

## FOREIGN TERRORIST STRUCTURES IN AFGHANISTAN: CENTRAL ASIAN DIMENSION

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**Annotation:** *This article is devoted to the analysis of the prerequisites, driving forces, and geography of the expansion of foreign terrorist organizations in Afghanistan in the context of the regional security of Central Asia.*

**Keywords:** *Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Central Asia, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, IMU, UTO, FTO*

Great power politics (Geopolitical confrontation of great powers) in Afghanistan in the second half of the 20th century ended with the transformation of its territory into the epicenter of global jihad and a terrorist safe haven. The policy of intervention, dictated by the logic of the Cold War and the realities of intra-Afghan life, made it necessary for the armed opposition (the Afghan Mujahideen, and later the Taliban) to enlist external support. As a result, numerous young men, “freedom fighters” from all over the Muslim world responded to their call and, with the overt and covert assistance of government and non-government organizations, joined the Afghan jihad.

The militants from Central Asia are the most active and integral part of the “terrorist international” in Afghanistan. Becoming members of the “international radical Islamist movement”<sup>1</sup>, they integrated into the structures of such global terrorist organizations as “Al-Qaeda” and “Islamic State of Khorasan Province” (IS-K) and, under the flag of which carried out terrorist attacks in different parts of the world. However, in the early 1990s, their goals and aspirations were largely of a local and/or sub-regional character.

The withdrawal of the US and coalition forces from Afghanistan and the rise of the Taliban to power in Kabul raise a number of questions; in particular, “Does the restoration of the “Islamic Emirate” mean a break in the historically traditional ties between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and other members of the “terrorist international”? What will be the fate of foreign terrorist organizations in Afghanistan? Is the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan” able to eliminate the IS-K threat? Currently, these issues remain on the agenda of security policy of the neighboring states and are the actual subjects of discussion among the expert

community.

### **From local (sub-regional) to global jihad**

It is known that the “parent terrorist organization” in Central Asia is the “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan” (IMU) which originated from such radical and extremist groups as “Adolat” (“Justice”), “Tavba” (“Penance”) and “Islom Lashkarlari” (“Warriors of Islam”). In the early 1990s, they attempted to change the constitutional order in Uzbekistan by creating parallel local government institutions in the provinces of the Fergana Valley, which by that time was an Achilles' heel within the Central Asian regional security complex.

There is no doubt that religion (or religious factor) is one of the key elements of the analysis of security dynamics in Central Asia, and especially in the Ferghana Valley. The population of the Valley traditionally distinguishes by a high level of religiosity. Religious values deeply penetrated into public life and were an important element in shaping people's way of thinking and educating young people. At the same time, having absorbed the traditions and customs of the peoples of the region who converted to Islam, they formed a kind of containment shell protecting from external negative influence, including from radical and extremist ideas. In this regard, Bahtiyar Babadjanov, a leading scholar in this field, notes, “*The formation of the IMU and similar organizations did not result solely from confrontations between believers and the state, for an intra-confessional conflict was also unfolding. Most believers followed the traditional theologians of Central Asia, whose positions had developed over the many centuries of the community's interactions with non-Muslim political and cultural substrate*”<sup>2</sup>.

In the second half of the 1980s transformation of social and political life, decentralization of power and the growth of economic pluralism in the former Soviet Union weakened the traditional foundations of the Soviet regime (the vanguard role of the Communist party, the foundations of a planned economy, censorship, etc.). These trends, in turn, contributed to the strengthening of centrifugal processes in the former Soviet republics and the revival of the national and religious self-consciousness of people. In this sense “*The successful activity of the IMU in those years was more connected with the degradation of state power during the collapse of the USSR than with the support of Islamist ideas by the population,*”<sup>3</sup> said Dr Martha Brill Olcott, a leading US academic on Central Asia.

