

NEO-TALIBANISM AND ITS IMPACT ON CENTRAL ASIAN  
REGIONAL SECURITY

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**Abstract.** This research examines the shifting paradigm of security in Central Asia following the establishment of the “Taliban 2.0” government in 2021. It explores the theoretical transition from traditional Talibanism to Neo-Talibanism, characterized by advanced diplomatic strategies like “Twitter diplomacy” alongside a continued adherence to radical Deobandi doctrines. The study highlights how the resurgence of religious governance in Afghanistan serves as an ideological inspiration for extremist groups in neighboring states. Furthermore, it analyzes the persistent threats posed by international terrorist organizations, including ISIS-Khorasan and Al-Qaeda, which utilize Afghanistan as a base for recruitment and regional destabilization.

**Keywords.** Neo-Talibanism, Central Asian Regional Security, Taliban 2.0, Deobandism, ISIS-Khorasan, Al-Qaeda, Cross-border Threats, Radicalization.

### Introduction

As a result of the deep decline of mutual trust in modern international relations and the resurgence of the “bloc-based” approach, serious threats to global security and sustainable development are becoming increasingly serious, and the rules-based system of the world community is undergoing rapid changes. In the context of the rapidly changing situation in the world, the attention and interest of major and regional power centers in the Central Asian region is increasing. The task of resolving unusual factors affecting the stability and security of the Central Asian region on the basis of diplomatic dialogue, good neighborliness, mutual trust, equality and respect is becoming an urgent issue. Therefore, the impact of the current situation in Afghanistan on the regional security of Central Asia and its prospects are gaining urgent importance.

World Afghan studies feel a great need to promote new conceptual approaches to scientific research on “Taliban studies”. In particular, the issues of the current Afghan government’s unique form of state governance, religious and political views, dialogue with neighboring countries, and integration with the world community are attracting the attention of international scientific and analytical centers. This process is especially reflected in the fact that approaches and methods aimed at resolving the complex problems that have arisen and continue between the Afghan government led by the “Taliban” and the Central Asian states are not effective. From this point of view, this situation necessitates the need to determine the impact of the prospects of the “Taliban” on the Central Asian region and develop in-depth methodological and institutional mechanisms for ensuring regional security.

### Methods

The methodology of this research is grounded in a systematic and comparative analysis of the ideological and strategic evolution of the Taliban movement, specifically distinguishing between the original “Taliban 1.0” administration (1996–2001) and the contemporary “Taliban 2.0” government established in 2021.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study, detailing the socio-political and ideological shifts observed in Afghanistan following the establishment of the “Taliban 2.0” government. The data highlights the transformation of the movement’s governance style and its expanding religious-institutional framework.

### Talibanism

The world was not yet fully aware of the madrasa “Taliban”, which emerged in Kandahar in 1994 and called itself the “Taliban”. Their rapid capture of a number of areas in Afghanistan, especially the capital, Kabul, began to interest the entire international community. In particular, political scientists have begun to study the reasons for the emergence of the “Taliban” movement, its religious and political motives, goals and actions, and have begun to provide a theoretical basis for the “Taliban” phenomenon. Talibanism is a theory that expresses the religious form of government of the “Taliban” movement. Zalmay Khalilzad and Daniel Byman, a political analyst at the RAND Corporation, are well-known experts who first spoke about Talibanism. As they wrote in an article published in 1999,

Talibanism — a radical, backward, and repressive version of Islam similar to the Saudi “Wahhabi” credo but rejected by the vast majority of Muslims worldwide — is gaining adherents outside Afghanistan and spreading to other countries in the region<sup>1</sup>.

