

~~TOP SECRET~~ (b)(3);50 USC 3024(i)

This is page 56. Pages 1-55 are withheld in full citing (b)(1), (b)(3) 10 USC 424 + 50 USC 3024(i), and (b)(6), and are not provided.

(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i)

SUBJ: (U) Iraqi Minister of Defense Says ISIS Resurging Amid Fight Against COVID-19 Outbreak

SOURCE: Baghdad Al-Mada in Arabic 14 Apr 20

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

TEXT:

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SUBJ: (U) Iraqi Minister of Defense Says ISIS Resurging Amid Fight Against COVID-19 Outbreak

SOURCE: Baghdad Al-Mada in Arabic 14 Apr 20

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BODY

After more than 20 attacks and dozens of casualties in areas in northern Baghdad, the Ministry of Defense admitted that there is an escalation in armed operations and cases of infiltration by armed members of DA'ISH [Arabic acronym for ISIS] organization. Security sources in these areas assert that it would be difficult to eliminate the DA'ISH cells that became active lately without international assistance. The sources add that there are also technical obstacles preventing the pursuit of the remaining DA'ISH elements due to the absence of coordination between local fighters in these areas and the various branches of the armed forces.

The security sources told Al-Mada that "DA'ISH has so far carried out more than 20 attacks on the security forces and civilians in remote villages in Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah ad Din since March." On 12 April, DA'ISH carried out three attacks near Kirkuk and Diyala over the course of less than six hours. The sources said that the recent attacks "killed or wounded around 50 soldiers and civilians and that some of the attacks were carried out using explosive devices and rockets while others were direct clashes between the enemy, DA'ISH, and the security forces."

Minister is Busy

As the attacks escalated, Minister of Defense Najah al-Shummari, who, according to some leaks, is preoccupied with internal conflict at his ministry, admitted that there has been a recent spike in the number of terrorist operations. The security media cell announced on 13 April that several armed men were killed when their den was encircled during a security operation in southern Kirkuk. In a statement, the cell said: "The security forces at the forward operating base of the joint operations command in Kirkuk Governorate tracked a terrorist den that is home to a number of terrorist DA'ISH elements in Wadi ash Shay." There were reports on the kidnapping of soldiers in southern Kirkuk, but the joint operations command denied them.

According to leaked information, the Minister of Defense has been busy lately with removing some of his competitors at the Ministry. For instance, he transferred former spokesperson Yahya Rasul to the army command which is equivalent to sending a soldier into early retirement. According to a statement issued by the Defense Ministry on 13 April, al-Shummari said that there has been a recent increase in terrorist operations and infiltrations, and it is crucial to determine the reasons that led to that. Al-Shummari added that "a full evaluation must be made of all the terrorist incidents that took place across the operations' sectors," and said that "we must not allow the terrorist DA'ISH gangs to exploit the current situation in the country as it is battling the coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic."

In March, Al-Mada reported that the holdovers of DA'ISH continue to infiltrate into and out of the country despite the security fortifications and the fact that most of Iraq's neighboring countries have closed their borders with it to stop the COVID-19 outbreak. For more than two years, the holdovers of DA'ISH have been mastering the game

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of hide and seek in rugged terrain as they continue to exploit the previous political and military mistakes, which are yet to be rectified, to gain more time. Al-Shummari said: "We must intensify intelligence efforts, gather and analyze accurate information, and use all military efforts, including air force."

Escalation in Attacks

Sources said that DA'ISH has adopted a new tactic in the areas of northern Baghdad to launch attacks on the security forces. This new tactic consists of long-term monitoring of military barracks and waiting for a moment of complacency to launch an attack. This tactic was adopted after the decline in DA'ISH's ability to carry out wide-scale attacks in the past two years after it lost its influence in Iraq and its members scattered and are now isolated. Marwan al-Jibarah, one of the leaders of the Popular Mobilization Commission [PMC] in northern Baghdad, said to Al-Mada: "Despite the fact that DA'ISH is in Iraq, it is a threat to the entire world, and we need the Global Coalition to help us."

Over the last few months, US soldiers coordinated with the Iraqis to move on DA'ISH cells. However, since the death of Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi ally, Abu-Mahdi al-Muhandis, in early January, the joint operations stopped, and the Americans began focusing on protecting their own troops. Since that time, terrorist attacks started increasing as several members of the Global Coalition withdrew and ended training programs while the United States evacuated its troops from six bases.