On the other hand, in the light of globalization and the growing interdependence of societies, nations, and states purely domestic problems cannot remain within the framework of national frontiers for a long time. The dynamics of international relations, as well as internal and regional conflicts will ultimately “raise” the issues to a higher level than national. In this sense, the Central Asian radical groups fought their way into the global jihad through the civil war in Tajikistan and the conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. They were directly involved in the fights against pro-government forces as part of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and fully integrated into its structures. The main ideologist and one of the leaders of the IMU, Takhir Yuldashev, had a membership card of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT)<sup>4</sup>. The group had training camps and bases in Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan<sup>5</sup> (mainly in Kunduz<sup>6</sup>).

The Tajik civil war contributed to the establishment and strengthening of their ties with the main actors in the Afghan theater: the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani network. It is noteworthy that the establishment of the so-called “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan” in 1998 was announced in Afghanistan<sup>7</sup>. The IMU militants used the Taliban and Al-Qaeda infrastructures in Afghanistan. Before the start of combat operations of the international coalition forces in 2001, the defense of Kunduz, the strategically important direction, was entrusted to Juma Namangani. The “al-Qaeda” and the IMU militants united under his command<sup>8</sup>.

In Afghanistan, the Central Asian militant groups were influenced by the global jihad, and their intentions and objectives experienced a transformation. The Haqqani network, a traditional key actor in the Afghan resistance against both the Soviet Union and the US and coalition forces, played an important role in the internationalization of the activities of the Central Asian groups. The training camps and bases of the “Haqqani network” served as the place “transforming *muhajirun* into *mujahideen*”<sup>9</sup>. The initial volunteers, “Afghan Arabs”, participants in the Afghan jihad, were trained in its bases<sup>10</sup>. In the beginning of 1992, there was organized the training of Central Asian militants (mainly in the al-Furqan camp) in the Zawara Valley in the Afghan province of Khost. Initially (1992), militants of the armed Tajik opposition were trained. The first group of the fighters from Uzbekistan arrived in Zavara in 1994<sup>11</sup>.

Members of the Central Asian factions remained staunch allies of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in their fight against the Northern Alliance and

international coalition forces. The overthrow of the Taliban government in 2001 dealt a serious blow to their activity in Afghanistan. Remnants of al-Qaeda, the IMU and other foreign terrorist groups had taken refuge in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

### **The Terrorist International: Relationship Based on the Principle of Communicating Vessels**

The chain of events that has swept through the countries of North Africa and the Middle East since the end of 2010 had been characterized by demonstrations, mass protests, and change of political regimes, civil wars and a security vacuum. Against the backdrop of an open confrontation between regional and world powers, together they gave a new impetus to the actualization of foreign terrorist organizations phenomenon and the deepening of their relationship *on the principle of communicating vessels*. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 led to another large influx of terrorists from the Middle East, Central Asia and Pakistan<sup>12</sup>.

In January 2015, at the Kurram agency of FATA were formally announced the creation of “*Islamic State of Khorasan Province*”, a cell of the so-called. “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria” (ISIS) in the Afghan-Pakistani borderlands, which meant *de jure* and *de facto* expansion of IS activities beyond the zone of its traditional influence - the Middle East and/or the Arab world. Some of the *IMU* militants were among the first to take an oath of allegiance (*bay'at*) to ISIS. However, the change of the white flag of the Taliban to the black one of the ISIS (in the summer of 2014) is due to financial difficulties and the search for alternative sources of funding, on the one hand, and a divergence of views with the Taliban regarding the goals and objectives of jihad in Afghanistan and beyond, on the other.

A characteristic feature of the Afghan jihad is that foreign fighters and groups representing them, use the territory, bases and training centers of the hosts, i.e. Afghan Mujahideen, while not having full freedom of action. One of the leaders of the Taliban movement, Sirajiddin Haqqani, criticizing Karzai government for the lack of control over the actions of the US and coalition forces in Afghanistan, noted that the Arabs and other foreign groups operating in the ranks of the movement were “under his control”<sup>13</sup>.