Zalmay Khalilzad had expressed similar views a little earlier, in an article published in the *Washington Post* in 1996: “The “Taliban” does not practice the anti-U.S. style of fundamentalism practiced by Iran — it is closer to the Saudi model”<sup>2</sup>. However, as we have noted in previous pages, the theory of Talibanism is more likely to be a product of Deobandism. Even the statement by one of the Taliban ambassadors, Rahmatullah Hashemi (2001), that “Every Afghan is a Deobandi”<sup>3</sup>, is a small confirmation of this. Of course, this sentence is greatly exaggerated and should refer specifically to the “Taliban”, not to all Afghans. According to reports, from the 1960s both the number of *madrasas* in Pakistan and the number of students (*taliban*) had expanded dramatically. Between 1960 and 1983 the number of “Taliban” increased tenfold, from 7,500 to 78,500, and of teachers from 321 to 2,217. In 1988 there were 1,320 *madrasas* in Punjab, but by 1997 there were 2,512 *madrasas* with 220,000 students. In Karachi there were twenty-nine madrasas which educated an average of 2,000 students each year<sup>4</sup>. Inspired by the early ideas of Deobandism related to the fight against colonialism, the doctrine of Talibanism took as its slogan the fight against communism during the Soviet-Afghan war, and when the Americans entered Afghanistan, it

<sup>1</sup> Khalilzad Zalmay, Byman Daniel. Afghanistan: The Consolidation of a Rogue State // *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 23, Number 1, winter 2000. – P.65.

<sup>2</sup> Khalilzad Zalmay. Afghanistan: Time to Reengage. *Washington Post*, October 7, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Metcalf Barbara D. Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and talibs. – Leiden, International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World. 2002. – P.1.

<sup>4</sup> Alex Strick van Linschoten, Felix Kuen. *An Enemy We Created. The Myth of the Taliban-Al-Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan*. – Oxford University Press, 2012. – P.22.

took on the slogan of “jihad” against liberalism. We believe that the above figures do not require any explanation of the extent to which Deobandism influenced the theory of Talibanism.

### Neo-Talibanism

Among the theoretical approaches to studying the “Taliban” movement, the theory of Neo-Talibanism is relatively new and requires in-depth scientific research. There are currently very few studies and scientific sources aimed at determining the essence and foundations of this theory. However, in our opinion, the scientific views of some scientists that are closer and similar to this theory, as well as the theory of Talibanism that we have considered above, encourage us to reflect on Neo-Talibanism and, as a result, to use it more widely in current scientific circles.

Since the US-led international military forces entered Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban government, terms such as “old Taliban” and “new Taliban” have been frequently used in the Western press and articles by research scholars. According to research, the term “*Neo-Taliban*” was first used in an article by Jonathan Ledgard in *The Economist* in 2003<sup>5</sup>. Antonio Giustozzi, a professor at King’s College London, a senior fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), and a renowned expert on the Taliban movement and terrorism in Afghanistan, examines the differences between the “old Taliban” and the “new Taliban” in his book “*The Quran, the Kalashnikov and the Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*”. He writes that while there are many similarities between the “Taliban” administration that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 and the “Taliban” movement after 2001, there are also some distinct differences. They seem to have absorbed from their foreign jihadist allies a more flexible and less orthodox attitude towards imported technologies and techniques. Not only have they expanded their investment in the production of tapes containing jihadist songs (without musical accompaniment), which they had already been using in the 1990s, but even ventured into the world of video production. Already during the years in power the “Taliban” showed some occasional flexibility in this regard, allowing, for example, foreign journalists to film their fighters (but not the leaders)<sup>6</sup>. Amin Tarzi, director of the Middle East Studies Department at the U.S. Marine Corps University, divides the Neo-Taliban into two principal ideological groups. The first are those who align themselves with the al-Qaedaists and the views eventually adopted by Mulla Omar and the more radical Taliban toward the end of the Taliban regime. The other group of neo-Taliban seems to have gone back to their more traditional Pashtun roots and is trying to become a voice, not only for the Pashtuns, but also for traditionalist Muslims in Afghanistan<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, researchers such as Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour and Farzad Salimifar have studied the Neo-Taliban theory as a form of religious nationalism. According to them, Neo-Taliban has shown flexibility in terms of its previously imposed social regulations and indoctrinations based on religion, including the ban on music, photography, enmity toward Shiites and the significance of Pashtunwali in legislation<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Ledgard Jonathan. Taking on the Warlords ... *The Economist*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Giustozzi Antonio. *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*. – London, 2007. – P.12-13.

<sup>7</sup> Tarzi Amin. *The Neo-Taliban // The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. Edited by Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi. Harvard University Press. 2008. – P.306.

