

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY
COMMISSION
TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 11-12, 2023

After a successful 104th National Convention, the National Security Commission continued to work on several resolutions, engaged in advocacy efforts to prevent a government shutdown that would stop paying our military, and continued efforts to repeal outdated authorizations for use of military force (AUMF) used in Iraq and other operations.

National Security Resolution Screening Committee

The National Security Resolution Screening Committee meeting convened at 5 p.m. on October 2, 2023, supported by national staff and attended by the following:

- Matthew Shuman (AZ), Committee Chairman
- James Grenier Jr (VA)
- Devell Durham Jr. (NC)
- Gary Walker (WA)
- Elizabeth Hartman (NC)
- Theresa L. Pucket (VA)
- Richard Keiser (NY)

The committee reviewed and provided recommendations on the following resolutions:

- Resolution 25: North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) – **Approve**
- Registered Resolution 2843: Tricare Coverage of Dependent Adult Children - **Approve**

Additionally, the committee also reviewed and made the following recommendations:

- Resolution No. 2: Permitting Concealed Carry of Privately Owned Firearms on Department of Defense Installations - **Reject**
- Resolution No. 11: Expand Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Eligibility Criteria to Include Corrections Officers - **Reject**
- Resolution 31: Artificial Intelligence – **Hold for further study**
- Resolution 35: Support Legislation on the Importance of Veterans Service Organizations - **Hold for further study**
- Resolution 43: Artificial Intelligence - **Reject**
- Resolution No. 45: Establish Separate Paramedic/Emergency Medical Technician Award – **Reject**
- Resolution 46: Investigation of the United States Airspace - **Reject**

National Security Commission Meeting

The National Security Commission convened at 6 p.m. on October 3, 2023, supported by national staff and attended by the following:

- Chairman Matthew Shuman (AZ)
- Vice-Chairman Kenneth Trumbull (IL)

Other attendees included:

- James Grenier Jr (VA)
- Thomas Schottenbauer (MN)
- William Flanagan (IL)
- George Wehrli (FL)
- Elizabeth Hartman (NC)
- Doug Haggan (FR)
- 18 Commission members

Resolutions

Commission Chairman Matthew Shuman (AZ) led a discussion on the following resolutions to make recommendations to the Fall 2023 National Executive Committee:

- Resolution 25: North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) - The commission unanimously voted to **Approve**.
- Registered Resolution 2843: Tricare Coverage of Dependent Adult Children- The Commission voted to **Approve**.

Additionally, the Commission made the following recommendations:

- Resolution No. 2: Permitting Concealed Carry of Privately Owned Firearms on Department of Defense Installations - The commission unanimously voted to **Reject**.
- Resolution No. 11: Expand Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Eligibility Criteria to Include Corrections Officers - The commission unanimously voted to **Reject**.
- Resolution 31: Artificial Intelligence - The commission unanimously voted to **Hold for further study**.
- Resolution 35: Support Legislation on the Importance of Veterans Service Organizations - The commission unanimously voted to **Hold for further study**.
- Resolution 43: Artificial Intelligence - The commission unanimously voted to **Reject**.
- Resolution No. 45: Establish Separate Paramedic/Emergency Medical Technician Award – The Commission unanimously voted to **Reject**.
- Resolution 46: Investigation of the United States Airspace - The commission unanimously voted to **Reject**.

Since completion of the 104th National Convention, the Commission and National Security Staff has been actively involved in preparing for the following:

Increased engagement with DoD

The National Security Commission successfully hosted the top seven senior enlisted leaders from across DoD, and the U.S. Coast Guard during the 104th. The event was extremely well received by Legion members in attendance and the members of the panel. Due to this success, NS Staff began meeting with each of branch of military service to discuss military quality of life and the national military recruiting crisis. American Legion veterans are would-be advocates for a national call to service that is crucial to maintaining a strong national security posture as well as preventing any discussion for implementation or return to the draft. NS Staff will continue to engage with military and Legion leadership to discuss a strategy where supporting our troops and supporting a recruiting efforts remain a top priority.

Quality of Life Update (QOL)

The National Security Division worked vigorously to finalize logistics for the inaugural BASE Program visit aboard Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, AZ (MCAS Yuma) scheduled for October 22-24. In preparation, the division created a volunteer training syllabus and has worked with internal Legion staff to help advertise the evening town hall which is a key aspect of the program. Additionally, staff created standardized scripts and guidelines for execution of the town hall, provided recommendations for flyers, and reviewed contents of the program link/website. MCAS Yuma leadership has been extremely supportive and worked to facilitate all logistics required for the visit.

