The Islamic State’s Terror New Tendencies in Central Asia and Effects

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Keywords: The Islamic State (IS); New tendencies; Effects.

Abstract. This currently, the Islamic State (IS) is expanding eastward after its collapse in Syria and Iraq, threatening the security of Central Asia and China. In Central Asia, IS adopted polycentric and decentralized management, with members from different organizations and professions. These terrorists have attacked various targets and spread extremist ideas. Also, more jihadists have transferred or returned to Central Asia. They imposed pressure and stability threat to Central Asia and China. In China, the influence of IS lies not in occupation of territory, but the ideological penetration of separatism, extremism and terrorism into western China which weakens people’s sense of national identity.

Introduction

In June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) changed its name to just the Islamic State, a “caliphate” [1]. This terrorist group plans to expand their effects to the rest of Central Asia and Xinjiang in China. Currently, having almost no place in Syria and Iraq anymore, IS tries to spread its extremist ideology to Central Asia, posing an increasing security threat to this region. On the one hand, the subdivision of IS in Central Asia, keeps making trouble in the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, transferring and returning Jihadists [2] are making counter-terrorism in Central Asia a more significant challenge. As a neighbor of Central Asia, China is enviably affected by Central Asia regarding security and social stability. This paper, analyzes IS’s terror new tendencies in Central Asia since 2014, and then evaluates their impacts on Central Asia and China.

IS’s Terror New Tendencies in Central Asia

The International Crisis Group (ICG) says in Syria Calling: Radicalization in Central Asia published in 2015 that IS have recruited 2,000 to 4,000 fighters in Central Asia. According to Peter Neumann, Professor of Security Studies at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, 15% of IS fighters are from the post-Soviet states, including 1,500 (mainly Chechens) from Russia, 500 from Uzbekistan, 360 from Turkmenistan, and 250 from Kazakhstan[3]. Data released by the government of Tajikistan reveal that 500-1,100 Tajiks have joined IS. In May 2015, former OMON commander Gulmurod Khalimov defected to IS, followed by many other Tajiks. The government responded strongly by sentencing many defectors in early 2016[4]. In Kyrgyzstan, about 100 residents in southern city Osh have gone to Syria to participate in jihad.

IS Adopts Polycentric and Decentralized Management in Central Asia, with Members from Different Organizations [5] Professions

In April 2014, several Al-Qaeda members from Afghanistan, the Khorasan Pledge, declaring their allegiance to IS. Later in May, a group of Central Asian (mainly Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) militants fighting in Syria pledged allegiance to IS. In September, Usmon Ghazi, leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), pledged allegiance to IS. He also sent members to Syria for training.
The Turkistan Islamic Party, formerly ETIM, defected to IS, trying to seek support for its conspiracy of separating Xinjiang from China.

According to reports, Central Asian IS jihadists are mainly from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (descending order), and foreign jihadists primarily come from Russia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. Among them, there are seasonal workers[6], people, undergraduates, teachers, civil servants. Some of them are even women and children.

Under the attacks of multinational anti-terrorism forces led by the U.S. and Russia, IS suffered heavy losses, including most its territory in Syria and Iraq. In this process, IS has gradually broken up into several small jihadist groups, reverting to Al-Qaeda’s guerrilla warfare tactics. Meanwhile, they instigate its supporters in Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia to launch small-scale attacks, sending ripples across these regions [7].

**Active IS Terrorists [8]have Attacked Various Targets in a Wide Range of Ways which Fortunately led to Fewer Casualties**

Tajik Interior Minister Rahimzoda stated that in 2017, Tajikistan’s law enforcement agency uncovered 1,300 cases related to extremism and terrorism, and arrested 392 Tadzhik extremists serving terrorist groups like IS[9]. On Nov 8, 2018, a detained “Islamic State” member in Tajik prison attacked prison guards and robbed guns, and other prisoners created prison riots, killing 27 people and injuring six others. In June 2016, terrorist attacks occurred at a military unit and two gun shops in Aktyubinsk, Kazakhstan, leaving 26 people dead and 38 injured. A group of Salafi jihadists committed the attacks, saying they were inspired by a speech made by a news spokesman of IS. Later in July, the Almaty Shooting occurred, leading to five deaths and seven injuries. In January 2016, Tajik security agency arrested a senior police officer on charges of supplying small weapons and ammunition to a local terrorist suspect with links to IS in Jalal-Abad near Afghanistan [10]. In September 2015, Tajik Deputy Defense Minister Abdukhalim Nazarzoda and his supporters attacked the Interior Department of Vakhdat. Including the part of IS militants.