<sup>8</sup> Sajjadpour Mohammad Kazem, Salimifar Farzad. *Neo-Taliban and Religious Nationalism in Afghanistan // Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Winter- Spring 2019. – P.82.

As can be seen, scholars who have discussed the Neo-Taliban have preferred to focus on the “Taliban 1.0” administration as the “old Taliban”, and the activities of the “Taliban” after its overthrow by US-led international forces in 2001 as the Neo-Taliban. However, in our opinion, it is not possible to fully assess the theory of Neo-Talibanism through these periods. On the contrary, we believe that it is more appropriate to assess it from the perspective of the activities of the “Taliban 2.0” government established in Afghanistan in 2021. This is because by this time, the “Taliban” has undergone a unique transformation in diplomatic and political terms. They have held political dialogues and negotiations with official representatives of a number of countries involved in Afghanistan, and, starting from regional isolation, their names have begun to be removed from the black lists of terrorist organizations of some countries. Another important change is that representatives of the “Taliban” are effectively using “twitter diplomacy” to promote the “large-scale reforms” that have begun in post-American Afghanistan, the superiority of Sharia-based governance, and various religious and ideological ideas. According to the results of a study conducted by Iranian scholars Seyed Yahya Rahim Safavi, Almas Islami, and Kianoosh Kiakjuri, the lack of internal unity in Afghanistan and the inability of the Taliban to exercise full sovereignty throughout the country and to involve various socio-political groups in the state and state-building process are among the problems of the emergence of Neo-Talibanism in Afghanistan. These scholars assess the emergence of Neo-Talibanism in Afghanistan as an external threat based on the comprehensive theory of regional security developed by representatives of the Copenhagen School, Barry Buzan and Ole Wever<sup>9</sup>.

Based on the opinions of the above-mentioned scholars and the theoretical foundations of the religious views and teachings of Talibanism, it should be noted that the theory of Neo-Talibanism reflects certain changes and differences in the religious-political, socio-ideological views of “Taliban 2.0” that differ from the “Taliban 1.0” government.

There is no doubt about the place, role, and even decisive importance of religion in the life of the Afghan state and society. However, if it is filled with extremely radical ideology and teachings, if the processes of its politicization are observed, this cannot but affect the stability of the state and society. According to the calculations of Professor A. Khaydarov, the total number of mosques in Afghanistan is approximately more than 120 thousand. The total number of religious leaders is close to 350-400 thousand. It is noteworthy that, according to data from 2019, these religious leaders are greater than the total number of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which has more than 272 thousand people<sup>10</sup>. In this respect, the number of mosques in Afghanistan alone is ten times greater than the number of mosques in all of Central Asia. It can be assumed that the “Taliban”, after regaining power, are likely to continue preparing to train “Taliban” who teach the radical Deobandi doctrine. As Antonio Giustozzi writes, the Neo-Taliban became much more integrated in the

<sup>9</sup> سيدیجی رحیم صفوی، الماس اسلامی، کیانوش کیاکجوری. نوظالبانیسم در افغانستان و امنیت ملی جمهوری اسلامی ایران // فصلنامه مطالعات بنیادین و کاربردی جهان اسلام، سال پنجم، شماره هفدهم، پاییز ۱۴۰۲. – ص. ۱۱۹.

Seyed Yahya Rahim Safavi, Almas Islami and Kianoosh Kiakjuri. Neo-Talibanism in Afghanistan and the National Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran // Journal of Fundamental and Applied Research of the Islamic World. No. 3, 2023. – P.119.

