

ISIS-Daesh Is on the Rise in Afghanistan. Why? Who's Supporting Them? Afghanistan's Rare Earth Elements

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It has long been since many residents and the Afghan Government officials first vocalized fear over buzzing and landing of mysterious helicopters in parts of Afghanistan where the ISIS-K is reported to have been stepping up efforts for a battle. The ISIS first surfaced in eastern Nangarhar province and then spilled over into the neighboring Kunar province. And now months later the alarming reports uncover the arrival of French and Algerian ISIS loyalists in Darzab district of northern Jawzjan province.

The ISIS's stationing in Afghanistan's north could carry more than one reason. The widely held opinion says that ISIS's rise and then relocation to the northern Afghan provinces is aimed at Russia, but Moscow's far-laying borders as well as the Central Asian states' tenacious border embattlement against the possible ISIS assault is overshadowing this reasoning. The ISIS-K's anti-Russian motto and mobilization in Afghanistan derive from Moscow's shattering of the group's strongholds in the Middle East.

The sitting first vice president of Afghanistan Gen. Dostum who is an ethnic Uzbek and a native of northern province where ISIS is gaining ground, spent most of his term time as the commander of an army corps fighting against the Taliban and the ISIS's encroachment to the north. He really forced the militants to scatter and spoiled their plans. But the Afghan Government was in disapproval of his self-willed military campaign against the militants, perhaps, because the move was supported by Moscow.

The following days he was indicted with the rape of his former aged male aide and even the international community spared no moment to condemn the alleged act. Now, he is living in forced expatriation in Turkey as his plane is banned from landing in Afghan airports.

A third possible motive behind a loosened ISIS-K movement in Afghanistan could be what is recently hitting news – Afghanistan's rare earth elements. The underground riches of the southern Afghan province of Helmand are being substantially plundered under the pretext of heated war as most mineral-rich fields are declared as no-go war zones. Afghan Ministry of Mines has stated that the ISIS-infested region in the north is abounding in precious minerals and it fears about illegal unearthing of the valuable elements at the group's hand. The ministry's spokesman admits the presence of Uranium and other rare earth elements in the region under the ISIS control.

The fully armed Afghan forces in their thousands are awaiting orders from supreme authorities in Kabul to approach and annihilate a potato-small number of ISIS fanatics, but it

appears that there is no intent to wipe out the group.

The ISIS which used to siphon off hefty revenues from multiple roots in Syria and Iraq started losing money-making sources in 2016. The Russian fierce air campaign reduced the ISIS to lose 80 of the incomes from oil wells and tax revenues. Money matters for the ISIS and it could be the same for abundant natural resources in Darzab district.

One local man named as Hajji said the fighters were of several nationalities including French, Algerians Uzbeks and Chechens and they were tall, aged in their late 20s and dressed in military clothing. He added:

“They ride their motor bikes, go to the border and come back, but they talk to nobody”

The fighters are said to be arriving via Tajikistan and Uzbekistan into Afghanistan. The European services revealed that at least one Frenchman was arrested in Tajikistan in July who intended to join ISIS in Afghanistan. Whether these radical foreign citizens are the survivors of the ISIS fiasco in Syria and Iraq and moving here to carry on the bloody and dollar-fueled Jihad or are part of a fresh recruitment process, they are supported by the same parties back in Syria and Iraq.

In the past two years, the capital Kabul has went through the most deadly civilian-targeted bombings which have been claimed by the ISIS-K in a bid to gain some weight in the country's proxy wars. Revealing another dark side, Kabul is everyday witness of quite a few child kidnapping cases under an organized plan. These innocent children abducted from the streets of Kabul city find themselves in the terrorist sanctuaries across the border in Pakistan or in parts of Afghanistan and trained to fill up the ranks of upcoming generation of terrorists. The reports inform that the newly burgeoning ISIS group in the north of Afghanistan is nurturing children as young as 10.

A year ago, Russian foreign ministry and special envoy for Afghanistan repeatedly warned of mysterious aircrafts flying over the skies of northern Afghan provinces, especially Jawzjan. Moscow had realized that the helicopters were dropping cases of arms and foods down to the terrorist training areas to gear up anti-Russian radicalization. Reports indicate that thousands of fighters from Syria, Iraq and elsewhere are regrouping in the mountains of Afghanistan to chalk out revenge attack against the Kremlin. Earlier, the ISIS's high command has given orders to target Russian cities.

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova had said that Russian Government closely monitors the armament and transportation of the ISIS fighters into eastern parts of Afghanistan. In May 2017, the ministry in a statement asked for the US and NATO's accounts about the unidentified aircrafts. It stated that they [the US and NATO] have been deployed in Afghanistan for over 15 years and they should find about vague flights in the airspace of Afghanistan.

Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai in an exclusive interview with Russian RT went boldly and pointed at West being behind the momentum of the ISIS in Afghanistan. In October 2017, he blamed the US for [supplying weapons to Daesh](#) or ISIS in Afghanistan. He maintained that the US army helicopters were being used to supply weapons to the group. He even went on to say that the militant group emerged in the country over the past three

to four years under the watch of US military and intelligence agencies.

During ex-president Karzai's administration when the brouhaha on the ISIS's rise in Afghanistan had reached its peak, he once openly talked of anonymous aircrafts carrying ISIS militants into northern parts of Afghanistan in the dead of the night.

The ISIS's advancements in Afghanistan occur while on Dec. 9 the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the end of the war against ISIS in Iraq during the international media conference in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Earlier this month, President Putin made a surprise visit to Syria and announced withdrawal of Russian forces from Syrian air bases. He said that if the terrorists raise their heads in Syria again, Russia will hit them hard with powerful strikes. Russia would keep its Hmeymim air base as well as its naval facility at Tartous on a permanent basis.

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