Confirmed by the fact that in November 2015, in Zabul province, the

Taliban killed a large number of IMU militants, along with its leader, Usman Ghazi, and thereby dealt a serious blow to the combat capability of the group. The actions of the Taliban were not caused only by the existing differences between these groups and/or the desire of the Central Asian group to find an alternative to the masters. This was a kind of retribution by the Taliban for an attempt by a foreign group to get out of its control in the Afghan jihad. In the words of Abdulhak al-Turkestani, emir of the “East Turkestan Islamic Party”, the IMU “disappeared” after it became “on the path of war with the Taliban”<sup>14</sup>.

This seriously undermined the foundations of the organization and led to its further fragmentation. In the summer of 2016, part of the IMU fighters, who have no connection with “Khorasan Province”, declared their loyalty to the Taliban and their readiness to “fight against the enemies of religion shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim brothers of Afghanistan”, as well as openness to other jihadist groups in Afghanistan<sup>15</sup>.

Over the past years, the IMU, once the leading terrorist organization in Central Asia, had lost its former “significance” in the jihadist environment. It was able to stay afloat for a certain period after the overthrow of the Taliban government under the control of the Afghan Taliban and in cooperation with the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda. In North and South Waziristan (FATA), the group introduced itself aggressively against the local Pashtun population, sowed discord between various tribes and was involved in the murder of tribal leaders (maliks and khans). As a result, they were subjected to a three-pronged attack, which is expressed in “increasing pressure from a combination of ethnic violence, CIA drone strikes, and Pakistan Army operations”<sup>16</sup>. The physical removal of the IMU’s top leadership, the split, the outflow of some of its militants to other groups, and financial difficulties have combined to turn the group into a marginal force.

There is no doubt that, currently, the IS-K is the main threat undermining the capacity of the Taliban regime and its relations with neighboring countries. While maintaining its presence in the east of Afghanistan, mainly in Kunar and Nangarhar, it is also expanding its cover to the northern and northeastern provinces of the country. The group is actively recruiting militants from Central Asia into its ranks, which, according to experts, “to not only boost its numbers, but also make inroads across the region”<sup>17</sup>. (According to some estimates, at present stage around 200 fighters from Central Asia operate under its flag<sup>18</sup>). The

IS-K seeks to utilize Afghanistan as a regional base for attacks elsewhere<sup>19</sup>. For these purposes, the “Voice of Khorasan”, the propaganda magazine of the terrorist organization, publishes materials along with Pashto and Persian, also in Uzbek (“Khuroson Ovozi”) and Tajik<sup>20</sup>.

Nevertheless, *Al-Qaeda* established in 1988 in the Afghan-Pakistani border area, remains as the traditional and root terrorist organization in the structure of the Afghan jihad. As a parent organization, it has an extensive network of cells in many regions of the world. Since the 1980s Afghanistan and Pakistan have served as a springboard for the training of Al-Qaeda militants, the seat of its leadership, organization and coordination of terrorist attacks around the world.

Unlike IS-K (in the recent past), Al-Qaeda does not have “territorial possessions” in Afghanistan. However, this did not prevent the group from having an extensive network of training bases and camps in its territory. Bill Roggio and Thomas Joscelyn, leading experts in the field, claim the presence of Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups in 18 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces in the spring of 2021<sup>21</sup>. According to some estimates, from 200 to 500 militants were under its direct control<sup>22</sup>, which (including Al-Qaeda cells in the Indian subcontinent (AQIS)) maintain its presence in the east (Paktika, Zabul, Ghazni) and south (Nimruz, Kandahar, Helmand) of Afghanistan, where the group fought against the former Afghan government on the side of the Taliban<sup>23</sup>. With the takeover of Kabul, members of the organization released from government prisons replenished its ranks.

At the present stage, the question of the current level of its relationship with the Taliban, which established its power in Afghanistan in August 2021, is relevant. According to the UN, relations between them “*remain close and mutually beneficial*”<sup>24</sup>. The fact is that the alliance, functioning on the principle of *quid pro quo*, withstood the “test of time”. Al-Qaeda provided resources, trained the movement's fighters, and served as military instructors and religious mentors. In return, the organization used the territory controlled by the Taliban and was under its protection. Moreover, the Taliban are hoping to enlist the support of foreign groups (mainly the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e Taiba, etc.) in building a broad coalition against IS-K in Afghanistan<sup>25</sup>.