<sup>10</sup> Хайдаров А.А. Мусульманское духовенство vs. власть в современном Афганистане: взгляд из Узбекистана // Вестник РУДН. Серия: Международные отношения. 2020. Т.20. № 4. – С.756-757.

international jihadist movement after 2001. Their rhetoric featured concepts such as ‘global Christian war against Islam’ and stressed solidarity with other jihadist movements around the world, which were clearly perceived as part of the same struggle. The internationalisation of the Taliban’s ‘ideology’ might be a key point in the understanding of their strategies, not because of the existence of a serious constituency for pan-Islamism inside Afghanistan, but because it enabled stronger external support<sup>11</sup>. The current “Taliban 2.0” government may have now expanded the scope of such external relations even further. The widespread spread of Talibanism in Afghanistan may, first of all, have an impact on the religious and socio-political environment in neighboring countries. The fact that the leader of the “Taliban”, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, made a statement on the agreement concluded between the US and the “Taliban” on February 29, 2020, stating that “the agreement was a victory for all Muslims”<sup>12</sup>, indicates that the religious and ideological teachings of the “Taliban” are aimed not only at Afghanistan, but also beyond it. As Ahmed Rashid rightly noted, now Pakistani Deobandis want a Taliban-style Islamic revolution in Pakistan<sup>13</sup>. It is possible that goals and plans were drawn up to spread such a revolution not only to other parts of South Asia, but also to the Central Asian region.

If we look at history, we will see that religious authority in Afghanistan itself has not been established to such an extent and has not ruled for a long time. Military-political attempts to do so have been made based on the long-term strategic interests of external forces and the teachings they have set. Paying attention to the conclusion of the prominent Afghan scholar Neamatollah Nojumi serves to confirm our thoughts in a certain sense:

The separation of state and religion was an important component of national politics in Afghanistan. Historically, Afghanistan was never ruled by religious leaders, and the state leaders were always in charge of the public affairs and the religious institutions were managed either independently or under the auspices of the state<sup>14</sup>.

However, the pre-conceived strategy of external forces has returned Afghanistan to a form of religious rule through the “Taliban”. There are reasons to argue, both theoretically and practically, about the possibility of the doctrine they are promoting spreading beyond one region and throughout the entire region. It should not be forgotten that the current ruling elite of the “Taliban” has emphasized the importance of the jihadi spirit and culture in its agenda. It is noteworthy that the new and current leader of the “Taliban” movement, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, stated in a statement in December 2016 that religious scholars have always guided the historical rule of Muslim leaders in the region, including India and Afghanistan<sup>15</sup>. Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Minister of Information of the “Taliban 1.0” government (now the Minister of Foreign Affairs), expressed the “Taliban’s” view on this issue at the time as follows: “Our position is spreading throughout the region, because we are implementing the

<sup>11</sup> Giustozzi Antonio. *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*. – London, 2007. – P.13-14.

<sup>12</sup> Seierstad Åsne. *The Afghans: Three lives through war, love and revolt*. Translated by Seán Kinsella. – London. Virago Press, 2024. – P.220.

<sup>13</sup> Rashid Ahmed. *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*. – London. I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000. – P.93.

<sup>14</sup> Nojumi Neamatollah. *The rise of the Taliban: mass mobilization, civil war, and the future of the regime*. – New York, Palgrave. 2002. – P.224.

<sup>15</sup> Öztürk Selim. *The Role of Political Salafism in the Formation of Saudi Arabia and the Taliban Regime*. A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. 2018. – P.188.

true essence of Islam in a correct way. However, this situation is very worrying for the Americans and some of our neighbors”<sup>16</sup>. As Nuriddin Sultanmurotov, an expert at the Kazakh Institute of Asian Studies, rightly wrote, since August 2021, state governance in Afghanistan has been oriented towards a completely different model, associated with a significant increase in the role of religion in state and social construction. Such a model, which, unlike the modernist-oriented form of the development model, is archaic in nature, can lead to significant consequences. This applies not only to Afghanistan itself, but also to the entire region. Indeed, for the first time in a separate country, supporters of the Deoband school of Islam came to power. At the same time, this form of Islam is distinguished by its radicalism. Because Deobandists call for the return of the historical role of Islam in society, “...a literal reading of old religious traditions, idealization of the past, and in general, adherence to the extremely strict religious practices of the Middle Ages”. Given that all societies in Central Asia have supporters of building a state based on Islamic principles, the “Taliban” model could become a point of support for this category of the population<sup>17</sup>. Expert R. Mahmudov also describes the influence of the “Taliban” ideology on the Central Asian region as follows:

The problem is that the Central Asian region itself does not create export identification models, but rather is an object of external identification influence. Currently, several external identification models are active in the region. For example, Western, Dubai and neo-Ottomanism, as well as Middle Eastern Islamic conservative and fundamentalist models. The ideology of the Afghan “Taliban” in this ensemble can be considered one of the variations of conservative and fundamentalist models, which, in turn, creates certain conditions for influencing the minds of fans of this type of thinking and values living in the countries of Central Asia<sup>18</sup>.