Observers believe that DA'ISH, which has been on the decline since 2017, wants to exploit these opportunities amid the COVID-19 outbreak and the conflict among the armed factions in Iraq. Al-Jibarah, who is a member of a tribe that fought ISIS in eastern Tikrit, says: "There are military combining operations but there is no coordination between the PMC and the security forces. We need a war room."*

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Pages 60-83 are withheld in full citing (b)(1), (b)(3) 10 USC 424 + 50 USC 3024(i), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), (b)(7)(D), and (b)(7)(E) and are not provided. Pages 84-118 were deemed or contained open source information. This information was not processed, as Plaintiff considers open source information non-responsive to the scope of the request. Pages 119-138 are withheld in full citing (b)(1), (b)(3) 10 USC 424 + 50 USC 3024(i), and (b)(6) and are not provided.

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Actions
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(U) Iran: IRGC Commander Calls COVID-19 Outbreak as 'Enemy's' Biological War Against Some Countries
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(U) Iran: IRGC Commander Calls COVID-19 Outbreak as 'Enemy's' Biological War Against Some Countries

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

SUBJ: (U) Iran: IRGC Commander Calls COVID-19 Outbreak as 'Enemy's' Biological War Against Some Countries
SOURCE: Tehran Mashregh News in Persian 05 Mar 20

TEXT:

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

SUBJ: (U) Iran: IRGC Commander Calls COVID-19 Outbreak as 'Enemy's' Biological War Against Some Countries

SOURCE: Tehran Mashregh News in Persian 05 Mar 20

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[Internet]

[TRANSLATION]

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BODY

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Commander Salami stated: Our people have set some criteria that the enemy must move beyond them but, it cannot.

According to Mashregh, on 5 March at the farewell and inauguration ceremony of the commander of IRGC Sarallah Base in Kerman Province, [IRGC Chief Commander] Major General Salami referred to piety, loyalty to Velayat [-Fa'iqh guardianship of jurisprudence], jihad, and seeking martyrdom as the salient characteristics of the people of Kerman. He stated: These qualities are manifested in the warriors and commanders of this province. The most brilliant figure that manifested these characteristics wonderfully and remarkably was Commander Haj Qasem Soleimani. He was a symbol of prominent universal virtues and he will certainly be at the forefront of martyrdom in this world and the hereafter.

The IRGC Chief Commander added: Haj Qasem was a real outcome of piety and midnight prayers. He obtained this level of popularity through his piety, and God gave him the power of influencing and conquering the [people's] hearts. Haj Qasem Soleimani pioneered in having virtues and was at the forefront of love for Velayat. He was the first in jihad and the closest to the enemy's tent [military bases]. He was on the battlefield for 41 years without a moment of ignorance or inaction. He truly reflected the glory of protecting religion, the Revolution, Islam, and freedom.

He added: These true [characteristics] put Commander Soleimani in a situation where the funeral of his pure body was the most remarkable ritual in human history. The unique presence of the people of Iran and Muslim even non-Muslim countries at the time of his martyrdom fostered new spirit in people, revived resistance, and shattered all illusions of the enemy. The enemy noticed that Commander Soleimani had created a new resistance current around the world.

He stated: Kerman was a birthplace that cherished such a unique commander whose identity, personality, spirit, and attitude are a school of thought and as the Supreme Leader said, he was an embodiment of a school of thought. As time passes, his personality that was hidden for many years due to his position starts to flourish and becomes global. Today Haj Qasem is among us as an esoteric evidence. He is a role model and a symbol very similar to the people of Kerman. As he belonged and was attached to this land, his pure body was buried here.

The IRGC Chief Commander asserted: We left behind a very difficult year, but at the same time, it was very brilliant. Very difficult incidents happened, and the Revolution encountered great vicissitudes. We were in a close and operational battle with the enemies of the Revolution. They approached us and we got involved in a battle with them. We had some significant and some insignificant, covert victories. It was a difficult year, but at the same time, it was the year of victory and conquer.

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Saying that despite the enemy's intensive efforts, part of its hopes was dashed, Salami added: Wishing that the economic pressure and siege would finally make the Iranian people act against the regime in the streets and such calculations had fostered hope for the enemy, he added: However, fortunately, the incidents went on in such a way that they proved to be wrong. The enemy's lack of understanding and not knowing the people and the Revolution well was revealed. It did not know our people well, and if such incidents had not happened, the enemy would not have been able to understand that there was no affinity between it and the Iranian people, and they will never feel to be close to the [Global] Arrogance.

He said that the Iranian people came to the scene early this year [ending 20 March] when the Arrogance called IRGC as terrorist. The enemy assumed that the country would become a battlefield upon the gas price increase, but it failed because people, separated their path from rioters.

Referring to the wave [of people's presence] after the martyrdom of Commander Soleimani, the IRGC Chief Commander stated: The Friday prayer in Tehran, the 11 February rally [marking anniversary of victory of Revolution], and the [Majles] election defeated the enemy, and the [Iranian] nation indicated that it would not abandon its Revolution not even for a moment. People have set some criteria that the enemy has to act beyond them, but it cannot.