As for the terrorist groups “representing” Central Asia, all more or less well-known groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Katiba at-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ), Katiba Imam al-Bukhari (KIB), The Islamic Jihad

Union (IJU) and Jamaat Ansarullah operate in close contact with Al-Qaeda, which has played a key role in establishing and funding their activities. The galaxy of jihadi groups in Afghanistan that operate within Al Qaeda's orbit, including Central Asian ones, are said to "have greater freedom of movement around the country"<sup>26</sup>.

***The Islamic Jihad Union*** is one of the closest to Al-Qaeda Central Asian group. The "Union", which arose in 2002 based on disagreements regarding the goals of the organization with the leadership of the IMU, advocated the expansion of "jihadist activities" beyond the borders of Uzbekistan<sup>27</sup>. The Central Asian states, Afghanistan, Pakistan and some European countries became the objects of their terrorist aspirations, which corresponded to the strategic visions of Al-Qaeda. Experts, speaking about the existence of close ties between the IJU and Al-Qaeda, refer to the role of Abu Lays al-Libi, one of its leaders, who was considered as the ideologist of the Union and a link with al-Qaeda<sup>28</sup>.

The IJU, learning from the experience of the Haqqani network, its key Afghan partner, actively encouraged the recruitment of foreign fighters into its ranks. In some years, immigrants from other countries, in particular, Pakistan, Turkiye, Germany, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the United States, dominated its ranks<sup>29</sup>. The IJU also actively cooperates with Central Asian (IMU, KTJ and Jamaat Ansarullah), Pakistani (Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e Taiba) and Uyghur (East Turkestan Islamic Movement) groups, members of the international terroristic organizations in Afghanistan.

Unlike the KIB and KTJ, which are actively involved in the Syrian conflict, the main field of jihadist activities of the IJU is Afghanistan. Its presence in the Syrian conflict was limited (It is noted that in 2019 a small group of about 30-40 people arrived in Syria from Afghanistan)<sup>30</sup>. In Afghanistan, the geographical coverage of this Central Asian group was not limited to the north, but extended to the eastern provinces of the country<sup>31</sup>. IJU fighters took part in the capture of the strategically important province Kunduz by the Taliban in 2015. According to UN estimates, the IJU remains as the most combat-ready Central Asian group in northern Afghanistan (Badakhshan, Baghlan and Kunduz) to this day. Ilimbek Mamatov, a native of Kyrgyzstan, heads the group<sup>32</sup>.

***Katiba Imam al-Bukhari*** and ***Katiba at-Tawhid wal-Jihad*** represent a new generation of terrorists from Central Asia. Analyzing the activities of the KIB, experts note its three cells: Afghan, Syrian and Turkish. In Syria, the KIB was

considered as the largest Central Asian group. Most of its members are from Central Asia and have received combat training in Afghanistan<sup>33</sup>.

The Afghan cell of the KIB, like other Central Asian groups, mainly operates in the north of the country. The KIB recognizes the jurisdiction of the Taliban. In 2014, in Syria, the group's militants publicly pledged its allegiance to the leader of the Taliban. The summary of the video message emphasizes the fact of the “establishment” of the KIB on the basis of the sanctions of the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”<sup>34</sup>. Its main sources of funding are external sponsors, including financial assistance coming through “hawala” channels from its leadership in Idlib, as well as smuggling goods from Turkmenistan<sup>35</sup>. Financial opportunities, in turn, increase its attractiveness to members of other groups. Its ranks are expanding through active recruitment of the local population. At present, a Tajik citizen, Dilshod Dekhkanov, heads the group<sup>36</sup>.

***Katiba at-tawhid wal-jihad*** (also known as ***Jannat oshiqdari***), a Central Asian terrorist group, a participant in jihad in Syria and Afghanistan. Its founder is Sirojiddin Mukhtarov (better known as Abu Saloh), a native of the Osh region, an ethnic Uighur, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan. In the early 2000s, he received his religious education at Al-Fatah al-Islamiya University in Syria. In 2012, he returned to Syria and joined the KIB terrorist group<sup>37</sup>. In 2014, created a new organization, the KTJ, which included militants who had broken away from the IMU, the KIB and the East Turkistan Islamic Party. The Kyrgyz special services believe that the KTJ is responsible for the terrorist attack near the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek in August 2016.

