



# OFS IN BRIEF

The 19th 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).

## Taliban Peace Talks Restart

*pp. 10-11, 26-27*

- The Secretary of Defense characterized the war against the Taliban as a **“strategic stalemate”** that the Afghan government cannot win militarily.
- On November 28, President Donald Trump visited Afghanistan and announced the **United States would restart talks with the Taliban.**
- **Ambassador Khalilzad pushed for a reduction in violence** but was not successful during the quarter.
- Less than 1 week after talks resumed, **the Taliban attacked Bagram Airfield**, a major coalition base, killing 2 civilians and injuring more than 70 civilians.

## ISIS-K Abandons Historic Stronghold

*pp. 10, 13*

- More than **300 ISIS-K fighters and 400 family members surrendered** to Afghan forces in Nangarhar province.
- Afghan **President Ghani declared ISIS-K “obliterated”** in Nangarhar.
- The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that ISIS-K was “severely hurt,” but **has not been destroyed.**

## Violence Continues at Heightened Pace During Peace Negotiations

*pp. 11-15*

- More than **8,400 enemy-initiated attacks** occurred this quarter, the **second-highest number** since OFS began in 2015.
- **Enemy-initiated attacks were smaller in scale and proportionally less effective.**
- **Civilian casualties decreased** by more than 50 percent compared to last quarter, and 20 percent compared to the same period one year ago.
- In December, an **insider attack** in Ghazni **resulted in 23 ANA Territorial Force members killed.**

## China, Russia, Iran Pursue Their Own Agendas

*pp. 15-17*

- **China is likely open to cooperation with the United States** in Afghanistan to enhance security for its border and economic investments.
- **Russia likely sees Afghanistan as an opportunity to expand pressure on the United States**, undermining U.S. credibility while bolstering its Central Asian military presence.
- **Iran seeks to ensure its influence on any future Afghan government** and is attempting to play a central role in reconciliation talks.

## Preliminary Afghan Presidential Election Results Released

*pp. 27-28*

- Preliminary results indicate **President Ghani received more than 50 percent of the vote** in the September election.
- President **Ghani would win reelection** and avoid a second round of voting if the count is confirmed.

## Afghan President Orders Security Forces to Reduce Number of Checkpoints

*pp. 17-18*

- Afghan President Ghani ordered the ANDSF to **reduce the number of static checkpoints.**
- The **ANDSF relies upon an excessive number of lightly-defended checkpoints**, which are frequently attacked by the Taliban.
- The coalition has long recommended that the ANDSF reduce checkpoints, **but the problem has persisted for years.**

## Healthcare Gains in Afghanistan May Not Be Sustainable

*pp. 29-32*

- **Child and maternal mortality rates have decreased**, and access to healthcare facilities has increased.
- **Donor nations provide the majority of the funding** to sustain the healthcare system.