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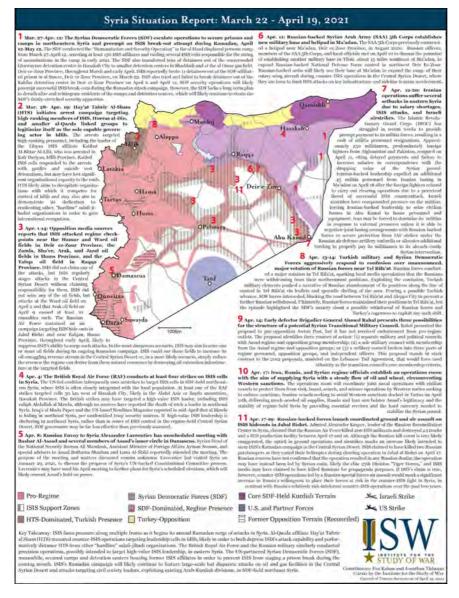
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## Syria Situation Report March 22 - April 19, 2021

By Eva Kahan and Jonathan Tishman

Key Takeaway: ISIS faces pressure along multiple fronts as it begins its annual Ramadan surge of attacks in Syria. Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS) mounted counter-ISIS operations targeting leadership cells in Idlib, likely in order to both depress ISIS's attack capability and performatively distance HTS from other "hardline" Salafi-jihadi organizations. The British Royal Air Force and the Russian military similarly conducted precision operations, possibly intended to target high-value ISIS leadership, in eastern Syria. The US-partnered Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), meanwhile, secured camps and detention centers housing former ISIS affiliates in order to prevent ISIS from staging a prison break during the coming month. ISIS's Ramadan campaign will likely continue to feature large-scale but disparate attacks on oil and gas facilities in the Central Syrian Desert and attacks targeting civil society leaders, exploiting existing Arab-Kurdish divisions, in SDF-held northeast Syria.

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ISW Board Member Gen. (Ret.) Petraeus discusses key issues in the Middle East.

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