Saying: We are engaged in a biological battle today, but the country is firmly and strongly passing this tough period and will pass this year, Salami added: As the time passes, we feel that we need people more, and they become more influential in maintaining the Revolution. We feel that people will take the place of the armed forces in defending the Revolution. They have always uplifted us and made us feel proud against the enemy. We rely on people; we cannot go on without them. When we get linked to the ocean of people, we become inexhaustible and will never be defeated. Because of people the incidents in November had a reverse effect.

The IRGC Chief Commander went on to say: Today the war with this virus [COVID-19], which may be a biological invasion that primarily attacked China, then Iran, and other places, will return to them as verses of the holy Koran say. They will also get involved in it, though we will defeat it.

Commander Salami also stated: We have learned to defend the Revolution by changing and improving the behavioral patterns, and by employing them we have overcome many problems. The enemy still emphasizes economic pressure and psychological warfare and takes advantage of every opportunity to bring them together and make things difficult for people. It works on regional issues to take control of the region. We need to make every effort to take full advantage of the opportunities. Our country is secure and stable; our economy is rich, and we have plenty of resources and a high capacity of human resources.

The IRGC Commander stated: Today we have a strong school of faith that holds people strong in any situation, and this is the greatest asset that gives us life. Our [Supreme] Leader is the leader of this school and the living symbol of its values.

Stating that the incidents happening in this year were a miracle of reliance on God, Commander Salami added: We saw the thoughtfulness, deliberation, identification of the enemy, reliance on God, and courage in the decisionmaking of the great Leader of the Revolution. God has bestowed these great

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assets and blessings upon us. They are a school of thought and a great leader who runs the society with the divine and Koranic reasoning. He rules us and his ruling empowers us. Today we need to be strong and have no choice but to overcome the enemy. All our forces play a decisive role in this movement. We continue moving on this glorious path as we did in the past. We are close to victory and are sure that the divine will has promised to bring victory to believers. God will certainly open our eyes to new victories. Our enemies are truly helpless, desperate, and unable to advance. They have employed all policies and strategies, so we need to be strong.

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Pages 145-158 are withheld in full (b)(1), (b)(3) 10 USC 424 + 50 USC 3024(i), (b)(5), and (b)(6), and are not provided.

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(U) Indonesia: Moderna, Pfizer start decisive COVID-19 vaccine trials, eye year-end launches

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(U) **BODY**

(U) * Carl O'Donnell

(U) Reuters

(U) / Tue, July 28, 2020 / 12:15 pm

(U) Moderna Inc and Pfizer Inc launched two 30,000-subject trials of COVID-19 vaccines that could clear the way for regulatory approval and widespread use by the end of this year, the companies said on Monday. (JP/T. Sutanto)

(U) Moderna Inc and Pfizer Inc launched two 30,000-subject trials of COVID-19 vaccines that could clear the way for regulatory approval and widespread use by the end of this year, the companies said on Monday.

(U) The trials, both announced on Monday, are the first late-stage studies supported by the Trump administration's effort to speed development of measures against the novel coronavirus, adding to hope that an effective vaccine will help end the pandemic.

(U) Moderna stock rose 9%. Pfizer shares rose 1.6% in afterhours trade and its partner BioNTech, which developed the vaccine, rose 4.2%.

(U) Both vaccine candidates rely on a new technology that allows for faster development and manufacturing than traditional vaccine production methods but does not have an extensive track record.

(U) So-called mRNA, or synthetic messenger RNA (mRNA), teaches the immune system to recognize and neutralize the coronavirus by mimicking its surface.

(U) Moderna, which has never brought a vaccine to market, has received nearly \$1 billion from the US government, which is helping bankroll several vaccine candidates under its Operation Warp Speed program.

(U) Pfizer has an agreement to sell vaccines for 50 million people to the US government for around \$2 billion, if the vaccine is effective.

(U) More than 150 coronavirus vaccine candidates are in various stages of development, with some two dozen prospects already conducting human testing.

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(U) Johnson and Johnson is launching clinical trials in the US this week and could start a larger, late-stage trial as early as September. British drugmaker AstraZeneca Plc said it will begin large-scale US trials this summer of its vaccine under development with Oxford University researchers.

(U) "Having a safe and effective vaccine distributed by the end of 2020 is a stretch goal, but it's the right goal for the American people," National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Francis Collins said in a release announcing the start of Moderna's large Phase III trial.

(U) Manufacturers are ramping up production while testing is underway in order to respond as soon as possible to virus, which is still spreading rapidly around the world. COVID-19 has killed nearly 650,000 people worldwide and battered economies.

