Will Iraq Follow Syria?

Talks on May 21 in Moscow with the Iraqi delegation headed by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi were dedicated to Military-technical co-operation, oil, bilateral cooperation and Syria. The first and fourth points are very important to Baghdad, which for almost a year has been in a cruel and unsuccessful struggle with the ISIS. They need weapons and joint coordination with Syria in regards to ISIS.

It is significant that this visit of the Iraqi government to Russia took place at a time when terrorists of ISIS seized the city of Ramadi 110 km from Baghdad. The success of the ISIS in Ramadi was a direct consequence of the massive defeat of government troops near the city of Fallujah. Iraqi forces planned to take the city through two flank attacks but fell into a well-planned ambush. As a result of losses (200 militants killed and 59 captured) Iraqi forces were forced to retreat. This provided ISIS with serious quantitative superiority and allowed to transfer part of the forces to Ramadi. This demonstrates not only the combat capability of this terrorist organisation but also the militarily incompetence of the Iraqi authorities.

Not coincidentally, two months ago the USA decided to reduce arms supplies to Iraq as the Iraqi army, consisting mainly of Shiites, loses and almost without a fight gives up weapon warehouses to jihadists. At the same time in Washington it was noted that Haider al-Abadi, like its predecessor Nouri al-Maliki, does not want to enter into a coalition with the Sunni forces, which are ready to cooperate with the Shiites and are moderate in their ideology. As a result, the US has taken a de facto policy of preferential development of relations with the Sunnis. In so doing the Americans have made it clear that they are willing to accept in principle the creation of a Sunni enclave within the Iraqi state, or even go for the split of the country into a three part quasi-states: Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni. Especially as the breakaway Sunni regions of Iraq is also supported by Saudi Arabia, while Iran in principle is ready for the Shiite provinces to be divided in a separate state entity, with the support and orientation to Tehran.

The following picture, which is obviously "drawn" by the Americans with the help of Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries and possibly Turkey, is to first overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria by force by May of this year, using a new armed opposition, and if necessary with external military intervention; then dividing Iraq into three ethno-religious enclaves, which is directed primarily against Iranian influence in the region; in the next phase - a regime change in Iran through a "colour revolution" or by fomenting inter-ethnic conflict there; and already at the end - the spread of American influence in the use of the opportunities of Turkey in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is clear that the ultimate goal of the United States is to encircle Russia with hostile states.

The question arises - how such a large army of a state like Iraq, could suffer such a severe defeat of the terrorist group? The two most important reasons can be noted. Firstly, ISIS is no ordinary terrorist group. It is no different from an organized and disciplined military force. In their ranks are former officers of Saddam's army. They have modern weapons ranging from tanks to missiles. They are zealously devoted to their cause: revenge on U.S. and Iraqi Shiites, because in 2003 they sent in military intervention. Second, the current government and the army in Iraq are weak. After al-Maliki's government, Prime Minister al-Abadi actually inherited a dilapidated state. The country plunged into a conflict between Sunnis and Shiites. The army does not want to fight. In Ramadi, as well as earlier in Mosul, the military chose to flee rather than fight.
The fact that the Iraqi government has given way to Ramadi, the centre of the Anbar province, where the majority of the population is Sunni, is a heavy loss for the government of Iraq and the United States who supports it. Now the ISIS threat is acute in Baghdad located 110 kilometres from Ramadi. Moreover, as you know, over the past few weeks, the government of al-Abadi has been preparing to liberate Mosul. Now these plans have failed. At the moment, all the forces are thrown into reclaiming Ramadi. The government quickly sent Shiite militias to the region. All hopes are connected with these well-armed Shiite fighters. But for the Sunnis in the region, and especially for the Sunni tribes, Shiite fighters are not saviours but enemies. The chasm between Sunnis and Shiites is so deep that the Sunnis are not willing to help the Shiites in getting rid of ISIS. Instead, Sunni tribes themselves want to fight with ISIS and demand that the Baghdad government provide them with weapons.

If the Shiite militias are still able to return to Ramadi, it will be only a victory in one battle of a protracted Iraqi war. To get rid of ISIS, Sunni-Shiite friction must cease and the government in Baghdad must develop a policy that should take into account the interests of all groups in Iraq.

Otherwise ISIS will continue its expansion.

ISIS radicals meanwhile took another town north-west of Ramadi, Juba virtually without a fight, which is of fundamental importance. This settlement holds a few hundred American instructors who train Iraqi forces and who as a result of the onset of the jihadists retreated hastily without entering into a direct clash. This in itself is remarkable and suggests that the Pentagon is struggling to avoid direct involvement of their troops in battle.

Meanwhile, on May 13 of this year by military command in Baghdad it was declared elimination as a result of an airstrike of the deputy leader of Islamic State Abdel of Rahman Moustapha al-Kaduli (he is Abu Alla al-Afari) in the village of Al-Liadkhiya near the city of Tell-Afar. Americans thus found it difficult to confirm this fact. Meanwhile, on May 13 military command in Baghdad declared that as a result of air strikes the ISIS deputy leader Mustafa Abdel Rahman al-Qaduli (aka Abu Alaa al-Afari) was eliminated in the village of Al-Liadhiya near the town of Tall Afar. Americans at the same time found it difficult to confirm this fact. Earlier, Baghdad announced that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was seriously wounded. It makes no sense to go into the details of what in this case is true, and whether it is just a propaganda move. It is more important to understand the other side, that these events will not have any significant impact on the fighting capacity of ISIS. First of all, due to the fact that the ISIS is a serious and organised organisation with clearly delegated functions. In this format, the elimination of the leader or his deputy does not affect the effectiveness of the group activities and military operations. As an example, experts point to the events of the time of Iraq's epic-scale presence of American troops in Iraq and the fight against al-Qaeda in the same province of Anbar. Then, after the elimination of the leaders of the serial Al-Qaeda and a number of warlords, the dead were quickly replaced by a fairly adequate level. The turning point came only after the vast majority of Sunni tribes went over the American side.

This is extremely negative and the situation in neighbouring Syria was not so easy either, as evidenced by the successful outcome of the fighting for the Islamists in the area of Palmyra and Idlib. And this despite the fact that Turks and Iraqi Kurds, who are themselves supposed to fight the jihadists, commonly tied to the smuggling of weapons to the IG and the purchase of his oil. Thus ISIS maintains a strong financial earnings scheme. Another indicator of the "well-being" of the Islamic State in this regard stems from the CIA data, which show that the influx of foreign jihadists into the ranks of ISIS has not decreased recently. So it is possible to ascertain the failure of US efforts to crush ISIS. All their plans in Iraq and Syria are just rapidly crumbling.

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