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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.

OF NOTE

• DOD needs $1.5B Reprogramming for Personnel: The Defense Department has requested congressional authorization to reprogram $1.5 billion from FY26 funds to pay for increased operational and personnel costs, according to a memo from acting CFO and Comptroller Michael Petters (Article 1). The request would cut $1.2 billion from the Air Force and $300 million from the Space Force but restore $717 million into Air Force personnel accounts and $92 million into Space Force personnel accounts.
• Air Force, DIU Team Up on MQ-39 Successor: The Air Force and Defense Innovation Unit are partnering to collect ideas on a successor for the MQ-9A Reaper that can be deployed in swarms and take on the MQ-9's profile (Article 5). "Future conflicts will demand greater mass, faster adaptation and the ability to absorb operational losses while continuing to generate combat effects," said Lt. Gen. Christopher Niemi, deputy chief of staff for force modernization and chief modernization officer.
• Space Force Establishes PAE Structure: The Space Force has finalized the reorganization of its portfolio acquisition executive structure, naming nine PAEs, according to a June 22 memo from Thomas Ainsworth, acting Air Force secretary for space acquisition and integration (Article 10). "These missions demand PAE structures can and will cover all domains," Ainsworth wrote. "Underpinning this construct, integration support to all PAEs remains essential to achieving success in delivering space capability consistently to the Joint Force for space warfighting."

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JOINT NEWS
1. Pentagon seeks to shed $4.3B to pay for increasing operations and personnel costs
(Breaking Defense, 9 Jul 26) ... Ashley Roque and Valerie Insinna
The Defense Department reprioritized authorizations last month to reprogram $4.3 billion from FY26 funds to pay for higher priority items, including increased operational and personnel costs. Acting CFO and Comptroller Michael Petters requested money from weapons and technology programs to pay for unforeseen military requirements that are "determined to be necessary in the national interests." The Air Force would receive $717 million for its personnel accounts, and the Space Force would receive $92 million. The Air Force would face $1.3 billion in cuts, including $191 million pulled from F-35 Joint Strike Fighter procurement and $583 million from other programs. The Space Force would lose $266 million from research and development accounts and $62 million from space procurement.

2. Pentagon amends deals for Iran weapons that could shoot down drone swarms
(DefenseScoop, 9 Jul 26) ... Jon Harper
The Defense Department awarded two contracts worth $86 million to ellLIGHT Defense and Lockheed Martin Astrolight for directed energy weapons that could defeat drone swarms, Pentagon officials announced Thursday. "We remain actively defend the homeland against emerging threats," Pentagon CTO Emil Michael said. "We are partnering with industry to rapidly deliver deep magazine directed energy capabilities to the Joint Force that can be seamlessly deployed across multiple domains."

3. Army review of friendfire deadliest attack on U.S. soldiers to be shared with families
(CBS News, 9 Jul 26) ... Joseph Kaplan, Michael Kiefer, Jenna LaPorte
An investigation into Iran's attack on U.S. forces in Kuwait in March is complete, and Gold Star families were expected to be briefed on its findings Thursday, Army officials said. An Army spokesperson declined to offer details on the briefing or the report's contents out of respect for the families. One of the Soldiers injured in the attack told CBS News in April that the unit was "unprepared to provide any defense for itself," contradicting statements from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that an Iranian missile penetrated U.S. air defenses. Army Maj. Stephen Rasmussen said the unit was also not prepared for medical emergencies, with no aid stations or doctors and only one ambulance.

4. New directive from Army leadership curtailses and restricts social media accounts
(DefenseScoop, 9 Jul 26) ... Jon Harper
The Army will consolidate its social media presence to reduce operational risks and improve information access for service members, their families and the public, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said in a June 30 memo. The directive doesn't affect Soldiers' personal social media accounts. Authorized Army installations will be allowed one set of social media accounts under the purview of senior commanders, Driscoll wrote. Commanders must archive records and deactivate unauthorized organizational accounts within 30 days. "While smaller, unauthorized unit pages will be closed, public affairs professionals and content creators at the tactical level will continue to document military training and operations," Army officials wrote. "That high-quality imagery and video will now be elevated to higher-echelon accounts and hosted on official Department of War platforms ... ensuring these stories reach a significantly larger audience."