Additionally, NS Staff is in contact with several departments regarding future potential site visits. For clarification, NS Staff takes the lead in all coordination and site selection recommendations to the NS Chairman. Once sites are selected, NS Analyst Stapleton and Director Marquez begin direct planning and logistics negotiations with selected installation leadership.

NS Staff will begin formally documenting all QOL issues that are identified during the National Commander's Foreign travel and record them in the BASE program's annual report.

Military Recruiting Crisis

In 2022, the Army fell short of its recruiting target by 25%, missing 15,000 of the aimed 60,000 recruits. Similarly, the Air Force did not achieve its recruitment goal for the first time in over two decades, missing its target of 26,500 new active-duty airmen by 10%. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve lagged behind their objectives by around 30%. The Navy's recruitment also saw challenges, missing its 37,000-sailor mark by 6,000. On the contrary, the Space Force and the Marine Corps are on track to achieve their recruiting goals with a relatively modest target. The Marine Corps, aiming for 33,000 recruits (almost half of the Army's target), met its FY2024 goal by October 1st.

Three primary factors have been cited for this recruitment decline:

- A robust labor market
- A limited pool of eligible recruits based on academic, physical, and moral standards
- Diminished propensity/interest toward military service

This decrease in interest in the military is partly attributed to fewer interactions by the general population with current service members and reduced opportunities to advocate for a military career. Despite the recruitment challenges, the Defense Department and Congress remain firm in upholding their recruitment standards.

These recruitment hurdles have considerable implications for national security. Recruiting is pivotal for maintaining the strength and capability of the armed forces. A competent, adaptable, and potent military force requires the best candidates, especially when considering potential confrontations with challenging adversaries like China, Russia, and North Korea. It's crucial for the Department of Defense (DoD) to consistently draw and retain top-tier talent.

In addressing these recruitment challenges, each military branch employs specific strategies. The Army, Navy, and Air Force have introduced recruitment bonuses for essential roles. Additionally, they've reconsidered waiving previous disqualifications such as tattoos, obesity, and past marijuana use. In 2023, the Army scaled up its Future Soldier Preparatory Course after a successful 2022 pilot test run. This initiative enables eligible recruits to undergo academic or physical training, preparing them for basic training. Over 90% of the 3,200 recruits succeeded and finished basic training during the program's initial six-month period. A year into this program, nearly 6,100 recruits, who might have been otherwise rejected, successfully completed basic training.

Foreign Relations Committee meeting update

On Thursday, September 21, 2023, the Foreign Relations Committee met by Zoom. The meeting was the second of a special two-part series review aimed at discussing/potentially updating The American Legion's Resolution on Foreign Policy (Resolution No. 205: Foreign Policy Objectives).

The guest speaker was William Ruger. Ruger is the President of the American Institute for Economic Research, a veteran of the Afghanistan War, and an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserves. President Trump nominated Ruger to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and where he was a prominent advocate for ending America's participation in the war there. Ruger presented the case for a less activist U.S. approach to international relations.

In July, Alan Dowd made the case for an active and engaged, but not hyperactive, foreign policy posture.

These two meetings were opened to the Legislative Commission and Council members because of the potential legislative impact of a new and updated Foreign Policy resolution.

Attacks on Israel

On the early morning of Saturday, October 7, 2023, air raid sirens went off across Israel as Hamas commenced a massive rocket barrage attack that was accompanied by an air, ground, and sea assault. With hundreds of Israeli civilians killed and thousands more wounded, the casualties continue to grow as more information is released about the devastating attack that Israel is calling their "9/11".

Additionally, Hamas terrorists captured over 100 Israeli citizens, including military soldiers, and took them back into the Gaza Strip as prisoners, demanding the immediate release of Hamas prisoners currently detained in Israeli jails. The same evening, Secretary of Defense Austin announced the deployment of U.S.

naval and air forces to the Eastern Mediterranean as a deterrence measure/show of force. Nine American citizens have been declared deceased and others are missing. National security staff worked with Legion leadership, public relations and media staff to release formal statements in support of Israel and its right to defend itself, support for deployed American military forces and calling on Congress to confirm military leaders, pass DoD's budget and to pay our troops. The NS Commission will continue to monitor the situation.

-End Report-

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Shuman".

Matthew J. Shuman, Chairman
National Security Commission