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Sent: Friday, November 14, 2025 8:26 AM
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Subject: Executive Insight Brief

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.

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November 14, 2025

Executive Insight Brief

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Notable Headlines

[Russia Creates New Military Branch Dedicated To Drone Warfare](#)

[Hegseth announces operation 'Southern Spear' to quash 'narco-terrorists'](#)

[Feds should get at least most backpay by Nov. 19, administration says](#)

[Trump Administration Prepares Tariff Exemptions in Bid to Lower Food Prices](#)

[Colombia to suspend intelligence sharing with US over boat strikes](#)

View From The Hill

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives [returned](#) to Washington and voted to pass the Senate's continuing resolution (CR), as well as three full-year appropriations bills, ending the nation's longest-ever government shutdown. The CR fully funds the U.S. Government through January 30th, giving lawmakers breathing room to craft the remaining fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations bills. In voting this week, Congress also enacted full-year measures for Military Construction-Veterans Affairs, the Legislative Branch, and Agriculture-FDA programs. Notably, the Legislative Branch appropriations bill included a controversial [provision](#) that retroactively allows Senators to sue the federal government for at least \$500,000 anytime their phone records are searched by federal investigators without their knowledge. Several House Republicans objected to the language, which is aimed at former special counsel Jack Smith's investigation into the January 6th insurrection at the Capitol following the 2020 election of former President Joe Biden.

The 40-plus day shutdown only ended after a small number of Senate Democrats—none of whom are up for reelection in 2026—broke ranks with their party and voted with nearly all GOP Senators on the CR-minibus package. In exchange for their votes, Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) [promised](#) a December vote on expiring *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) insurance subsidies. But the result of such a vote and the prospects for the subsidies remain deeply unclear, prompting a wave of fury among progressives in Congress and across the country demanding a protracted fight with the Republican majority and the Trump administration. The expiring subsidies mean that millions of Americans who get their health insurance through the ACA exchanges are set to see their premiums skyrocket in the new year, [presenting](#) a deep political problem for House Republicans looking to defend their fragile majority in the 2026 midterm elections.

The prevailing **sentiment** among Democrats in the wake of the vote is that a loose commitment from Thune on a future vote is insufficient to end the pain of a federal shutdown, particularly after several high-profile political victories last week in New Jersey, Virginia, California, and New York City. Much of the anger has been directed at Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), even though he ended up voting against the funding agreement. The angst towards Schumer, along with his apparently **shrinking** presence around his home state, continues to contribute towards speculation that his 26-year tenure in the Senate may be coming to an end, particularly as progressive firebrands like Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and NYC mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani—whom Schumer declined to endorse—take more of the limelight in Empire State politics.

A state judge in Utah **presented** a victory for Democrats this week, when she threw out a gerrymandered congressional map from the GOP-controlled state legislature, gifting Democrats with a prime pickup opportunity in Salt Lake City. House Budget Chairman Jodey Arrington (R-TX) **announced** his intent to retire from Congress at the end of this term, as **did** Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ). Both seats are considered very safe for their respective parties. The grandson of former President John F. Kennedy, Jack Schlossberg, **announced** his intent to run in the New York City congressional seat being vacated by retiring Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY).

Democrats on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee **released** previously unknown email exchanges by disgraced late financier Jeffrey Epstein this week, in which he alludes to President Trump having knowledge of his trafficking of underage girls.