According to Iranian experts, the “Taliban’s” military successes in recent years could serve as a source of ideological inspiration for groups that are likely to replicate their efforts<sup>19</sup>.

Since the establishment of the “Taliban 2.0” government, it has been possible to observe the activation of extremist and terrorist groups that export its form of government to neighboring countries. For example, “Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan” and “Tehreek-e Taliban Tajikistan” (TTT).

Although the “Taliban 2.0” government has repeatedly stated that it has completely eradicated terrorism in Afghanistan, it cannot be ruled out that a number of terrorist organizations and groups may continue to pose serious threats to regional security from Afghanistan. According to the US Congressional Research Service, at least 7 terrorist

<sup>16</sup> Hüsna Taş Yetim. Taliban’in kontrolü ve birinci Afganistan İslam Emirliği (1996-2001) // Yüz yıllık kriz Afganistan. Editörler Murat Aslan, Ramazan Erdağ. SETA, 2022. – S.67.

<sup>17</sup> Султанмуратов Н. К вопросу о политике Казахстана по отношению к Афганистану // Международные, глобальные и региональные процессы: Международные отношения, глобальные и региональные исследования. Журнал «Россия и мир: научный диалог», № 2(8) Июнь 2023. – С.103.

<sup>18</sup> Махмудов Р. Возвращение “Талибана” к власти как фактор трансформации угроз и вызовов для региональной безопасности // Мировая экономика и международные отношения, 2025, Том 69, № 2. – С.72-73.

<sup>19</sup> احسان کاظمی، حسین رفیع، علی ابراہیمی. سازمان همکاری شانگھای و بحران طالبانیسم در افغانستان: چالشهایی در توسعه همکاریها // Center for Strategic Research // پژوهشکده تحقیقات راهبردی، فصلنامه روابط خارجی. سال شانزدهم، شماره دوم، ۱۴۰۳. – ص.۸۶.

organizations (Al-Qaeda, Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, ISIS-Khorasan, Haqqani Network, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement) operate in Afghanistan<sup>20</sup>. According to other information from Afghanistan, more than 20 terrorist organizations with foreign members operate in Afghanistan under the support of the “Taliban”. More than 10 of them are similar to “Al-Qaeda” in their ideological slogans and radical views. The UN analysts’ report noted that “Al-Qaeda” has intensified active cooperation with the East “Turkestan Islamic Movement”, the “Turkestan Islamic Party”, and the “Jamaat Ansarullah” group in order to move the center of terrorist activity to Central Asia and strengthen its position in the military structures of the “Taliban” movement in order to conduct joint operations<sup>21</sup>. According to an article published in the British newspaper “Telegraph”, powerful elements within the Taliban have offered protection and support to al-Qaeda. Ken McCallum, the director general of MI5, expressed concern about the resurgence of the international terrorist organizations “ISIS” and “Al-Qaeda”. Gen Michael Kurilla, head of United States Central Command, warns that Isis in Syria and Iraq has grown so rapidly that it is again capable of carrying out attacks abroad<sup>22</sup>. Experts have noted that “Al-Qaeda” has regained strength since the “Taliban” returned to power in Afghanistan. For example, a report from the UN group monitoring the “Taliban” in April 2022 stated that the “Taliban” “remains close” to “Al-Qaeda” and that “Al-Qaeda” has “increased its safe haven and freedom of movement under the “Taliban””. Indeed, this was confirmed by the August 2022 report that a US drone killed “Al-Qaeda” leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul<sup>23</sup>. Zawahiri reportedly lived in the home of a leader of the Taliban’s military wing (the Haqqani network), and other “Al-Qaeda” leaders are believed to have found refuge in Afghanistan. A United Nations report also analyzed the possibility that “Al-Qaeda” could use Afghanistan as a “friendly environment” for recruitment, training, and fundraising<sup>24</sup>. Afghanistan resistance forces say that “Al-Qaeda” has managed to build nine training camps and even ammunition depots in the Panjshir Valley.