The KTJ is characterized as a staunch supporter of al-Qaeda. In his sermons and numerous video messages, Abu Saloh demonstrated his commitment to the global jihadist ideas of Al-Qaeda. He regards jihad in Syria and Afghanistan as a preparation for jihad to liberate the holy land of Palestine and Central Asia from infidels<sup>38</sup>. Its current leader, Hikmatov, has been the IJU's deputy leader in Afghanistan for almost twenty years, which also explains the group's activity on two fronts. Thanks to him, the coordination of the activities of the KTJ and the IJU, including in matters of financing, has been established.

***Jamaat Ansarulla***, another terrorist organization of Central Asian origin, created by immigrants from Tajikistan. The “parent organization” for the Jamaat is the IMU. In 1997, Amriddin Tabarov (better known as Mullo Amriddin), one of the deputy of UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri, did not accept the terms of the



peace agreement with the Tajik authorities and founded Jamaat Ansarullah. Until his death in 2016, he remained its permanent leader. In 2012, the Supreme Court of Tajikistan recognized the group as a terrorist organization and banned its activities in the country.

The group retains its presence on the territory of Afghanistan even after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. In the summer of 2021, the Taliban entrusted Ansarullah militants with the protection of a section of the Afghan-Tajik border in five districts of Badakhshan<sup>39</sup>. The current leader of the group is 28-year-old Muhammad Sharipov or Mahdi Arsalan, a native of the Rasht region of Tajikistan, the son of Mirkhoja Sharipov<sup>40</sup>, and a close associate of A.Tabarov, who joined Jamaat in 2014.

### **Conclusion**

An analysis of the background, driving forces and geography of the expansion of foreign terrorist organizations in Afghanistan leads to the following conclusion:

*Firstly*, a global war on terrorism and the overthrow of the Taliban government after the events of September 11, 2001, the unleashing of an armed conflict in Syria and Iraq, unprecedented in its scale, methods of confrontation and the circle of participants, together, gave a new impetus to the actualization of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist organizations, deepening their interconnection on the principle of communicating vessels and further integration and internationalization of jihadist activities around the world;

*Secondly*, the rooting of Al-Qaeda in the Afghan-Pakistani borderlands is mainly due to its historically close ties with the Haqqani network, on the one hand, and the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, on the other. Their “bonds of friendship”, at least with their individual segments, have shown their viability and remain strong today. Al-Qaeda sees the Taliban's victory as an opportunity to strengthen and expand its jihadist activities. It seems that in the short term this strategically important space will retain its attractiveness and significance for Al-Qaeda;

*Thirdly*, the terrorist attacks committed after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan testify to the viability of the IS-K, which poses a threat to the functioning of the Taliban government. It seems that the complete and final “squeezing out” of this terrorist organization from the Afghan-Pakistani border

area or the achievement of any tangible success in this matter requires political will and coordination of actions of all main actors at the regional level;

**Fourthly**, the Taliban, having established their government in Afghanistan, will certainly pursue the goal of building mutually beneficial relations with its neighbors and seek international recognition. The interests of the regime, the imperatives of security and the objective need to consolidate power determine the conduct of a balanced foreign policy by the Taliban. At the same time, a Taliban victory could lead to a bifurcation of the goals of the movement and foreign fighters, with the former weakening the control over the actions of the latter. Under these conditions, there is a high likelihood of foreign fighters uniting around a new al-Qaeda narrative or joining a certain part to the IS-K;

**Fifthly**, the Central Asian groups, having long-standing ties of friendship and relationships with international/foreign terrorist organizations and armed groups, remain as their in-demand tools. This demand is due, first, to the mutuality of their goals, objectives and the search for financial sources (in case of terrorist organizations), as well as the need to maintain protection and freedom of action on the territory of Afghanistan (in case of the Taliban). At present, the leaders of the Central Asian factions are trying to unite the disparate groups under a single command.

