# Weekly Report

National Security Division

***Week ending 27 March, 2020***

National Security Strategy:

1. **Protect the homeland, the American people, and the American way of life**
2. **Promote American prosperity**
3. **Preserve peace through strength**
4. **Advance American influence**

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National Defense Strategy:

1. **Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force**
2. **Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners**
3. **Reforming the Department's business practices for greater performance and affordability**

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## Trump Administration Says U.S. Border With Mexico To Close To Nonessential Travel

Trump administration officials say nonessential travel between the U.S. and Mexico will halt as of Saturday to try to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

"The United States and Mexico have agreed to restrict nonessential travel over our shared border," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters Friday.

CDC has determined that the "introduction and spread of the coronavirus in the department's border patrol stations and detention facilities presents a serious danger to migrants, our front line agents and officers, and the American people."

Mexico has 164 confirmed cases of the virus as of Friday afternoon, according to a dashboard created by the Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering. At least one person has died.

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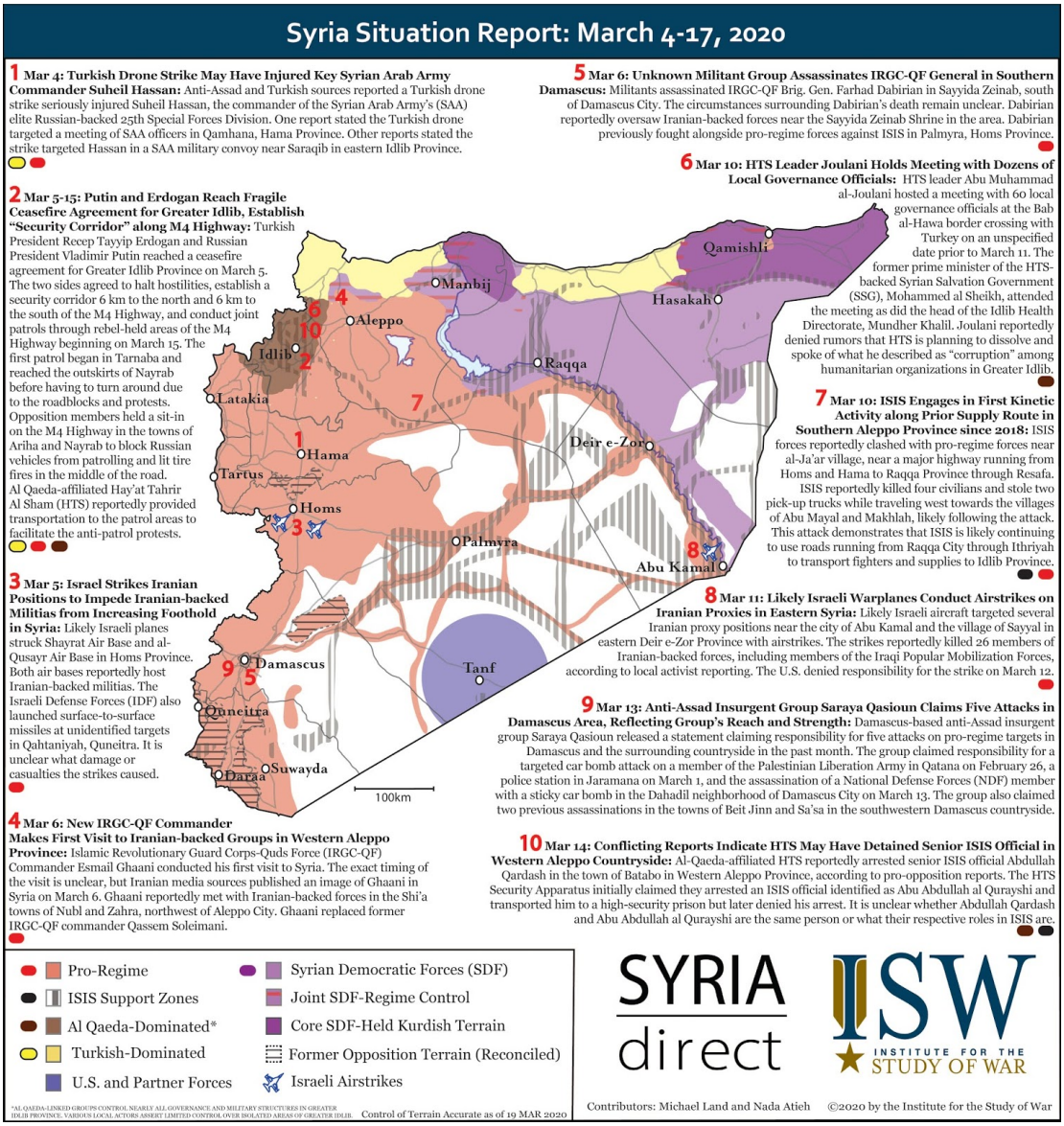
# Syria Situation Report: March 4 - 17, 2020

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## Italy reports 602 new coronavirus deaths

The death toll in Italy has reached 6,078 among 63,928 infections, as WHO chief warns pandemic is 'accelerating'.

