

# *Pentagon warns coronavirus outbreak could last for months in U.S.*

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Washington, March 26 (RHC)-- The U.S. Defense Department has warned that the fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak in the country could continue for months and the American military would continue to support efforts to counter the COVID-19 crisis.

The highly contagious disease could last for “a period of months,” U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday when asked how long the outbreak may last and how long the military would continue the support efforts to counter it. “I think we need to plan for this to be a few months long at least and we’re taking all precautionary measures to do that,” the Pentagon chief added.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 720 people and infected over 55,000 in the United States, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. U.S. health experts have sharply rebuked President Donald Trump’s administration for initially downplaying the crisis and lagging behind in testing efforts.

On Monday, Esper announced more security restrictions on those entering the Pentagon. He said that Defense Department employees teleworking should expect to continue to do so for “weeks for sure,

maybe months.”

Separately, U.S. Army General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the outbreak could last into July, citing models from the experience of other countries. “If it does apply, you’re looking at probably late May, June, something in that range, could be as late as July,” Milley said.

A US Navy officials said Tuesday three American sailors on board the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean have tested positive for the coronavirus, underscoring the impact the virus was having on the US military.

U.S. Navy Secretary Thomas Modly told a news conference at the Pentagon that the three had been quarantined and were being flown off the ship.

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