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## The issue of Taliban gaining power and the approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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### Abstract

In a strategic shock, the Taliban in Afghanistan entered Kabul on August 15, following a crisis caused by the Western military withdrawal, the reluctance of the Afghan government and national security forces to fight, and the Taliban's desire for power. The early withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban will have important consequences for the region and international politics more broadly. The developments in Afghanistan with the influence of the Taliban on Afghanistan and the formation of a government by this group have become a concern for the neighboring countries. Iran, as one of Afghanistan's neighbors, has adopted policies against the Taliban's control over Afghanistan and their formation of a government. Afghanistan shares a water and land border with Iran and is naturally part of the Iranian plateau, with many historical and cultural similarities between the

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two countries. The eastern borders of Iran are vital for two-way human, economic, and cultural exchanges between the two nations. In terms of geopolitics, respectable Baloch people live on Iran's eastern borders, whose relatives are also present in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are often provoked by foreign intelligence services for various ethnic and religious reasons. Over the years, these borders have also been one of the most significant security challenges regarding human and drug trafficking. More than millions of Afghans have dealt with the problems of these borders in the last four decades. The recent developments in Afghanistan over the past year with the Taliban's re-emergence have also caused many Afghans to flock to Iran's borders, which continues today. The Taliban regained power in Afghanistan with the withdrawal of American forces following the capture of Kabul, the capital of this country. This caused the Islamic Republic of Iran to face some contradictions in dealing with its eastern neighbor. Iran's position is not clear-cut. It views the developments as both a threat and opportunity, not ruling out the possibility of conspiracy in the events. This article collected data using qualitative methods within the framework of offensive realism. A thematic analysis technique was used to extract key themes. The article aims to identify Iran's approach regarding the Taliban's reestablishment of power. It seeks to answer: What stance has Iran adopted toward the Afghan Taliban? The authors will examine the hypothesis that the premature withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban has reshaped the turbulent conditions and geopolitical equations of the Middle East. This impacts Iran's interests. Meanwhile, the Taliban, as an extremist Sunni group, is still considered a threat to Iran's national security ideologically. The research results show that given Iran's position and sensitive regional role, its posture toward the Taliban will be nuanced.

A descriptive-analytical method has been used to answer the research question, given the nature of the subject. In the descriptive-analytical method, the researcher not only reveals what is, but also describes and explains the reasons behind the problem and its forms. The method and tool for collecting information and data is through documents, in which the researcher has gathered the required information from reliable sources or interviews with experts in this field.

The findings of the article show that Iran's positions will differ according to the Taliban's approach. If the Taliban moves towards distributing power and includes other ethnic groups, especially Shiites and Turkic-speaking people, in the structure of the government, considering that Iran ideologically has much in common with the Shiites and Hazaras of Afghanistan, and all these issues are in favor of Iran. That is, the goal of the Taliban can be aligned with the interests

of the Islamic Republic of Iran. But if the Taliban's approach is based on monopolizing power, considering that the ideology of this group differs from Iran and they are closer to Saudi Arabia, it seems that the relations between Iran and the Taliban will not be friendly.

The Taliban is an ultra-conservative political and religious faction that emerged with the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the collapse of the communist regime in Afghanistan. This group, which was founded by Mullah Muhammad Omar in the southern part of Afghanistan, centered around the Pashtun people. The Taliban, with their religious and extremist ideology, took drastic measures. In August 2021, the Taliban was able to begin a massive advance with the withdrawal of American forces, which provided a good opportunity for the Taliban in Afghanistan to dominate the whole of Afghanistan in a short time. On the one hand, the unfavorable political-security situation, economic crisis, social issues, and extreme ideology as internal factors. And on the other hand, the decisions and actions of international powers, including the United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, as external factors in the formation of the phenomenon of Talibanism. Afghanistan had been effective and enabled the Taliban to quickly advance inside Afghanistan and take control of the capital and force the previous government to flee, becoming the undisputed rulers of Afghanistan. Considering that the situation in Afghanistan had been messy for many years, these disturbances can threaten the countries of the region, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran. With this in mind, the security issues that have arisen against the Islamic Republic of Iran have caused Iran to deal with Afghanistan using a tactical approach aiming to manage and repel threats in its foreign policy.

**Key words:** Taliban, Iran, ideology, national interests.