According to reports, IS jihadists mainly spread extremist ideas, recruit members, join terrorist groups, organize training, participate in international jihad, organize transferring and returning jihadists, and plot local jihad through internet and other media. Spreading extremist ideas and recruiting members are dominant crime acts. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are the primary recruitment targets of IS. The Tajik government says in a report to the UNHCR in September 2017 that about 840 people from 234 families have decided to live in the territory of IS [11]. In early 2016, IS issued attack guidebooks for small groups and Lone Wolf Jihadists, instigating terrorists worldwide to launch attacks in the simplest way without orders. Although only a few Lone Wolf attacks have occurred in Central Asia recently, their high covertness still indicates substantial risks. Statistics show that IS’s attack targets generally fall into hard targets and soft targets, and the proportion of the former has been increasing recently. According to data provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace, from 2015 to 2016, civilians and properties were the main targets of IS terrorists worldwide. In 2016 alone, 9,132 deaths were caused by IS, up 50% over the previous year, making IS the most deadly terrorist group in the world[12]. In 2017, IS launched 4,500 attacks worldwide, leaving 6,500 people dead[13]. This decrease of deaths is partly related to its collapse in Syria and Iraq.

**IS Spreads Content-rich Radical Ideas Frequently and Covertly, trying to Penetrate Such Ideas into Different Populations**

Andrew Parker of a British intelligence service believes that many regions worldwide, including Europe, are facing a “sharply increasing terrorist risk”. Terrorist threats tend to be more diversified, showing the greatest magnitude ever. What’s more, since they are more covert than before, it is hard to find and remove them before occurrence [14].
Since early 2014, a growing number of IS recruitment websites aiming at Central Asia have appeared. IS also spreads recruitment videos in Central Asian languages through popular internet platforms like Facebook and YouTube, instigating people to take part in jihad in Middle East. In January 2015, some Tajik IS jihadists posted a message about launching jihad against the Tajik government online. Later, 50 Tajik citizens who were ready to go to Syria for the Tajik were arrested. Data released by the Kyrgyz government show that 2015 registered a total of 1,302 terrorist cases, including cases related to IS’s recruiting and hiring Kyrgyz citizens as fighters and spreading terrorist ideas. In June 2015, two Kyrgyz IS jihadists who spread extremist ideas and encouraged people to take part in jihad online were arrested, and lots of arms and ammunition, as well as audios, videos, and printed materials advocating extremism were confiscated. In August 2015, Uzbek police found propagating materials of IS and Hizbut-Tahrir in notebook and electronic information carriers of two Tajik nationals during an inspection of passengers in a train from Moscow to Dushanbe. In April 2016, IS uploaded a video about an Uzbek fighter urges people in Central Asia to take part in jihad in Syria. On June 19, 2018, IS released a few bloody posters, one of which was to warn that the Argentine superstar Messi will be executed.

Modern technology gives terrorist groups more freedom in implementing strategies and conducting the new “leaderless attacks” which will expand the sphere of influence of IS. IS excels at using social media and smartphones as tools. It has created some dark websites and forums which can hardly be accessed and traced compared to Facebook and Twitter as propaganda channels. In April 2016, IS created United Cyber Caliphate (UCC)[15] together with five hacker groups to release kill lists, distribute attack guidebooks, and attract new followers[16]. IS even developed an application through which children can learn Arabic through pictures of guns, tanks and rocket projectiles, as well as related songs, in a bid to indoctrinate young children. What’s more, cryptocurrencies have been used to finance terrorist activities online. Hackers claimed that IS is financed through several Bitcoin funding sites, and one of its e-wallets is worth several million dollars in Bitcoin.

