The 19th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) summarizes the quarter’s key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to defeat ISIS and train, advise, and assist partner forces in Iraq and Syria. Due to the events that unfolded in Syria after the quarter ended on September 30, this report covers events through late October.

Turkey Launches Offensive in Syria  pp. 16-17
- On October 9, Turkey launched an air and ground assault in northeastern Syria
- President Trump ordered about 50 U.S. forces to pull back from Syria-Turkey border, then ordered a full withdrawal

U.S. Administration Orders New Deployment to Northeastern Syria Oilfields  pp. 18-19
- As U.S. troops withdrew, the United States ordered mechanized forces to deploy to northeastern Syria oilfields
- Defense Secretary Esper said troops withdrawing from Syria will continue the OIR mission from Iraq, but later said they will only transit through

SDF Pulls Troops from ISIS Fight  pp. 18, 21-22
- The SDF, facing attack, halted the counter-ISIS fight to respond to Turkish incursion
- An SDF contingent continued to guard ISIS prisons; fewer than 200 ISIS detainees escaped
- SDF called U.S. withdrawal a betrayal, but said it will continue to partner with U.S. forces to fight ISIS

Syrian Regime and Russian Forces Move To Fill Vacuum  pp. 17-18, 24
- Syrian and Russian troops moved to fill the void left by U.S. forces and block Turkey’s advance
- Turkey agreed to halt advance in U.S.-brokered arrangement; Turkey conditioned freeze on Kurdish forces’ pullback from area of incursion
- Russia brokers long-term deal for Turkey to halt advance and SDF to withdraw from expanded area

ISIS Exploits Turkish Incursion and U.S. Troop Withdrawal  pp. 20-21
- The Defense Intelligence Agency reported that absent counterterrorism pressure, ISIS is likely to reconstitute in Syria in the short term, and globally in the long term

ISIS Leader al Baghdadi Dies In Raid  p. 26
- On October 26, a U.S. special forces raid into his northwestern Syria compound resulted in ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi’s death
- ISIS announced Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi al Quraishi as new ISIS “caliph”
- USCENTCOM Commander Gen. McKenzie said that al Baghdadi’s death does not end ISIS

Turkish Incursion Endangers Stabilization, Humanitarian Aid  pp. 40-42
- U.S. stabilization personnel were again withdrawn from Syria in wake of Turkish incursion, although most activities continued remotely
- Turkish incursion displaced 215,000; although some returned home, some 14,000 fled to Iraq

Turkish Incursion, U.S. Withdrawal Have “Minimal Impact” on Iraq Mission  p. 46
- OUSD(P)/ISA said that the events in Syria had minimal impact on the OIR mission in Iraq
- ISIS in Iraq continued to solidify command and control structures during the quarter

Iraq Imposes Air Restrictions Following Airstrikes on Iranian-Aligned Units  p. 51
- Iraqi government imposed air restrictions on foreign aircraft following suspected Israeli airstrikes on Iranian-aligned militia bases

Staff Drawdown Reduces Oversight of $1.16B USAID Portfolio  pp. 59-60
- Since the ordered departure of U.S. personnel from Iraq in May, USAID has had on average 6 staff in country versus 26 at the start of 2019
- USAID said that its remaining staff are only able to engage in the bare minimum coordination with other agencies and governments