



# Monthly Newsletter

## National Security Highlights



### A Note from the President

*Tracy Gregorio,  
President, Women in  
Defense Greater  
Hampton Roads*

*April is all about preparation—for new opportunities, new connections, and new ways to grow. On May 9th, Women in Defense Greater Hampton Roads will host a B2B event connecting our members with leaders from federal, state, city, and private-sector organizations.*

*In a time of shifting priorities and economic uncertainty, these organizations are seeking innovative partners who understand their challenges and can help meet evolving mission needs.*

*Our sponsors, Ferguson and Newport News Shipbuilding, will join others in highlighting gaps and building new relationships.*

*Come prepared to listen, learn, and show how your capabilities align. At WIDGHR, we know strong relationships drive opportunity—and together, we can help shape the future of defense and industry in our region.*

*With gratitude,  
Tracy Gregorio*

The April 2025 landscape for national security and business is marked by a convergence of trade tension and defense restructuring. This includes pivotal shifts, such as a 10% tariff on all U.S. trade partners and Department of Defense (DoD) workforce reductions. While these initiatives signal uncertainty, history offers a valuable lens for understanding—and navigating—these disruptions.

### Learning from the Past: The Smoot-Hawley Parallel

Nearly a century ago, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 triggered a dramatic global trade contraction. Over 20,000 goods saw tariff increases, leading to a 66% drop in international trade and deep economic hardship. Yet, some industries thrived. Automotive companies like Chrysler innovated with lower-cost models and grew market share. The entertainment industry adapted with budget-friendly double features, drawing crowds despite limited spending.

This historical moment mirrors today's environment. Back then, rising tariffs and shifting priorities forced businesses to evolve. Today, those same forces are back—but so are the opportunities for those ready to adapt.

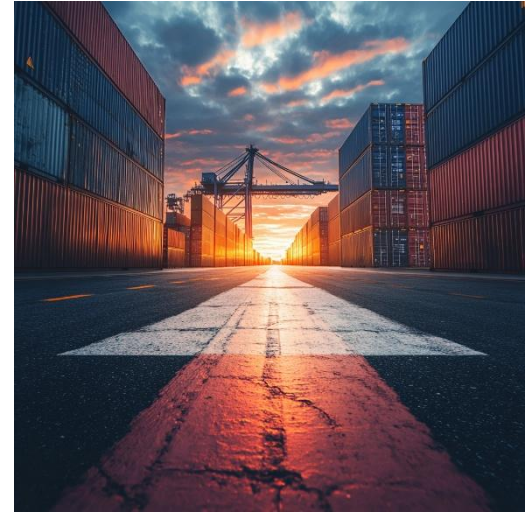
### Domestic Sourcing and Innovation

With tariffs increasing the cost and complexity of foreign imports, businesses have a strategic opportunity to strengthen operations by investing in domestic production and sourcing. This shift can reduce dependence on volatile global supply chains, enhance operational stability, and create new pathways for economic growth within local communities.

During the Great Depression, companies like Chrysler succeeded not by waiting for conditions to improve, but by proactively adjusting their offerings—producing more affordable vehicles that matched the economic realities of the time. Today's firms can adopt a similar mindset, designing cost-effective, high-quality products and services that meet emerging domestic demands.

Increased emphasis on domestic capability also aligns with evolving government and defense priorities. As funding and policy increasingly favor U.S.-based solutions, companies that build local partnerships, retrain their workforce, or invest in regional infrastructure may be better positioned for long-term success and new contract opportunities.

As the business and national security environment continues to evolve, those who adapt quickly—grounded in historical insight and forward-thinking action—will be best equipped to lead. By viewing today's disruptions not as obstacles but as inflection points, organizations can position themselves for growth, relevance, and impact in the months and years ahead.



## AI Tip of the Month

Choosing software that meets your business needs often involves lengthy research and deliberation, but ChatGPT can expedite this process by providing clear, concise comparisons. For instance, you can ask ChatGPT to evaluate multiple software solutions side by side—whether it's project management platforms, marketing automation tools, or data analytics services. By prompting ChatGPT for structured lists of pros and cons, you gain a quick overview of each solution's strengths, weaknesses, pricing models, and user experiences without having to sift through countless blog posts and reviews. This streamlined approach saves your team time and ensures more confident decision-making.

