



# OFS IN BRIEF

The 20th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the two complementary U.S. missions in Afghanistan: counterterrorism operations and building the capacity of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

## U.S. Signs Agreement With the Taliban

pp. 17-19, 34-37

- The agreement signed on February 29 provides for the **immediate withdrawal** of approximately **4,400 U.S. troops**.
- The **Taliban** committed to **preventing terrorist groups** from operating in Afghanistan.
- U.S. and coalition forces agreed to a **full withdrawal** within **14 months**, contingent on the Taliban upholding its obligations.
- Regional powers, including **Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iran**, issued statements in support of the agreement.

## Taliban Increases Violence Before and After Agreement Signing

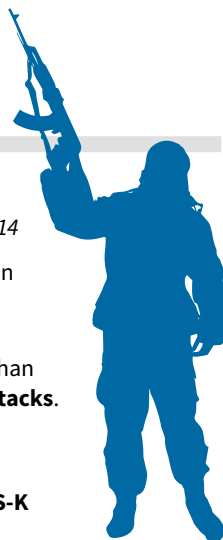
pp. 12, 15-20

- The Taliban **reduced violence against coalition** forces for 1 week prior to the agreement but **continued attacks on the ANDSF**.
- U.S. and Taliban forces both increased offensive activity early in the quarter to **strengthen their negotiating positions**.
- The Taliban launched more than **300 attacks** in the last 2 weeks of March.
- **17 insider attacks** against the ANDSF killed 48 Afghans and 2 U.S. Soldiers.
- The DoD, citing ongoing deliberations, **withheld the release** of attack data, which have previously been used as a metric of the conflict's intensity.

## ISIS-K Still Poses a Threat Despite Losses

p. 14

- ISIS-K's loss of its Nangarhar stronghold in November 2019 **diminished its capacity** to plan and recruit.
- ISIS-K continues to threaten U.S. and Afghan targets through **clandestine terrorist attacks**.
- **Taliban operations** contributed to the reduction of ISIS-K.
- The DoD estimates that **300 to 2,500 ISIS-K fighters** remain in Afghanistan.



## Political Impasse Over 2019 Presidential Elections Stalls Intra-Afghan Talks

pp. 38-39

- The Afghan Independent Election Commission declared incumbent president **Ashraf Ghani** the **winner** on February 18.
- Ghani's rival, Abdullah Abdullah, **disputed the results** and held a simultaneous inauguration ceremony on March 9.
- United States announced a **\$1 billion cut** in U.S. assistance to Afghanistan, and warned of a **further \$1 billion reduction** if Ghani and Abdullah do not resolve the dispute.
- The lack of a unified government, disputes over negotiating teams and prisoner releases, and violence **impeded negotiations** with the **Taliban**.

## COVID-19 Stresses Afghan Government, Economy, and Healthcare System

pp. 23, 39, 42-44

- The DoS announced **\$18.4 million** in COVID-19 support to Afghanistan, including assistance for displaced persons.
- Coalition forces **stopped in-person train, advise, and assist** efforts with the ANDSF but resumed some activities through telephone and e-mail.
- Afghan-Pakistani **border closings** aiming to stop the spread of the disease prevented or delayed necessary goods from entering the country.
- The large-scale **outbreak in Iran** contributed to a **surge of Afghan expatriates** returning to Afghanistan with only rudimentary health screenings at the border.
- Without sufficient action, an estimated **25.6 million Afghans** will likely be infected and **110,000 could die**.

## Oversight and Investigations

pp. 52, 56

- Lead IG agencies completed **2 reports** related to OFS, including an evaluation of **force protection** screening, vetting, and biometric operations.
- Lead IG and partner agencies collaborated on **97 investigations** involving **fraud, corruption, human trafficking**, and other crimes.