More than 15,400 people have died from COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, globally. An estimated 100,000 of the 362,000 people who have been diagnosed with the disease across the world have recovered, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University.

Also on Monday, the World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned "the pandemic is accelerating" with it taking 67 days for cases to reach the 100,000 mark, 11 days for cases to reach 200,000 and just four days for cases to reach 300,000.

Meanwhile, in the US, the number of cases surged past 35,000, with a death toll of 495, according to John Hopkins University data.

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## U.S. Officials Believe Ex-FBI Agent Who Disappeared In Iran In 2007 Is Dead

Robert Levinson, a retired FBI agent who disappeared in 2007 while on an unauthorized mission in Iran for the CIA, is now presumed dead, White House officials and his family said Wednesday.

"We recently received information from U.S. officials that has led both them and us to conclude that our wonderful husband and father died while in Iranian custody," his family announced in a post on the group "Help Bob Levinson" on Facebook. "We don't know when or how he died, only that it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic."

A spokesman for Iran's mission to the United Nations, Alireza Miryousefi, said in a tweet, "Iran has always maintained that its officials have no knowledge of Mr. Levinson's whereabouts, and that he is not in Iranian custody. Those facts have not changed."

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## Defense Secretary Esper Says Military Has 'Limited Capacity' To Provide Hospital Beds

Despite urgent pleas from governors and mayors across the country, Defense Secretary Mark Esper cautioned on Wednesday that the U.S. military is not positioned to deploy nearly enough medical resources to address the scale of the coronavirus outbreak. And warning that the pandemic will "inevitably" alter the global strategic balance, he said the virus cannot be allowed to overtake national security as the Pentagon's top priority.

In an interview with NPR's Steve Inskeep, the defense secretary said that while the military may have "a lot of capability, [it is] not as much, I think, as many people think when it comes to medical capacity."

"What we have great capacity for is planning and logistics and things like that, when it comes to supporting civilian authorities," Esper said. "But in terms of hospitals, we have a limited capacity, maybe a few thousand beds ... at most."

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## As India goes into lockdown, fear spreads: 'Poverty may kill us first'

Bintar Khushwaha sat on the pavement, covered up to his ankles in dust as he folded his hands before me. "You are the maharaja", he told me softly, using the Hindi word for king. "Help us." A little child, no older than 5, sat next to him with a vacant look. He sat absolutely silent and still, as if paralyzed by shock.

While many Indians like myself, middle- and upper-class, post memes on Instagram, complain about the lack of options on Netflix, binge-eat candy and tweet about out our angst, millions more — the 2011 Census counted 45 million transient migrant workers — fear that poverty will kill them before the coronavirus can.

Even with relatively few confirmed cases reported, the coronavirus is already exposing the deep fault lines in India's society.

There's our broken public health system. The virus has been ferried by India's wealthy from countries visited in the past few months. But it is the poorest who will pay the harshest price, especially in a country where there is less than one doctor for every 1,000 citizens and only 2.3 critical care beds for every 100,000 patients. In 2019, India spent just 1.28 percent of its gross domestic product on health.

The next 21 days could decide India's next 21 years, as Modi himself conceded. During this extraordinary challenge, the prime minister should reach out to political rivals and make them part of the coronavirus response.

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## *POW/MIA Update*

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Click on the links to read more:

News Releases

March 23, 2020

Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Cale, R.)

Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Storms, H.)

March 24, 2020

Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Ferguson, E.)

Pilot Accounted For From World War II (Smith, E.)

## *Staff Activity:*

- National Security Division staff are closely monitoring the developing situation with COVID-19. In response to guidelines concerning social distancing, staff are working remotely to the greatest extent possible. During this time, we wanted to take a moment to affirm our commitment to maintaining business continuity and to assure you that we are ready and able to serve the needs of our members.
- National Security Division is leveraging Microsoft Teams platform to ensure continued connectivity and productivity during social distancing. The division conducts daily video conference calls to synchronize and coordinate team efforts. Additionally, staff stays in contact throughout the day using live chat and has access to all Legion systems remotely.
- Throughout the week, staff participated in conference calls to conduct planning for the upcoming NEC meetings and the National Convention.
- On Monday, March 23, staff participated in a conference call with the COVID-19 Military Support Initiative Partnership. This will be a weekly meeting that allows MSOs/VSOs/family support organizations to exchange information to help support military families affected by the pandemic.
- On Wednesday, March 25, National Commission on Military, National, & Public Service released published their Final Report, Inspired to Serve, complete with policy recommendations and legislative proposals. These were disseminated throughout Legion leadership. The 11-member commission, created by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), as Congress argued over whether the Pentagon should open combat roles to women service members, has determined that, for the first time in American history, women should be required to register for the Selective Service. The Senate Armed Services Committee had scheduled a hearing for March 31 on this report, but that has already been postponed. The full report can be found at: www.inspire2serve.gov.
- On Friday, March 27, staff participated in a conference call with Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper for an update on what the Department is doing to help with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Several links were highlighted for the public to track: https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/. Also, military family information is regularly posted to: https://www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus. Information for TRICARE beneficiaries is found at: https://www.tricare.mil/coronavirus

*Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division*