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<sup>1</sup> Белокреницкий В.Я. Пакистанский исламизм и Центральная Азия // <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/pakistanskiy-islamizm-i-tsentrlnaya-aziya>.

<sup>2</sup> Babadjanov B. et al. Islam in the Ferghana Valley: Between National Identity and Islamic Alternative. In: Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia / Ed. by S.F. Starr, B. Beshimov, I.I. Bobokulov, P. Shozimov. New York – London: M.E. Sharpe, 2011. – P. 326.

<sup>3</sup> Олкотт М.Б. Велика ли угроза джихада в Центральной Азии? [uisrussia.msu.ru/docs/nov/pec/2009/2/ProEtContra\_2009\_204.pdf].

<sup>4</sup> Б. Бабаджанов. «Исламское движение Узбекистана»: джихад как идеология «изгоев» // Россия и мусульманский мир. – 2010. – №3. – С. 106.

<sup>5</sup> М. Б. Олкотт. Провал джихадистских движений в Узбекистане // Россия и мусульманский мир. – 2010. – №3. – С. 125.

<sup>6</sup> Due to its strategically important geographical location in the center of the transport hub of the north and northeast of the country, the heterogeneous ethnic composition, economic assets (presence of drug processing laboratories, the port of Sher Khan Bandar on the Afghan-Tajik border, etc.), Kunduz has always been considered a special object of aspiration for the parties of the Afghan conflict.

<sup>7</sup> Rashid A. They are Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away // New Yorker, 14 January 2002// <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Glyn Williams. On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam': Foreign Fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 1980-2010 // Orbis. Spring 2011. – P. 226.

<sup>9</sup> Vahid Brown, Don Rassler. Fountainhead of jihad: the Haqqani nexus, 1973–2012. – Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. – P. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Vahid Brown, Don Rassler. Op. cit. – P. 61.

<sup>11</sup> Vahid Brown, Don Rassler. Op. cit. – P. 97.

<sup>12</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown. Afghanistan in 2023: Taliban internal power struggles and militancy. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/02/03/afghanistan-in-2023-taliban-internal-power-struggles-and-militancy/>

<sup>13</sup> Carol Grisanti and Mushtaq Yusufzai. "Taliban commander: Afghan officials are helping kill Americans," NBC News, 20 July 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Joscelyn and Bill Rogio. Turkistan Islamic Party leader criticizes the Islamic State's 'illegitimate' caliphate // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/06/turkistan-islamic-party-leader-remains-loyal-to-al-qaeda-criticizes-islamic-states-illegitimate-caliphate.php>.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Rogio, Caleb Weiss. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Faction Emerges After Group's Collapse // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/06/Islamic-Movement-of-Uzbekistan-Faction-Emerges-After-Groups-Collapse.php>.

<sup>16</sup> Farhat Taj. Taliban and Anti-Taliban. – Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. – Pp. 91, 102; Thomas M. Sanderson, Daniel Kimmage, Davia A. Gordon. 'From the Ferghana Valley to South Waziristan: the Evolving Threat of Central Asian Jihadists' // A Report of CSIS Transnational Threat Project, March 2010. – P. V.

<sup>17</sup> FDD's Long War Journal's response to Zalmay Khalilzad's Twitter thread // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2023/04/fdds-long-war-journals-response-to-zalmay-khalilzads-twitter-thread.php>.

<sup>18</sup> Thirty-first Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 13 February 2023 <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/1267%20MT%20report.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> FDD's Long War Journal's response to Zalmay Khalilzad's Twitter thread // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2023/04/fdds-long-war-journals-response-to-zalmay-khalilzads-twitter-thread.php>.

<sup>20</sup> Lucas Webber and Riccardo Valle. Islamic State Khorasan's Expanded Vision in South and Central Asia <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/islamic-state-khorasans-expanded-vision-in-south-and-central-asia/>

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Joscelyn . No, Mr President. Al-Qaeda Is Not 'Gone' From Afghanistan. <https://vitalinterests.thedispatch.com/p/no-mr-president-al-qaeda-is-not-gone> .