AIR FORCE NEWS
5. Air Force and DIU want cheap drones to take on MQ-9 successor
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
The Air Force is partnering with the Defense Innovation Unit to solicit ideas for attritable drones that can be deployed in swarms and take on some of the MQ-9A Reaper's mission profile. "This partnership is crucial for developing next-generation capabilities that will inform the future of the MQ-9 Reaper fleet," officials said in a statement Thursday. "Future conflicts will demand greater mass, faster adaptation and the ability to absorb operational losses while continuing to generate combat effects," said Lt. Gen. Christopher Niemi, deputy chief of staff for modernization. DIU posted a solicitation Tuesday asking companies to submit pitches for a Manned Modular Aircraft concept. The military's current reliance on exquisite drones "is unsustainable against adversaries utilizing layered defenses enabled by increasingly low-cost autonomous capabilities," DIU officials wrote. "To operate effectively, we must accept this inevitable attrition and deploy larger numbers of less expensive unmanned platforms, designing them from the start with the expectation that some will be lost in combat."

6. Air Force to train weapons systems officers to fly B-2Ss
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
The B-2 Raider will fly with two pilots, including some former weapons systems officers and combat systems officers, Air Force officials said recently. "To maximize the lethality and survivability of the Raider, it is imperative to retain the deep tactical and combat experience currently residing within the WSO and CSO communities," Air Force officials said. "This deliberate talent management strategy secures the future of global strike capabilities, ensuring the Air Force remains postured to execute extended duration, long-range strike missions in highly contested environments." The Air Force will pull WSOs from the B-1 Lancer, B-52 Stratofortress and F-15E Strike Eagle communities. Having two pilots aboard a bomber allows pilots to rest during long sorties.

7. Questions, concerns about Space Force's Guardian Ideal for Air Force Office after Secret Service advised Trump to take old plane
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Courtney Albon
A recommendation by the Secret Service for President Donald Trump to leave the NATO summit aboard a VC-25B Aircraft has raised questions about the readiness of the VC-25B Boeing aircraft destined by the Quiet royal family. Air Force officials have said the VC-25B is "safe, secure and equipped with the most advanced technologies necessary to meet the requirements of the presidential mission. ... No risk was taken in security, safety or mission communications, but the collective team made trades on some of the less commonly used mission sets that Boeing must deliver to support the next 40 years." The VC-25As have commencement to defaulted incoming missiles, concern familiar with the aircraft said. Air Force officials declined to discuss specific capabilities, citing operational security.

8. Air Force revokes more than 100 promotions after testing snafu
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
Airmen in the last grading periods resulted in 110 security forces NCOs unnecessarily being selected for promotion to technical sergeant. Air Force officials said Tuesday. "We strive to be those affected to address it immediately," Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Wolfe said. "This is going to be hard for everyone impacted." A separate group of Airmen who were incorrectly denied promotions due to the same will now be promoted, Air Force officials said. "We promote Airmen based on merit, which is established in federal law and policy," said Lt. Gen. Jefferson O'Donnell, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. "Who we are as an Air Force, defined by our Core Values, demands integrity in the meritocratic promotion system; we have a core obligation to ensure the Airmen who earned it are selected."

9. Why DoD, Silicon Valley nerts are betting on solar power beaming sats
(Breaking Defense, 9 Jul 26) ... Sydney Freedberg Jr.
The dot-bom founding information administration identifies that can provide Space Operational Energy capability, using solar power to generate electricity for plasmatic installations. "While we have been informally researching the topic for a few years, Space Operational Energy is a growing focus for us," an Air Force spokesperson said. "We hope to learn industry days and create avenues for collaboration with industry partners in the near future." Mass Burn, founder and CEO of Overview, said the company is analyzing three scenarios in which SOE satellites could provide energy to U.S. forces, including powering installations in remote locations during a crisis or conflict and rapidly restoring power to damaged facilities. The SOE Division, part of the Air Force Office of Installations, Energy and Environment, is also working with the Air Force Research Laboratory to transition Space Solar Power Incremental Demonstrations and Research technology to other Defense Department organizations. SOED chief Nikolas Joseph said.

SPACE FORCE NEWS
10. Space Force establishes nine acquisition structure, names 9 portfolio executives
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Courtney Albon
The Space Force has finalized a reorganization of its acquisition apparatus, naming nine portfolio acquisition executives, according to a June 22 memo by the acting assistant Air Force secretary for space acquisition and integration. "These mission-focused PAE structures can and will cover all domains," Thomas Ainsworth wrote. "Underpinning this construct, integration support to all PAEs remains essential to achieving success in delivering space capability consistently to the Joint Force for space warfighting." Space Force PAEs will report directly to the service acquisition executive and will have broad latitude to chell resources across programs in response to new technology and evolved threats. The PAEs will cover space assets, space-based sensing and targeting, missile warning and tracking, infrastructure, battle management, command, control, communications and intelligence, satellite communications and positioning, navigation and timing, advanced capabilities, electromagnetic warfare and cyber, and space combat power.

