American Tactics On The Afghan Front

The White House recently disclosed its plans regarding American military presence in Afghanistan, making an already complicated military-political situation in that country even less clear. The new plans are obviously inconsistent with previous American announcements.

The US-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement proposes keeping 15,000 troops in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan “to 2024 and beyond.” (H. Karzai refused to sign that document, but both Afghan presidential candidates A. Abdullah and A. G. Ahmadzai, who've made it to the final stage of an unfinished election, signed.) According to the new layout, 9800 American troops should remain in-country in December of this year, when “operation enduring freedom” ends, which began almost 13 years ago. Throughout 2015, their number will be reduced to half that; Americans will play the role of consultants and will instruct the Afghan army, now under the banner “operation resolute support.” A special operations group will be given the task of continuing the counter-terrorist mission against the so-called “remains of Al-Qaida” (of which “remains,” actually, no less, if not more than existed before the American invasion.) After this, only a small supporting military presence of the American contingent will remain, lead by the American ambassador in Afghanistan and dealing with weapons supply.

The “war on terror,” announced by Washington in 2001, having become the reason for “operation enduring freedom,” did not get results, as well it could not have; a victory over the Taliban was not what they were aiming for. The level of terrorism in Afghanistan repeatedly grew during NATO's contingents' presence there. Terrorist activity spread to the country's previously relatively peaceful northern provinces. The process and results of this operation lead one to conclude that its true aim from the beginning was to create conditions that allow for an extended American military presence on the borders of Central Asia, China, Iran, India and Pakistan, using the excuse of continued instability in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the US's plans on the Afghan front, official plans anyway, have undergone significant changes.

In our opinion, two factors contributed to the US's reduced interest in Afghanistan. Communicating his new plan in the end of May 2014, Obama indicated that “an end to the war in Afghanistan . . . will allow us to re-direct resources to address a broader set of priorities around the globe.” This obviously means the distinct transition in recent years of American military and political attention from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific Region. The second factor is the aggravated situation in the Ukraine, in which the US and its European partners have participated. One can suppose that the decision to increase the American military contingent in Eastern Europe influenced the decision to decrease it in Afghanistan.

All this is going on within the context of Washington's commitment to reducing military spending, generated by financial problems. In terms of the above-mentioned US-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement, its significance to Americans is somewhat depleted, however, until recently high-ranking American voyagers tried to convince H. Karzai to sign the agreement. Depending on possible new hesitations in US strategic operations, the document maintains the legal right for long-term American presence in Afghanistan or simply remains unused.
It's pretty hard to believe that Americans, having invested many billions of dollars in an Afghan military campaign and having almost attained the signing of the above-mentioned Agreement, after 2 years would turn around and leave Afghanistan. We must consider the possibility that Obama's above-mentioned announcement is a result of unfinished Afghan business by his administration and American law-makers, including the financial constituent.

Now B. Obama needs to demonstrate to his fellow Americans his desire to complete the military campaign in Afghanistan, which has, for over 10 years now, stressed US foreign policy, as well as his desire, as he stated, to “turn this page” in the country's history. The fact that this should coincide with the end of B. Obama's presidency is not irrelevant here. Probably, the American path in Afghanistan will zigzag yet again, and ultimately serve America's geopolitical purposes beyond 2016.

The Taliban in turn announced that the announcement of Obama's plans has rallied its forces, and the jihad will continue until the last American soldier leaves Afghanistan. In other words, peace in this country will be delayed until further notice. Moreover, even the hypothetic complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from Afghanistan with a high degree of certainty will throw the country into a chasm of civil war, just as it was before the withdrawal.

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