Force's space-track.org catalog as of Monday evening. China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported earlier this year that the Shenfeng "will conduct technological verification for reusable spacecraft, providing technical support for the peaceful use of space."

19. Forced by Trump to retire, a team stream is 'pursing the lowrid' to a firefighter waiting to serve
(The Editorials, 22 Jun 26) – Christopher Wiggins
Master Sgt. Logan Ireland is set to retire after 15 years in the Air Force due to an executive order banning transgender service members from continuing to serve. "A lot of us are not getting retirement," Ireland said during a ceremony in May. "Some are getting separated against their desires, but ultimately, all of us have the same common goal of passing the torch on to the next person." Attending Ireland's retirement was Clayton McAllister, 23, who had planned to become a paraescutenant before the ban took effect. "Anytime my wife and I talk about our future, what's coming, that's our number one goal—get back in the Air Force, do the things that I wanted to do," McAllister said. "I still feel this void of, there's a job out there that I'm supposed to be doing that I don't get to do right now."

20. Opinion: China could win Taiwan without fighting
(Foreign Affairs, 22 Jun 26) – Richard Haass and David Sacks
The recent U.S.-China summit could lead to a situation where China can win possession of Taiwan without firing a shot, warn Richard Haass and David Sacks, members of the Council on Foreign Relations. Haass and Sacks write that Chinese President Xi Jinping's goal is likely to create distance between the United States and Taiwan, which he has accomplished by convincing U.S. President Donald Trump that Taiwan wants to never instead full independence and causing Trump into delaying or cancelling a $14 billion arms sale to the island. "Note that Xi vaw Trump is willing to renegotiate decades-old elements of U.S. policy toward Taiwan, he will continue to press for concessions," they write. "If could prove Washington to distinguish its security cooperation with Taiwan and even with Australia and the Philippines, which would further undermine deterrence." The damage to American credibility could also make Taiwanese prepare to bowing to defiance, they note, because Taiwanese politicians may be less inclined to meet U.S. demands for defense spending. "As confidence in Washington's protection erodes, skeptical politicians will grow even more reluctant to fund defense budgets they consider ineffective," Haass and Sacks write. "The argument for more accommodation of China will so lose gain traction."

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUMMARY: Air Force social media posts included an article on Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., an article on the Aerial Knight 2026 exercise, an illustration recognizing the one-year anniversary of Operation Midnight Hammer, and a look at the Air Force's work in photo. Space Force social media posts included photos and video from the Professional Bull Riders' Space Cowboys event at Falcon Stadium, Colo., and an article on a contract award for two GPS IIIF satellites.

• Air Force on Facebook: Posts included an article on Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. Total engagement was 286 reactions, 28 comments and 32 shares.
• Air Force on X: Posts included an illustration recognizing the one-year anniversary of Operation Midnight Hammer and a look at the Air Force's work in photos. Total engagement was 1,000 likes and 20 comments.
• Air Force on Instagram: Posts included a look at the Air Force's work in photos. Total engagement was 5,300 likes and 16 comments.
• Space Force on Facebook: Posts included photos from the Professional Bull Riders' Space Cowboy event at Falcon Stadium, Colo. Total engagement was 651 reactions, 23 comments and 38 shares.
• Space Force on X: Posts included coverage of the Professional Bull Riders' Space Cowboy event at Falcon Stadium, Colo. Total engagement was four replies, 34 reposts and 207 likes.
• Space Force on Instagram: Posts included photos and video from the Professional Bull Riders' Space Cowboy event at Falcon Stadium, Colo. Total engagement was 1,000 likes and 23 comments.
• Space Force on LinkedIn: Posts included an article on a contract award for two GPS IIIF satellites. Total engagement was 46 reactions, two comments and four reposts.

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