11. Space Force's new C2 system to get key upgrades in 2027
(Air & Space Forces, 9 Jul 26) ... Courtney Albon
The Space Force is considering three upgrades to the Advanced Tracking and Launch Analysis System next year that will make it easier for allies to share space domain awareness data. One upgrade will provide ATLAS data to all Five Eyes partners. Another will integrate ATLAS with cloud-based architecture at Naval Support Facility Dahlgren, Va., allowing the 18th Space Defense Squadron to coordinate more closely with the 18th SDS. LSHearts will also deliver a dedicated test, training and exercises capability, providing a separate, realistic training environment for Guardians.

12. National Space Intelligence Center welcomes new commander amid growing threats
(Dayton Daily News, 9 Jul 26) ... Thomas Gnau
A former National Air and Space Intelligence Center commander assumed command of the National Space Intelligence Center during a ceremony Thursday at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Col. Patrick Hamlin succeeded Col. Marcus Stalks, who retired. Maj. Gen. Brian Sidari, presiding official for the ceremony and deputy chief of space operations for intelligence, praised NSIC Guardians for their service "during an era that demands unbeatable United States space superiority." NSIC employees established a food pantry during a 43-day government shutdown in November. "When the paycheck stopped, the threat did not stop—and neither did you," Stalks said.

OF INTEREST
13. Rumored vote with Iran threatens to derail congressional agenda
(The Hill, 9 Jul 26) ... Alexander Bolton
Congressional Republicans and United States and Iran could jeopardize Congress' agenda leading up to the August recess and the November midterms, as Democrats plan to force additional War Powers votes. "The rest of the year is going to be spent on these issues that unite the Democratic Party and divide the Republican Party," a Democratic strategist said. War Powers votes could pick up more GOP support as energy prices spike and drive up economic anxiety. Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said last month that Democrats wont vote for the Trump administration's $87.5 billion supplemental spending package if President Donald Trump doesn't seek authorization for use of military force. "Until they authorize this conflict, I don't think we should subsidize it," he said.

14. Iran botched Israeli pilot to kill Trump, Israel told U.S.
(Wall Street Journal, 9 Jul 26) ... Anat Peled, Alexander Ward and Marianna LaVina
Iran botched a new plot to assassinate President Donald Trump, according to intelligence shared by Israel. "They want to take out the U.S. leader—me," Trump said Wednesday in Ankara. Trump spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday and agreed to continue coordinating on Iran operations. Iran has vowed to retaliate against Trump for the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, a former top general in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, during the first Trump administration.

15. Trump says troop levels in Europe will depend on Greenland, Iran
(Bloomberg, 9 Jul 26) ... Kate Sullivan, Jon Ludwig, and Skylar Woodhouse
President Donald Trump said Wednesday that a decision on U.S. troop levels in Europe would depend on whether NATO allies addressed his concerns on Iran and Greenland. "A lot's going to depend on Greenland. A lot's dependent on Iran," Trump said. "When they had a chance, an opportunity to help, they chose not to." Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced a six-month review of U.S. force posture in Europe last month during a speech at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Trump's fixation on Greenland during his second administration led European leaders' to worry that the United States might try to annex Greenland by force.

16. "Ending is next underway": Zelenskyy confirms progress on major US defense deals
(Defense News, 9 Jul 26) ... Katie Livingstone
The United States is testing Ukrainian-made drones and provided "very positive feedback," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday, suggesting a drone production deal between the two countries is moving ahead. "There are some documents that have already been signed so that the American side can receive from Ukrainian various types of systems in which the United States is interested for testing," Zelenskyy said. "And they are receiving these from us." The full deal, valued between $35 billion and $50 billion, would draw on up to 200 Ukrainian companies to produce drones for the United States, but that deal is still awaiting President Donald Trump's approval. Zelenskyy said Europe respects Ukraine's army and technological developments, which Ukraine is ready to share.

