More recently, the topic of Turkey and its use of fighters with Syrian war experience in a number of armed conflict zones has been discussed at length in the pages of NEO. However, the topic of foreign fighters in the current events in Ukraine, as well as the involvement of a number of NATO countries in sending them there, compels us to revisit this topic.

First, regarding foreign fighters “with Syrian experience”, the deputy head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of Opposing Sides (CROS) in Syria, Rear Admiral Oleg Zhuravlev, said on March 5 that fighters of Albanian and Caucasian origin were heading to Europe from the US-controlled Syrian province of Idlib. They plan to further “take part in combat operations on the territory of Ukraine”.

On March 1, Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Bashar Jaafari said that the USA might transfer terrorists of DAESH (a terrorist group banned in Russia) or members of other radical groups to Ukraine. According to the politician, this is being organized by the US special services. He also stressed that the use of mercenaries is a common practice in the US. “They moved terrorists from El-Hol camp (in northeastern Syria) to Al-Tanf area (territory seized by the US army) and from there sent them to Afghanistan and Burkina Faso,” Jaafari stressed.

In this connection, attention was also drawn to information that appeared in a number of media outlets that officers
of the Ukrainian Security Service, together with officers of Turkey’s national intelligence organization, had recently
visited northern Syria (including the settlements of Afrin and Azaz). In particular, a military diplomatic source
told RIA Novosti that they visited the base of armed groups banned in Russia, in particular “Harakat Saurin” (part of
the “Syrian National Army”), where they met with commanders of several pro-Turkish formations (“Firkyat Sultan
Murad”, “Liwa Al-Muattasim”) as well as camps of the illegal armed groups. There, the possibility of recruiting
fighters for Ukraine’s territorial defense was discussed with pro-Turkish formations and an agreement was reached
to organize a series of secret meetings with “interested parties”.

Detection of a Turkish flag in one of the workshops for manufacturing homemade drone shells near Mariupol in the
village of Sopino by the DPR military on 5 March is definite confirmation of the involvement of pro-Turkish militants
in the current events in Ukraine on the side of Kiev-controlled military formations. Troops found large quantities of
explosive devices and electronic components for drones there.

Moreover, according to Kosovo media reports, veterans of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), recognized as
a terrorist organization in Russia and Serbia, intend to fight on the Ukrainian side. As the Balkanist portal notes, the
Croatian nationalists who expelled the Serbs living there in 1995 from Croatia had previously volunteered to
participate in Kiev’s military operations.

Internationalization of the Ukrainian war by Kiev has been acknowledged by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro
Kuleba on the US TV channel CNN, who said, among other things, that more than 20,000 mercenaries from 16
countries were being sent to Ukraine. On February 27, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the
creation of a combat unit, into which he has invited citizens of foreign countries to join, and which has already been
dubbed Kiev’s “foreign legion”. The Norwegian conflictologist Thomas Hegghammer has already pointed out in an
interview with Der Spiegel that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made a blatant political mistake in
urging foreigners to fight in his country against Russia. Volunteers are also more difficult to control, he says, since
they are less pragmatic and less willing to compromise than the local population. They are of little military use, but
are often the ones who commit atrocities and violate ceasefires.

Nevertheless, militants from various countries have already started making their way into Ukraine in response to
Kiev’s call. A large number of military personnel are now reportedly on Polish territory and are involved in
smuggling weapons and fighters into Ukraine.

A number of Western countries have previously officially allowed their citizens to go to Ukraine and join the “foreign
legion”. In particular, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Croatia, Poland and Latvia have endorsed the sending of
mercenaries at national level. Meanwhile it is already known that the backbone of this “army of mercenaries” will be
nationalists and far-rightists of all stripes from Europe and America.

A certain proportion of these mercenaries are Western private military companies, which were present in Ukraine
even before the special operation by Russian troops began. They are led by the US, and consist mainly of Eastern
European nations, with Poles in particular tending to be the majority. These PMCs were used by Washington in
Afghanistan and Iraq, in overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi. PMC services are very expensive, so they will certainly be
paid for by “Western sponsors”, as “Zelenskyy’s state” is now bankrupt. It is therefore naive to suggest that
Zelenskyy’s call for a “foreign legion” was made by himself. This is clearly Washington’s tactical line to escalate the
Ukrainian conflict. The “US leadership” in deepening the armed conflict in Ukraine is also evidenced by a report in
the possession of The Washington Post showing that the Pentagon had significantly increased its military aid
deliveries to Kiev long before the Russian special operation began. Moreover, according to the declassified
document, the US Department of Defense “was equipping Ukrainian fighters with arms and equipment useful for
fighting in urban areas.”

Another category of “foreign helpers of Kiev” will be outright Nazis who hate Russia and Orthodoxy fiercely. The
most prominent of these are the Croats, about 200 of whose representatives are now based in besieged Mariupol and
holding tens of thousands of people hostage. Representatives of such groups are very aggressive and they are not part of the European right-conservative political community, which is largely sympathetic to Russia because of its
strong defense of traditional values.

It is frankly surprising that there are Israelis in the ranks of such ultranationalists and Nazis. It would seem that they
cannot stand idly by as monuments are being erected in Ukraine to those who were exterminating Jews by the tens
of thousands, burning, stabbing, shooting and burying them alive in mass graves. The names of these executioners,
whose hands are up to their elbows in Jewish blood, are called streets and schools in the cities. Because of the
policies pursued by the Kiev authorities, these murderers are now heroes for Ukraine. But nevertheless, Israeli
The Israeli media reported that Israelis, in particular former fighters of the Golani brigade, are already fighting in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Territorial Defense Forces. This was reported on the telegraph channel Israeli Working Life, which even published a video showing one of these fighters being interviewed in Hebrew. The Ukrainian newspaper Donpress also reported that the first Israeli special forces veterans had already arrived in Ukraine, quoting Ukrainian MP Oleksiy Honcharenko. Moreover, several Ukrainian media outlets quoted the Israeli portal Ynet as saying that trainees from the Israeli army’s elite units are taking part in the war with Russia on Ukraine’s side. All this raises a lot of questions for the official current authorities in Israel!

On March 2, Japanese newspapers reported that Tokyo was ready to send 70 Japanese “volunteers” to the Ukrainian front. The Japanese Mainichi Shimbun reported that about 50 of them were former members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

Groups of young Danish citizens have already left for Ukraine, Danish news agency Nyheder.TV2 reported on March 1, specifying that the young Danes have only three months of military service as their only military experience. So the likelihood of any of them returning from the Ukrainian battlefield alive is small...

The US publication Vice published on March 2 an interview with a former British military officer who is already in Ukraine. Britain’s retired Royal Marines have already arrived in Ukraine to fight the Russians, said Fox News journalist Lucas Tomlinson. British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss gave permission for Britons to fight on the side of Kiev’s neo-Nazis, but on March 6 she was opposed by the head of the Royal Armed Forces’ General Staff, Admiral Tony Radakin, who said that it was “illegal and useless” for Britons to fight against Russia in Ukraine.

A short while ago, the Senegalese Foreign Ministry summoned the Ukrainian ambassador to protest over the recruitment of its nationals to take part in military operations. The communiqué said it was about a Facebook post by the Ukrainian embassy in Dakar that called for Senegalese volunteers to take part in the armed conflict in Ukraine.

About 60 mercenaries are known to have left Georgia for Ukraine. According to unofficial data, 15 of them have already died...

The mercenaries sent by Western countries to help Kiev will not be entitled to POW status, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Major-General Igor Konashenkov has said. Their fate is therefore unenviable.

Vladimir Platov, expert on the Middle East, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”. 