(U) Moderna could have tens of millions of doses ready when and if the vaccine is deemed safe and effective, Collins told reporters on a call.

(U) Pfizer said that if the trial was successful, it could seek regulatory approval as soon as October and supply vaccines for 50 million patients, at two doses each, by the end of the year.

(U) Pfizer aims for about 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021, and Moderna aims for 500 million-1 billion doses a year, beginning 2021, Moderna Chief Executive Stephane Bancel said on the call.

(U) The late-stage trials are designed to evaluate the safety of vaccines and determine if they can prevent symptomatic COVID-19.

(U) Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious disease official, said a readout from the Moderna trial could come by November or even earlier. Fauci said he was "not particularly concerned" about the vaccine's safety after seeing data from earlier, smaller trials. He also said he had briefed President Donald Trump about the trial the Oval Office on Monday.

(U) As other companies ready inoculations, the COVID-19 Prevention Network, a US government-funded program formed by the NIH, said it plans to roll out a large-scale clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine candidate with at least 30,000 participants each month through fall.

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(U) Singapore: US to pay Pfizer, BioNTech US\$1.95 billion for COVID-19 vaccine

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(U) **BODY**

(U) WASHINGTON: The U.S. government will pay nearly US\$2 billion to buy enough of a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Pfizer Inc and German biotech BioNTech SE to inoculate 50 million people if it proves to be safe and effective, the companies said on Wednesday.

(U) The contract for 100 million doses of the vaccine amounts to a US\$39 price tag for what is likely to be a two-dose course of treatment.

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(U) The contract is the most the United States has agreed to spend on a vaccine, although previous deals with other vaccine makers were intended to also help pay for development costs.

(U) Pfizer and BioNTech will not receive any money from the government unless their vaccine succeeds in large clinical trials and can be successfully manufactured, according to a Pfizer spokeswoman.

(U) Under the agreement, the government would also have an option to procure an additional 500 million doses. Pfizer said the price for the additional doses would be negotiated separately if the US orders them.

(U) The vaccine, if successful, will be made available to Americans at no cost, although their health insurance may be charged, the US department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said.

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(U) Pfizer Chief Executive Albert Bourla has said the company intends to make a profit on the vaccine. He has also said that spending its own money, rather than government money to develop the vaccine should help speed the process.

(U) Pfizer hopes to start its pivotal late-stage trial of the vaccine as early as next week, pending regulatory approvals, Chief Scientific Officer Mikael Dolsten said in an interview.

(U) "We're already starting to the process of allocating vaccine vials to a variety of different clinical sites in the US and elsewhere," Dolsten said. "We're looking at the map and getting good advice from the CDC. Where do we have the greatest incidence of COVID-19 disease?"

(U) Vaccine trials are more efficient if conducted in areas where high rates of active infection are prevalent.

(U) The vaccine has already shown promise in early-stage small studies in humans, producing the type of neutralizing antibodies needed to fight the virus. In those trials, subjects received two doses of the vaccine.

(U) The Pfizer/BioNTech candidate is one of the most advanced of over 150 vaccines being developed against COVID-19, which has claimed more than 600,000 lives globally and crippled economics.

(U) The vaccine utilizes the chemical messenger RNA to instruct cells to make proteins that mimic the surface of the coronavirus, which the immune system sees as a foreign invader and mounts an attack. Although the technology has been around for years, there has never been an approved messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine.

(U) The Trump administration has agreed to spend billions of dollars for the development and procurement of potential vaccines under its Operation Warp Speed program.

(U) The aim is to produce vaccines that can end the pandemic by protecting billions of people from infection or severe illness, and governments have signed deals with drugmakers to secure supplies of various candidates. Whether any will succeed remains far from clear.

(U) Other vaccine makers that have signed deals to receive US government funding for their efforts include Moderna, AstraZeneca and Novavax.

(U) Pfizer said it will deliver the doses if the product receives emergency use authorization or US approval as early as October after demonstrating safety and efficacy in a large Phase III clinical trial involving up to 30,000 subjects.

(U) Pfizer and BioNTech currently expect to manufacture up to 100 million doses globally by the end of 2020, and potentially more than 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021, subject to final dose selection from their clinical trial.

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(U) On Monday, the companies agreed to supply the United Kingdom with 30 million doses of the vaccine candidate, but did not disclose a price.

(U) Pfizer shares were up nearly 5 per cent, while BioNTech's US-listed shares were up 13 per cent.

(U) BOOKMARK THIS: Our comprehensive coverage of the coronavirus outbreak and its developments

(U) Download our app or subscribe to our Telegram channel for the latest updates on the coronavirus outbreak: <https://cna.asia/telegram>

(U) Source: Reuters

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