

Will ISIS Resurrect the Caliphate in Afghanistan?

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Despite major losses and military setbacks in Iraq and Syria, ISIS shows potential of gaining momentum in Afghanistan by exploiting the political uncertainty and volatile security environment in the country, in order to achieve its goal of resurrecting their so-called 'Caliphate'. While competing with the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaida who are fighting for dominance in the regional Jihadist landscape, the ISIS Afghan affiliate group, which is currently branded as the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K) has been conducting a steady drive of radicalization and recruitment of the local Afghan population, while engaging in building key alliances with Salafi Jihadist militant groups in the Central and South Asian region, as part of the transnational terror group's strategy to consolidate its position in the war-torn nation. ISIS has also been attracting large numbers of foreign fighters to Afghanistan which could become the new battle-ground to resurrect the so-called Caliphate, which was previously established in Iraq and Syria, which will signal a shift in the centre of gravity of ISIS operations. Following the defeat of ISIS in multiple theatres of conflict which led to the group losing territory in Iraq and Syria, the transnational terror group has maintained resilience by evolving through its affiliates spread across the globe. This paper will provide an in-depth analysis on the regional security implications of the US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and the possible attempts made by ISIS to resurrect its so-called caliphate in the war-battered nation which will once again evolve into a hub for transnational terrorism.

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