<sup>22</sup> Twenty-seventh report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team // <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-2020-53.php>.

<sup>23</sup> Twenty-ninth report of the UN Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. // <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/16/PDF/N2141616.pdf?OpenElement>; Thomas Joscelyn . Al Qaeda's alliance with the Taliban 'remains firm,' UN says . // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/08/al-qaedas-alliance-with-the-taliban-remains-firm-un-says.php>

<sup>24</sup> Twenty fifth Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team // <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-2020-53.php>. According to experts, the alliance between the Taliban and al-Qaeda is the most important jihadist alliance in Afghanistan and beyond. // FDD 's Long War Journal 's response to Zalmay Khalilzad 's Twitter thread // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2023/04/fdds-long-war-journals-response-to-zalmay-khalilzads-twitter-thread.php> .

<sup>25</sup> Joshua T.White. Nonstate threats in the Taliban's Afghanistan. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/01/nonstate-threats-in-the-talibans-afghanistan/>

<sup>26</sup> 29th Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/14/PDF/N2141614.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>27</sup> In different years (2004, 2005, 2009), members of this group committed a number of terrorist acts in the cities of Uzbekistan.

<sup>28</sup> Jeremy Binnie, Joanna Wright. The Evolving Role of Uzbek-led Fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan // CTC Sentinel. August 2009 Vol. 2. Issue 8. <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-evolving-role-of-uzbek-led-fighters-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan/>

<sup>29</sup> Bill Rogio. Islamic Jihad Union details cooperation with Afghan Taliban // [https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/02/islamic\\_jihad\\_union.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/02/islamic_jihad_union.php) .

<sup>30</sup> Twenty-fourth Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team // [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s\\_2019\\_570.php](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s_2019_570.php) .

<sup>31</sup> It is noted that in the period from 2007 to 2013. International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) carried out 19 raids against IJU fighters in the provinces of Paktia, Paktika, Khost, as well as Kunduz and Balkh // ISAF raids against al Qaeda and allies in Afghanistan 2007-2013 // [https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/05/al\\_qaeda\\_and\\_allies\\_.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/05/al_qaeda_and_allies_.php) .

<sup>32</sup> Twenty ninth Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/14/PDF/N2141614.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>33</sup> Erlan Karin, "Central Asia: Facing Radical Islam", *Russie. Nei Visions*, No. 98, Ifri, February 2017. Pp. 23-24

<sup>34</sup> Joanna Paraszczuk . Main Uzbek Militant Faction In Syria Swears Loyalty To Taliban // <https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-state-uzbek-militant-faction-syria-taliban/26686992.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Twenty fifth Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team // <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-2020-53.php>; Twelfth Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team // <https://www.undocs.org/ru/S/2011/790>.

<sup>36</sup> 29th Report of the United Nations Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/14/PDF/N2141614.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>37</sup> Uran Botobekov Katibat al Tawhidwal Jihad: A faithful follower of al-Qaeda from Central [Asia qaeda-from-central-asia/](#) ].

<sup>38</sup> Uran Botobekov Katibat al Tawhidwal Jihad: A faithful follower of al-Qaeda from Central [Asia qaeda-from-central-asia/](#) ].

<sup>39</sup> Мумин Ахмади, Муллоараджаб Юсуфзода. Талибы доверили охрану афганско-таджикской границы группировке «Ансоруллах». Кто такой Махди Арсалан? 27 июль, 2021. // [https :// rus . ozodi . org / a /31379490. html](https://rus.ozodi.org/a/31379490.html) ; Bill Roggio , Andrew Tobin . Tajik terrorist serves as Taliban commander in northern Afghanistan // <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/05/tajik-terrorist-serves-as-taliban-commander-in-northern-afghanistan.php> .

<sup>40</sup> M. Sharipov was killed in 2011 during the operation of the Tajik special services to eliminate the detachment of Mullo Abdullo in the Rasht region of Tajikistan.