**Jihadists have Transferred or Returned to Central Asia Frequently, Strengthening Existing Terrorists in the Region**

Due to IS’s collapse in Syria and Iraq, and its Eastward Expansion, some terrorists have started to transfer or return to Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and other areas, posing a major threat to the security of these areas and even the whole world. Some terrorist groups in China is closely linked to IS[17]. The Chinese Embassy in Bishkek bombing was conducted by terrorists returning to Central Asia and ETIM members. Currently, ETIM has collaborated with IS and other terrorist groups in Central Asia, South Asia and Caucasus.

According to the Interior Minister of Tajikistan, in 2014, Tajik arrested 53 terrorists fighting in the Middle East, including 12 returnees serving IS. Data released by the Committee of National Security of Kazakhstan show that from January 2014 to September 2015, Kazakhstan foiled two terrorist attacks plotted by Kazakh terrorists returning from the Middle East. In early 2015, Kyrgyz police seized 36 extremists who returned to Kyrgyzstan to raise money and recruit fighters after undergoing training in Syria. In November 2015, Uzbek police arrested 200 Uzbek nationals who were suspected to be sympathizer supporters of IS. Most of them were workers returning from Turkey and Russia. In June 2017, Turkey informed Turkmenistan that IS planned to send Central Asian terrorists to Turkmenistan.

Drones, which are commonly used around the world, have also become weapons of IS in attacks. IS has announced its plan to build a jihadist drone force by transforming common drones into suicide drones carrying small bombs. In the operation to retake the military airfield in Deir al-Zor, IS shot several projectiles containing mustard gas[18]. Therefore, it is possible that IS would attack densely populated places or civilians with chemical weapons through drones.
Effects of IS’s Terrorist Activities on the Anti-terrorism in Central Asia and China

Central Asia is a neighbor of China. Its security, prosperity and stability thereby directly affect China in these respects. In 2013, China’s President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road initiative which focuses on promoting the strategic development of the Eurasia. Consequently, Central Asia gained increased geostrategic importance and thus will play a more prominent role in Eurasia[19]. In such a context, IS’ terrorist activities in Central Asia pose a grave security threat to not only Central Asia but also China.

Enhanced Propaganda and Penetration of Extremist Ideas Intensify Ideological Conflicts

In June 2014, IS declared the establishment of a new caliphate to claim dominion over Muslims across the globe. IS follows the extreme Takfiri doctrines, according to which, a true Muslim may consider Muslims whose behavior or belief violates Islamism, as well as non-Muslims as heretics, and has the duty to execute heretics. IS advocates the use of force to “purify” the Islamic society, and the establishment of caliphs according to the strict Islamic law. In line with the “unification of religion and state” principle, IS spreads Islamic principles through terror. Western countries are not the first goals of IS and they will not conduct the campaign of global jihad in the short run. The growing extremism in Central Asia is mainly caused by its complex political and economic situation, ideological and spiritual vacuum, and the propaganda and penetration of external extremist forces[20]. Social and economic problems such as high employment rates faced by Central Asia are factors behind the spread of extremist ideology in the region. 80% of the terrorists and extremists in Kazakhstan are unemployed persons[21].

Russian scholar Alexei Malashko once said, “IS penetration in Central Asia will surely affect its surrounding regions, and IS is intended to spread its value to these regions.” In Milestones, a famous book banned for propagandizing Islamic extremism, its author Sayyid Qutb interpreted “jihad” as “striving in the cause of God”, and “the cause of God” as “all Islamic movements”. Sayyid Qutb connected Islamic movements with overthrowing all non-Islamic regimes, which distorts and generalizes the traditional definition of “jihad”. Generalization of “jihad” is an attempt to legalize the anti-government violence of jihadists. Jihadists think that they have, through practice, verified and affirmed the feasibility of extremism, creating a legal ground for global jihad. This situation leads to serious ideological confusion, and also confusion about right and wrong[22].

A shocking thing is that IS jihadists not only read the Koran carefully, but also strictly follow the teachings of the Koran. They present a nearly sick assiduous attitude hardly seen on common Muslims[23]. Their devoutness has received great approbation from other Muslims, building the reputation of IS. Many Central Asian Muslims, including elite Muslims, have been affected by or directly joined IS, or started to organize Islamic organizations in their countries[24]. Such endogenous growth of extremism, together with local IS terrorist groups, extremist groups composed of Central Asian nationals, as well as foreign terrorist groups, have led to many devastating terrorist attacks with significant impacts, such as the Aktobe shootings in June 2016, and the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek bombing in August 2016.

