US "Plan B" in Syria is Being Implemented Now

Washington seems kin to implement its long-cherished plan B in Syria, that implies that even though the legitimate Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will remain in power for a while, Syria itself will be divided into several enclaves, most of which are to be fairly loyal to the US and its allies. Washington's think tanks are not excluding the possibility of Syria's somaliazation which means that the country will be plunged in the state of perpetual violence and chaos for years.

The US administration still relies on the Free Syrian Army (FSA) as the most organized, in its opinion, opposition force on the ground. At the same time, Washington is trying to enlist in its ranks as many smaller anti-government groups as it possibly can, including Turkomans, the Muslim Brotherhood and all sorts of the so-called "moderate Islamists".

The recent success of the government forces in the fight against Islamists in the the Aleppo area along with the victories scored by the Kurdish militias near the towns of Manbij and Jarabulus raised concerns in Washington and provoked a veritable panic in Ankara. There was a real threat that Turkish authorities would lose control over a sixty miles long strip of the Turkish-Syrian border, stretching from Jarabulus to Azaz, that until recently was used by Turkey to provide assistance to a number of anti-government groups, including ISIS. This made Tayyip Erdogan suspicious that the two Kurdish communities in Afrin and Kobani may secure an autonomy along with the northern Syrian region of Rojava, thereby blocking the Syrian-Turkish border. This development could strengthen the positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey, which is being regarded by both Ankara and Washington as a terrorist organization.

The recent failed military coup in Turkey has not just allowed Erdogan to launch a crackdown on all forms of internal dissent, but also allowed him to make decisive steps in the strengthening of Ankara's positions in the border areas with Syria. Under the pretext of intensifying the fight against ISIS, Turkish Air Force on August 22 launched air strikes against the positions of Kurdish militias along the Syrian border. Two days later Turkey's armed forces entered the town of Jarabulus. By that time the better part of ISIS militants has already fled the town, unable to resist the pressure of the Peshmerga units, but there's possibly still that the terrorists reached an agreement with the Turkish authorities and left their positions to relocate to the south and east. Therefore, Turkish troops didn't meet any Islamist resistance, however Kurdish militias didn't take this intervention so lightly, since they were subjected to bombing and shelling and a number of Kurdish settlements was destroyed.

Judging by Washington's response to this operation, one may safely assume that it was discussed and approved by the White House beforehand. The Pentagon has even tried to create some sort of a demarcation line between the Kurds and the Turkish army in order to avoid large-scale clashes between them, since the former have been considered US allies in the region.

To no surprise, Damascus described Turkey's invasion as a violation of Syria's state sovereignty. The Russian Foreign Ministry has also recommended Turkey to consult Syrian authorities before taking any steps in the Syrian conflict. But Ankara preferred to ignore those statements and carry on its military operation, which is widely believed to be a part of the practical implementation of the American plan B on Syria. A sixty mile long section of the Turkish-Syrian border is now in control of the Turkish troops that have been deployed 25 miles deep in Syria's
territory. This area is to be controlled now by the above describe pro-Turkish opposition groups. The Turkish expeditionary corps has brought around 1,500 Syrian fighters along with it, that were trained by American and Turkish instructors in military camps on the territory of Turkey. Thus, on top of the already existing and potentially neutral Kurdish enclaves in the north of Syria, we've witnessed the creation of a pro-Turkish enclave.

The US is trying to establish communication between these enclaves and all opposition groups, in particular, between the troops of the Free Syrian Army, Turkomans and Kurdish troops. At the beginning of 2016, Washington managed to bring together a so-called Democratic Alliance in the areas of Kobani, Al-Hasakah, Al-Qamishli that managed to recapture a number of town with the extensive amount of support from the US Air Force and Special Forces, along with taking the strategically important dam on the Euphrates River, which supplied electricity to the city and the province of Aleppo.

Obviously, Washington and its regional allies are beginning to realize the futility of any attempts to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad with the help of radical Islamists. Therefore it is possible that Islamists will be pushed out of Syria and Iraq till the end of this year, with the cities of Mosul and Raqqa being finally liberated. In this situation, it can be expected that a part of the radical Islamists will try to pretend to be "moderate" in a bid to carry on their operations. For example, it has recently been declared that a major ISIS competitor, the well-known terrorist group Jabhat al-Nusra has been transformed in Jabhat Fateh al-Sham. Allegedly, the new group has already broken all ties with the Al-Qaeda and is now “moderate”. Obviously, Kerry and Lavrov will have a hard time negotiating the list of terrorist groups.

The essence of the American plan B for Syria is the distribution of its regions into enclaves and the consequent isolation of the central authorities. While Bashar Assad remains in power, Washington and its allies will be promoting separatist sentiments across Syria to sabotage any attempts to transfer the Syrian conflict into the peaceful reconciliation process.

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