Pentagon News

Last Friday, we discussed Secretary Hegseth's planned announcement on acquisition transformation based on the leaked draft memo. This week, the Defense Secretary's new **Acquisition Transformation Strategy** was officially unveiled, along with a handful of memos that intend to fundamentally rework the defense acquisition system in a move that favors speed, flexibility, and disciplined execution. The Strategy serves as a clear indicator that the Department of Defense (DoD) is getting serious about keeping pace with adversaries, and centers on five major pillars: Rebuilding the Arsenal of Freedom

by beefing up the industrial base and fostering competition through longer contracts; Elevating and Empowering the Acquisition Workforce by creating a new Warfighting Acquisition University and consolidating decision-making authority into Portfolio Acquisition Executives (PAEs) to cut bureaucratic red tape; Maximizing Acquisition Flexibility by expanding fast-track prototyping and aiming to scrub some regulation from the FAR and DFARS; Developing High Performance Systems via the new Wartime Production Unit to merge public/private expertise; and finally, Improving Lifecycle Risk Management to make sure these new systems are sustainable and maintainable. This whole overhaul is in direct response to President Trump's April 9th [Executive Order](#), "Modernizing Defense Acquisitions and Spurring Innovation in the Defense Industrial Base," and signals a decisive pivot from an older, compliance-based framework toward a lean, wartime-ready model that's focused squarely on performance and competition.

While questions remain about some specifics of the new structure, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Michael Duffey has described the updated guiding principle as "schedule, performance, cost," as opposed to "cost, schedule, performance."

Additional specifics of the updated acquisition approach, such as a streamlined Foreign Military Sales process, will be ironed out in the coming months. Under Secretary Duffey clarified that legacy programs like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and the Columbia-class submarine will not be affected.

Turning to the Indo-Pacific, Guam's defense bureaucracy has also seen restructuring intended to increase acquisition efficiency.

The Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office (RCCTO) has [assigned](#) responsibility for the Guam Defense System Joint Program Office (JPO) to the U.S. Army Program Executive Office Missiles and Space (PEO Missiles & Space). Lt. Gen. Frank Lozano, the new director of the RCCTO, delegated the responsibility for the Guam Defense System JPO to Jeannie Sommer, Program Director of the Integrated Fires Directorate. This decision is designed to ensure leadership continuity as Lt. Gen. Lozano previously served as the head of PEO Missiles & Space.

The move shifts the JPO into a formal acquisition structure under PEO Missiles & Space, setting up a transition from early experimentation toward long-term development, integration, and fielding. This project will cost an estimated \$8 billion and represents one of the Army's largest integrated air-and-missile defense efforts outside the continental United States. With the Guam Defense System now embedded in the Integrated Fires Directorate, the program is set to progress through the stages of requirements refinement, site development, and spiraled capability delivery, leading to its planned initial fielding in FY27.

As the Guam Defense System formalizes its structure for kinetic defense, the DoD is simultaneously addressing the digital threat landscape.

The Department has [released](#) a revised Cyber Force generation model to attract and retain cyber talent by better integrating U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) with other military departments for recruitment and training. The plan establishes three new organizations to improve the military's hacking and defensive prowess, designating each different roles to prioritize the warrior ethos, and [echoing](#) hallmark sentiments from Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. These reforms are a response to threats from peer adversaries and the rapid pace of cyber innovation. Elbridge A. Colby, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, [affirmed](#) that the DoD was "laser-focused" on strengthening the military's cyber capabilities.

Under the memo's guidance, the Cyber Talent Management Organization will identify, attract, recruit, and retain an elite cyber force; the Advanced Cyber Training and Education Center will develop and deliver mission-specific training and education to build expertise and mastery; and the Cyber Innovation Warfare Center will accelerate the rapid development and delivery of operational cyber capabilities. Cyber operators will be trained and developed with the same combat-ready mindset as traditional warfighters, meant to [increase](#) their "lethality," resulting in better-trained operators executing more complex missions and a faster deployment of cyber offensive tools.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committee

House of Representatives NONE

Senate NONE

Appropriations Committee

House of Representatives NONE

Senate NONE

Homeland Security Committee

House of Representatives

- 11/20, 10:00 AM - Joint Hearing, Securing Global Communications: An Examination of Foreign Adversary Threats to Subsea Cable Infrastructure

Senate

- 11/19, 10:00 AM - Hearing to examine the nomination of Charlton Allen to be General Counsel, Federal Labor Relations Authority; John Walk to be Inspector General, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Thomas Bell to be Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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