Transferring and Returning Central Asian Terrorists Pose a Severe Threat to Local Stability

Currently, many Central Asian jihad veterans who have participated in wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya are transferring or returning to Central Asia, attracting the attention of some Central Asian terrorists. These veterans are venerated as “leaders” and “model jihadists” to involve more individuals in the process of radicalization[25].

Since the end of 2013, some Central Asian terrorists have started to transfer or return to Central Asia from the Middle East, South Asia and other regions[26], and actively collude with local extremists and terrorists in launching attacks according to the orders of IS and other international terrorist groups, jeopardizing the security and stability of Central Asia. In the past two years,
Kyrgyzstan’ law enforcement agencies have arrested several extremist group members who tried to build safe heavens after returning to Central Asia from Syria. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, about 500 Kyrgyz nationals have joined IS in Syria[27]. Since 2014, Uzbekistan has arrested a large number of IMU jihadists who participated in IS activities after returning from Afghanistan and Pakistan. In July 2015, more than 10 returning Kyrgyz and Kazakh IS militants tried to attack a Russian military base in kant of Kyrgyzstan and planned to launch an attack at the Ala-Too Square in Bishkek during the Eid holidays. In June 2016, three prisoners killed a jail officer and tried to break out of a jail in the northern city of Khujand, Tajikistan. Among the three escapees, one is a returning jihadist who once fought in Iraq for IS, and one is a Pakistan Al-Qaeda member. The two fugitives plotted to cross over to Afghanistan to join IS but were arrested later. On June 5, 2016, 17 people were killed in Aktubinsk, Kazakhstan. The event is considered as a response of terrorist groups (including returnees) in Central Asia to IS’s order of “Attacks in Ramadan”.

2017 registered less returning Central Asian terrorists. It is because IS temporarily shifted its focus to Europe and Southeast Asia, and some Central Asian terrorists transferred to northern Afghanistan, waiting for opportunities to return to Central Asia[28]. IEP Executive Chairman Steve Killelea pointed out in 2017 “IS threat is still escalating. Although it has suffered a heavy loss regarding territory, military strength and funds, it’s very likely that those stubborn terrorists will transfer to other regions of conflict. OECD members are facing the above challenges as foreign jihadists are returning from Syria and Iraq to their homelands. In 2015, 11 countries were directly attacked by IS, while in 2016, this number increased to 15.” In August 2016, some returning Central Asia terrorists and ETIM members bombed the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek.

**IS Terrorist Activities in Northern Afghanistan Exert Tremendous Pressure on the Security of Central Asia [29]**

The border between Afghanistan and Central Asia has long been an important channel through which transnational extremists, terrorists, separatists, and other crime organizations penetrate into, and smuggle drugs and weapons to Central Asia, Russia and China. In January 2015, IS declared the establishment of Khorasan branches in Afghanistan and Pakistan as an important part of its Eastward Expansion strategy. In the process of establishing the branches, a task force composed of Central Asian terrorist fighters tried to build a base in Afghanistan, in a bid to return to Central Asia under the cover of possible turmoil[30]. In more than three years since 2014, a general upward trend was observed in the number of IS members in Afghanistan despite the frequent military attacks like heavy bombing using GBU-43, the biggest conventional bomb known as the Mother of All Bombs. Currently, Khorasan activities are still happening in over 30 areas across Afghanistan. IS Afghan subdivision is active in border areas shared by Afghanistan with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and has launched several attacks in such areas and Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. In 2016, IMU clashed with the Taliban and local tribes after defecting to IS. The leader of IMU and about 200 fighters were killed, and the survivals surrendered to Taliban or defected to Jundallah in northeastern Afghanistan. In October 2017, IS launched a series of suicide bombings aiming at Shiah in Afghanistan, leaving over 100 people dead and around 200 injured. In November, some Algerian and French fighters entered an area mainly controlled by an IS subdivision in northern Afghanistan. They built a training camp in Darzab, Jowzjan, and recruited many women and even children as members. In areas controlled by the Afghan government, IS has also started to establish safe havens and training camps to train young terrorists[31].

