Terrorism Remains Pakistan’s Chief Problem

Despite the increased efforts of the government, the army and the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan, innovated methods for combating terrorist and extremist groups, the problem of terrorism remains a major threat to the stability of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The high level of terrorist activity hardly decreases. In this regard, Pakistan is second in its number of terrorist attacks only to Iraq. Besides this, Pakistan with ease holds third place in the world for the number of suicide terrorists after Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact, in spring of 2015, another method became more and more common: instead of careening cars with explosives or suicide bombers in crowds, groups of militants began to break into various public buildings, killing everybody there and hide before any special operation could be launched to destroy them.

In 2014, as a result of extremist attacks, almost 1800 people lost their lives and just in the first trimester of 2015 - around 400. Yet, the number of casualties among members of religious minorities decreased and terrorists began to suffer more losses in the course of special operations. In 2014, Pakistani security forces killed more than 3200 militants, which doubles the previous year’s success. In the first quarter of 2015, the number increased to 900 militants. However, the losses of the security services remain quite high.

Currently, the subversive and terrorist activities are carried out almost everywhere throughout Pakistan, especially on the border with Afghanistan, the north-western part of the country. Many terrorist attacks happen in the big cities - Karachi, Islamabad and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Only Punjab remains a relatively calm region, including its capital Lahore. Although even there, weekly explosions can be heard.

So far, the main source of terrorist threat in Pakistan is the Taliban Movement of Pakistan (TTP). In reality - it is not a single structure, but a kind of umbrella organization which consists of three dozens of different anti-government groups. They are responsible for the most notorious and most resonant attacks in Pakistan, such as the attack on the international airport in Karachi and a school in Peshawar. The Pakistani Taliban declared the government pro-Western and anti-Islamic, stating that the fight against it is its main goal. That is why the TTP attacks state institutions, the police, public institutions and kills individual officials. They do not hesitate to attack foreigners either, especially Westerners, including members of foreign diplomatic missions and the UN agencies.

The Pakistani Taliban has close ties with the troops of the Afghan armed opposition, based in the north-west of the country, such as the Haqqani network, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the radical organizations such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

The attempts of Nawaz Sharif’s government to establish negotiations with the TTP and run something like domestic Pakistani dialogues failed. From the very beginning, the TTP began the dialogue from a position of strength, refusing to accept the Pakistani constitution and demanded a full Islamization of Pakistan in Wahhabi patterns. After that, the army and security forces of the country resumed active hostilities against the Pakistani Taliban and the IMU. To do this, even aircraft was involved. And though the authorities were able to destroy more than 100 terrorist bases, terrorists managed to regroup and relocate. After the bloody terrorist attack on a Peshawar school, which killed 132 children, a moratorium on the death penalty for crimes of a terrorist nature was lifted under pressure from the military. New military courts were established for a period of two years. There are nine military tribunals established in four provinces of Pakistan. In addition, by mid-April they set up special anti-terrorist units of up to five thousand,
tightened control over religious schools - madrasa.

In the midst of this, began the fragmentation of the Pakistani Taliban, caused by conflicts between warlords. In view of NATO’s withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, the leaders of some of the breakaway organization called the Movement to focus on helping the Afghan Taliban, instead of subversive activities on Pakistani soil. Thus, they opposed the Pakistani Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah, whose priority is to topple the pro-Western government in Islamabad. As a result of the split, new organizations were birthed, such as the "Movement of the Taliban in South Waziristan" headed by Mehsud, "Jammat and al to Hindi" headed by Horasani who began to express their commitment to Mohammad Omar and the Afghan Taliban. At the same time they support and maintain close ties with the heads of the "Al-Qaeda". It only confirmed the dangerous trend, i.e. strengthening of international organizations in Pakistan, especially "Al-Qaeda". De facto, is formed a South Asian wing of the "Al-Qaeda", which intends to operate from India to Myanmar.

But the most dangerous phenomenon of the last few months is the beginning of penetration in Pakistan from "Islamic state." First, their leaflets appeared in the north-western regions of Pakistan and then they began to appear in the major cities, including Karachi and Lahore. The leaflets say that the IS intends to expand the boundaries of the "Islamic caliphate" from the Arab world to Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India, etc. This part of the IS is called "Khorasan". In spring of 2015, IS troops consist hundreds of militants. They are joined by new fighters from the TTP, the IMU and "Al Qaeda". One of the warlords, Hafiz Saeed Khan proclaimed himself governor of Khorasan. According to some reports, citizens of a number of former Soviet republics of Central Asia are among his fighters.

Apparently, all these terrorist trends in Pakistan will escalate, taking various ideological forms. IS ideas are the most attractive. So law enforcement agencies will have to continue to be most active in the fight against terrorism in the country.

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