Once your organization decides on which tools to adopt, ChatGPT also serves as a digital assistant for getting started and troubleshooting. Ask ChatGPT about compatibility with existing systems or how to leverage a specific feature to solve a given challenge. Whether you need guidelines on how to integrate an application into your workflow or want tips on best practices for using it effectively, ChatGPT can quickly deliver targeted advice, step-by-step instructions, and practical workarounds.

## Try this prompt...

*Please compare the top project management software options for my mid-sized marketing agency. Outline key features, pricing models, pros and cons, and any integration concerns to help me decide which platform best meets our needs. Create a table comparing the options.*

## Heard at the Congressional Water Cooler...



As April 2025 begins, Congress continues to work through the implications of the March 23 government funding agreement, which narrowly averted a shutdown. The final FY25 continuing resolution preserved most defense topline while providing the Trump administration with additional authority to reprogram funds. Democrats ultimately supported the resolution to safeguard key domestic programs and ensure continued government operations, although partisan tensions remain elevated.

On March 4, President Trump delivered a Joint Address to Congress. While commonly referred to as the State of the Union, a president's first address to Congress in an inaugural year is traditionally considered a policy-setting speech rather than a retrospective report on the nation. In his remarks, President Trump outlined his national security priorities, including the creation of a new White House Office of Shipbuilding and a proposal for a "Golden Dome" missile defense system for the United States.

At the Pentagon, Secretary Pete Hegseth has announced major organizational changes. On March 29, 2025, he signed a memorandum initiating a realignment of the Department of Defense's civilian workforce. The plan aims to reduce duplicative roles and improve efficiency, with a targeted reduction of 5% to 8% of the civilian workforce. To support this initiative, the Pentagon has reopened the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and expanded voluntary early retirement options for eligible employees.

In addition, the Department of Defense has announced approximately \$580 million in contract and grant reductions as part of a broader effort to align spending with the administration's strategic priorities. Among the affected programs are initiatives related to ship-based carbon emission reductions, cultural training, and certain education grants.

On Capitol Hill, preliminary negotiations on the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) are underway. The House Armed Services Committee is expected to complete its markup by early June, with the Senate likely to follow in late June or early July.

For more Women in Defense Greater Hampton Roads news and information, select the following icons.



# Local Events

WID Hampton Roads

## Spring Business Expo

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

The Hampton Roads Chamber is showcasing businesses from various industries, including defense, technology, and professional services. Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with industry leaders, explore new business opportunities, and gain insights into regional economic trends. [More information here.](#)



## WIDGHR Industry Day

May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Industry Day is your gateway to mastering government contracting—learn directly from experts who've scaled successful businesses and gain insights into upcoming procurement opportunities. The event will include matchmaking sessions, networking over meals, and expert-led presentations. [Register now!](#)



## Hampton Roads Chamber Business Social

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

These monthly Chamber Business Socials bring together professionals from across Hampton Roads at local venues. The May business social will be held at iFly VA Beach, where the region's business leaders can mingle over complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. [Sign up now.](#)

## Featured Member Spotlight



### Hillary Boyce

*President and CEO*

*BAFO Services LLC*

Hillary Boyce is the President and CEO of BAFO Services LLC, where she helps clients respond to RFPs and build winning proposals. An Army veteran, Hillary applies her military experience to lead under pressure and deliver results. She is deeply involved in the defense community, serving on the board of AFCEA and previously earning their Small Business Person of the Year award.

A longtime supporter of Women In Defense Greater Hampton Roads, Hillary currently serves as Secretary—a role she's held several times. She values WIDGHR for its strong community and steady flow of new connections. Her advice to fellow professionals: take risks, try often, and treat every failure as a lesson.

If your business is looking to strengthen its proposals, Hillary can help. [Connect now!](#)