Although “ISIS-Khorasan” is considered the “Taliban’s” main rival in Afghanistan, it has not been able to completely eliminate its activities. As a result, “Taliban” forces have been unable to prevent “ISIS-K” from recruiting foreign fighters and increasing its size, scope, and geographic ambitions. According to analysts, the group’s resurgence is evidenced by the attacks on the embassies of China, Pakistan, and Russia in Kabul in late 2022. According to the UN monitoring team, that attack elevated the group’s status and led the self-declared Islamic State to provide an additional half a million dollars in funding for the group<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Clayton. Terrorist Groups in Afghanistan // Congressional Research Service (CRS). April 2, 2024. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF10604.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Письмо Группы по аналитической поддержке и наблюдению за санкциями от 31 мая 2024 года на имя Председателя Комитета Совета Безопасности, учрежденного резолюцией 1988 (2011). S/2024/499. 8 July 2024. – С.15.

<sup>22</sup> Blomfield Adrian. The return of al-Qaeda and Islamic State. The drums of global jihadism are again sounding around the world // The Telegraph, 12 October 2024. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/10/12/the-return-of-al-qaeda-and-islamic-state/>

<sup>23</sup> Hoffman Bruce . What Zawahiri’s Killing Means for al-Qaeda // Council on Foreign Relations, August 2, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-zawahiris-killing-means-al-qaeda>

<sup>24</sup> Thirteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2611 (2021) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace stability and security of Afghanistan. S/2022/419. 26 May 2022. – P.12.

<sup>25</sup> Maizland Lindzay. The Taliban in Afghanistan // Council on Foreign Relations, January 19, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/background/taliban-afghanistan>

The most dangerous aspect is the involvement of citizens from Central Asia in international terrorist groups. In addition, their movement from Syria and Iraq into Afghanistan also generates additional problems related to regional security. According to a report by Soufan Center, the total number of fighters from Central Asia who left for Syria and Iraq exceeds 5,000. If we break them down by countries of origin, the results would look as follows: Kazakhstan – more than 500 (11.90%), Kyrgyzstan – more than 500 (11.90%), Tajikistan – more than 1,300 (30.95%), Turkmenistan – more than 400 (9.52%), Uzbekistan – more than 1,500 (35.71%)<sup>26</sup>. For example, during a meeting with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the head of the National Security Committee of Kazakhstan, Yermek Sagimbayev, announced that preparations for four terrorist attacks in the republic in 2024 had been stopped. At the same time, 84 people were convicted and sentenced for involvement in terrorism and extremism, and 44 people were arrested. In addition, attempts to enter Kazakhstan by 824 foreigners associated with terrorism and extremism were blocked<sup>27</sup>. Similar examples can be cited from other Central Asian countries.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, based on the above information, the security situation in Afghanistan cannot yet be considered fully stable. Despite the security assurances given to neighboring countries by the “Taliban 2.0” government, such a concerning situation indicates the absence of firm confidence or guarantees that threats will not emerge or arise in the future.

The research indicates that the massive religious infrastructure in Afghanistan, coupled with the involvement of Central Asian citizens in foreign terrorist groups, creates a “friendly environment” for potential destabilization. Consequently, there is currently no firm basis for confidence that threats will not continue to emerge from Afghan territory. Ensuring regional security in Central Asia will require deep methodological and institutional mechanisms to counter both the military-political and the socio-ideological impacts of the Neo-Taliban phenomenon.

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<sup>26</sup> Хакимов У. Зачем нужен пояс безопасности вокруг Афганистана? // Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting (CABAR.ASIA), 18.01.2022. <https://cabar.asia/ru/zachem-nuzhen-poyas-bezopasnosti-vokrug-afganistana>

<sup>27</sup> Глава государства принял председателя Комитета национальной безопасности Ермака Сагимбаева. 5 декабря 2025. [https://t.me/aqorda\\_resmi/21744](https://t.me/aqorda_resmi/21744)

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