17. Defying Trump, Italy's Meloni 'maintaining' hard line against Iran war help
(Breaking Defense, 9 Jul 26) ... Elizabeth Gonzalez Melo
Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni underlined her stance Thursday on not allowing the United States to use bases in Italy to persecute its war against Iran. "It's not as though we've been changing course from one day to the next—we've had a very clear line since the beginning of the conflict in Iran, and we are maintaining that," Meloni said. "We are not participating in attacks against Iran, and we will not participate in attacks against Iran." In an address before Italy's Senate in March, Meloni said the nation didn't want to enter a war. Italian law allows technical authorizations for the United States to use its bases for logistical purposes and non-kinetic activities.

18. Opinion: Protect Colorado Springs military bases from encroachment
(The Gazette, 9 Jul 26) ... Ed Eberhart
Colorado Springs must take steps to protect its space bases from encroachment or it will jeopardize their long-term effectiveness, writes retired Gen. Ed Eberhart, a former commander of U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Space Command. Encroachment at the Consolidated Space Operations Center in Sunnyside, Calif., inhibited the site's future growth, leading to the construction of what is now Schriever Space Force Base, Colo. "What the Department of Defense recognized in the 1980s ... remains true," Eberhart writes. "Urban encroachment poses a risk to bases—through electromagnetic and radio frequency interference, horizon and physical obstruction, ambient noise and vibration, incompatible land use and zoning, and environmental impact. This is not a matter of one installation scaling back operations. It's a matter of what could be a large-scale exodus of the defense industry from Colorado Springs." The El Paso County community must seriously take on endeavors to protect military bases from encroachment, and elected officials and business leaders must understand the threat, he writes, concluding. "We have the opportunity to not only bolster our local economy but also to continue to play a key role in our national security. We must not miss this opportunity."

19. Opinion: The AI disinformation gap the Pentagon may be missing
(Breaking Defense, 9 Jul 26) ... Mark Ginsburg
The Defense Department is fighting the wrong battle on disinformation, writes Mark Ginsburg, a colleague for the Times of Israel and analyst covering technology, security and geopolitical affairs. "The distraction tools the DoD is funding were built for a world where adversaries generate fake images, fake video and fake audio and then try to pass it off as real," Ginsburg writes. "That world exists. But it is the easy version of the problem. ... Adversaries are poisoning the AI models that defense analysts, intelligence platforms, and policymakers rely on to sort real from fake in the first place." Iran, Israel and other states in the Persian Gulf restrict reporting and Internet access in ways that shape what and how AI models learn about the region, Ginsburg writes. Moreover, just 250 malicious documents can poison a large language model, forcing a complete retraining of the model. "This is the gap," he writes. "The Pentagon is building a better mousetrap while the mice are rewriting the blueprint for the house. Detection tools flag synthetic media ... after it has been created. They do nothing about a model that has been quietly trained to favor certain narratives, minimize certain conflicts, or omit facts a state actor would rather the world forget."

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUMMARY: Air Force social media posts included an article on an Air Force Defense Innovation Unit partnership to accelerate development of a follow on to the MQ-9A Reaper and a link to the Air & Space Forces Association's website. Space Force social media posts included coverage of the July 4 Block Party featuring Quinn Latifah and 1st Lt. Sabrina Taylor, an article on Department of the Air Force awards from the 2026 Department of War Environmental Awards, and a link to photoclassics showing the documentary "Always Above."

• Air Force on Facebook: Posts included a link to the Air & Space Forces Association. Total engagement was 402 reactions, 36 comments and 35 shares.
• Air Force on X: Posts included an article on an Air Force Defense Innovation Unit partnership to accelerate development of a follow on to the MQ-9A Reaper. Total engagement was 16 replies, 27 reposts and 276 likes.
• Air Force on Instagram: Posts included a photo by Staff Sgt. Dreme Young of F-15EX Eagle II flying in formation over the Pacific Ocean. Total engagement was 5,309 likes and 80 comments.
• Air Force on LinkedIn: Posts included a photo of Lt. Gen. Christopher Niemi, deputy chief of staff for force modernization. Total engagement was 2 reactions, one comment and two shares.
• Space Force on X: Posts included a link to photoclassics showing the Space Force documentary "Always Above." Total engagement was three replies, 20 reposts and 194 likes.
• Space Force on Instagram: Posts included a photo of a Falcon 9 launch from Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif. Total engagement was 331 likes and 16 comments.
• Space Force on LinkedIn: Posts included an article on Department of the Air Force awards from the 2026 Department of War Environmental Awards. Total engagement was eight likes.

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