In June 2017, Andrey Novikov, head of the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Center said that IS tried to build new spheres of influence in Afghanistan while expanding its influence to Central Asia. In December, Zamir Kabulov at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation said that IS had over 10,000 fighters in Afghanistan, and many of them had fought in Syria and Iraq[32]. Kyrgyz anti-terrorism expert Marat Torobekov held that IS offers wages much higher than those paid by other extremist groups to recruit extremists in Afghanistan and thus has
attracted a large number of extremists, many of whom are from Central Asia, which pose a grave threat and challenge to the security of Central Asian countries [33].

IS’s Terrorist Activities in Regions around China [34] Pose a Security Threat to China

IS leader Baghdadi once claimed in a Ramadan speech in 2014 that there were Chinese fighters in IS’s foreign legion, and Xinjiang would be a major part of the Great Islam. On the one hand, IS rushes to spread Islamic extremism to Xinjiang through Central Asia. On the other hand, IS tries to integrate extremist and terrorist groups in Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, into a unified force to participate in jihad. The government of Xinjiang confirmed in March 2015 that some locals had crossed the border to join IS, and there were also returnees who plotted violence or terrorist attacks in Xinjiang. Investigation results show that through internet and other media, IS spreads Islamic extremism in the name of religion, regulates people’s standards of value with the strict Islamic law, and instigates Muslims in Xinjiang to participate in jihad. To attract more Muslims, IS puts recruitment videos up online and offers generous salaries. Recruits will be taken abroad by IS members in Xinjiang and abroad to receive targeted training. The radicalism of IS has been followed by some violence and terrorist groups in Xinjiang, which poses a significant threat to the security and stability of Xinjiang [35].

The region from Waziristan to Ferghana Valley runs through Central Asia and South Asia, and China shares borders with several countries in the region, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. A large number of terrorist groups such as IS, Al-Qaeda, IMU, ETIM, Hizbut-Tahrir, Taliban are active in these border areas. Recently, they have started to collude with each other, and flee hither and thither. There are currently about plenty of ETIM terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other regions. If returnees from the region collude with terrorist groups in Xinjiang, China’s safety and social stability will face a grave threat. Moreover, Al-Qaeda is on the rise again and has been looking for opportunities to incorporate IS terrorist groups, filling the vacuum of its violence. Osama bin Laden’s son Hamza is eager to go into his father’s line of work as the new leader of Islamic jihad. A growing threat has been posed to the surrounding areas of its sphere of influence [36].

IS’s terrorist activities in Central Asia and Afghanistan have not only affected the security of Central Asia, but also posed a substantial threat to China, including China’s energy security and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Involving more than 4 billion people from over 60 countries, the Initiative requires large quantities of key technologies, equipment and human resources, which means a growing number of companies, factories, labors and tourists will rush to the Belt and Road. However, this also provides excellent opportunities for terrorist groups (e.g., IS and Al-Qaeda) to obtain funds and equipment through kidnapping and hostage-taking. What’s more, in countries along the Belt and Road, religion and ethnicity are always the major causes of conflicts due to a strong sense of cultural identity of different ethnic groups. Transnational terrorist groups like IS and Al-Qaeda, which pursue cultural unity, determine their future boundaries based on culture. The cultural identity developed by such terrorist groups will spread naturally, creating cultural barriers in the process of cultural integration [37].

Russian scholar Aleksandr Knyazov pointed out that IS is very interested in the oil and gas resources in Turkmenistan. Its enhanced penetration into Pakistan, India and South Asia will pose a threat to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline which extends to China [38]. In September 2015, a deadly assault organized and commanded by terrorists abroad occurred at a coal mine in Xinjiang. In May 2017, IS kidnapped and killed two Chinese people in Pakistan. In December 2017, Tajikistan closed crossings with Afghanistan in fear of possible terrorist attacks around the New Year's holiday. In December 17, IS launched a suicide attack on a church in Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan, leaving 9 people dead and 56 injured. If IS expands its influence southward from Afghanistan, the security of Balochistan will continue to slide backward, substantially threatening the construction of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor [39].
According to Yevgeniy Sysoyev, Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS SCO), through cooperation among SCO members, from 2013 to 2017, SCO had spoiled over 600 terrorist attacks, destroyed over 500 jihad training bases, and arrested more than 2,000 multinational terrorist group members. In 2017, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan jointly arrested and repatriated 150 wanted terrorists[40]. To prevent IS from launching terrorist attacks in Central Asia, first of all, the five Central Asian countries should, within the framework of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization, enhance cooperation in border security and anti-terrorism[41]. Second, SCO members should strengthen political and intelligence cooperation, including building a more efficient information exchange network to better control transferring and returning terrorists, and formulating more efficient foreign terrorist extradition mechanisms according to their national laws[42]. Third, measures should be taken to further promote the communication and cooperation between Central Asian countries and its surrounding countries like China, Afghanistan and Pakistan[43]. Also, SCO members and observers should realize the fusion [44]of anti-terrorism centers, so that intelligence is fused rather than just collected together[45], which is crucial for predicting the movements of terrorists. Regulating religious activities on solid legal ground is also an effective way to suppress and fight against terrorist groups. Aside from using forces, countries threatened by terrorism may also turn to the power of culture, that is, to control radical Muslims through moderate Muslims, to effectively shrink the social base of radical Muslims, and prevent radical Muslims from turning into terrorists[46].

**Conclusions**

Allegedly, as of February 2018, Central Asia registered about 700-1,000 IS jihadists[47]. Besides, compared with Salafi jihadists, people in the three countries have a fundamentally different understanding of Islam, the ideological foundation for the behavior of Salafi jihadists and even for the growth of IS[48]. Most people have a strong sense of ethnicity and national identity, and thus are not interested in building a cross-regional caliphate[49]. At the SCO Qingdao Summit held in June 2018, topics like how to take comprehensive measures to solve international and regional conflicts in a peaceful way, how to intensify crackdown on terrorism and its ideology, and how to eliminate factors leading to terrorism and extremism were discussed[50]. Currently, the mainstream Muslim society of Central Asia is adamantly opposed to extremist ideas. Central Asia’s stability and development are the primary social concerns. In such a context, challenges posed by terrorist groups like IS to Central Asia and even the whole world may be the change in the forms of terrorism caused by the extremism of radical Muslims. Specifically, in the context that ideological conflicts are increasingly sharp, more and more radical Muslims are likely to accept the radical ideas of terrorist groups, and finally participate in terrorist activities[51].

Currently, IS has lost over 90% of its territory in Iraq and Syria, and is running out of money which has consequently affected its recruitment. Despite its Eastward Expansion strategy, IS has never been a stable modern regime. The spread of terrorism is determined by the penetration of terrorist ideology on the one hand, and ordinary people’s response to difficulties in their lives on the other hand. Therefore, IS’s influence on China doesn’t lies in occupation of territory, but the ideological penetration of separatism, extremism and terrorism into western China, which affects people’s sense of national identity. The ideas of Islamic revival and re-establishing the caliphate advocated by IS have kindled the enthusiasm of some religious extremists in China, to which we must pay close attention.

**Acknowledgement**

This paper is one of the staged achievements of National Social Science Fund Project “Studies on ‘Islamic State’ Terrorist Activities and Its Impact on the Anti-terrorism in China” (16BGJ032). This work was supported by the National Social Science Fund Project.
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[5] It refers to different terrorist, extremist, and anti-government organizations in Central Asia, and foreign jihadists. For example, IS jihadists in Uzbekistan are from extremist groups like IMU, Tablighi Jamaat, and Imam Bukhari Brigade, as well as foreign Jihadist groups in Russia, the rest of Central Asia, and other countries.

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Since 2014, IS activities have been found in Caucasus (Russia), Afghanistan, Pakistan and other regions. The organization is very active in Afghanistan, and thus poses the biggest threat to the security of Central Asia. Limited by the length, the paper mainly discusses IS activities in northern Afghanistan.

It mainly refers to the five Central Asian countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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