CSTO Ensures Security on the Tajik-Afghan Border

In October 2016, a terrorist organization that has been known as the Taliban assaulted the Afghan town of Kunduz once again. It should be noted that the city is located on the very Afghan-Tajik border, therefore this development allowed the Republic of Tajikistan and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to test their effectiveness in fighting terrorism.

Even though there were no incidents on the Tajik-Afghan border reported, Tajikistan raised its border guards on high alert, while deploying a number of regular army units to assist those. Over the years the republic grew accustomed to paying a great deal of attention to the situation on the border with its restless neighbor. However, as the security situation in Afghanistan keeps deteriorating, there’s new measures to be taken to ensure stability in the region. According to Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, in less than a year a total of 80 border outposts was built on the Tajik-Afghan border, while another 100 is being constructed now. At the same time, border guards are getting additional training and equipment on the regular basis. Nevertheless, terrorist groups and drug convoys still have a fair chance of penetrating Tajik border. The government of Tajikistan understands this perfectly clear, so it’s willingly accepting any sort of assistance from its neighbors.

For many years, the situation in Afghanistan remains primary concern of the CSTO. This war-torn country is still one of the centers of international terrorism due to the fact that it remains plunged in a bitter armed conflict. In this respect, Tajikistan plays the role of a shield that defends the relatively calm Central Asia from the Afghan chaos. At the same time, it should be understood that the security of the Central Asian region is directly linked to Russia's internal security. Since the whole Central Asia is and will be a zone of strategic interests of the Russian Federation, Moscow pays special attention to defense cooperation with Tajikistan, both within the framework of the CSTO, and via bilateral channels.

One must note that Russia's largest military base outside of its territory, the notorious №201 is located in the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan. There's a wide range of units being constantly deployed here, starting with aviation, and ending with reconnaissance and tank units.

In September 2016 Russia and Tajikistan conducted a massive antiterrorist drills at the Lyaur military range. A total of 800 servicemen and 200 armored vehicles were deployed to imitate the neutralization of a possible armed incursion.

At the end of September 2016, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Nikolay Bordyuzha arrived to Tajikistan to hold a meeting with President Emomali Rahmon. Among other issues, the parties discussed the situation on the Afghan border. The officials stressed that situations looks fairly alarming, therefore there is a need to increase the combat readiness of the joint anti-terrorist forces operating in Tajikistan.

In October 2016, Lyaur military range witnessed yet another round of antiterrorist drills. This time it was scout units of the №201 military base that tested their survival and combat skills in difficult mountainous terrain. This drills were followed by a military game that simulated an incursion of 150 radical fighters in the nighttime.

The drills were followed by a meeting of the Chairman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Valentina...
Matvienko, with the speaker of the Lower House of the Tajik Parliament Shukurjon Zuhurov. It was once again stated that Tajikistan need Russia's assistance to ensure Central Asian security. According to Shukurjon Zuhurov, Russia and Tajikistan should increase their efforts aimed at resolving the complex situation in the region. The activities of various extremist groups, the spread of radical ideology across Central Asia, the threat that Afghanistan presents - those are the challenges that are to be taken seriously. He added that Tajikistan is deeply interested in the creation of collective security mechanisms. At the same time, the speaker of the Lower House of Tajik Parliament stressed his belief that the challenges that Afghanistan faces today can be addressed by both the military and economic measures.

In November 2016, Russia and Tajikistan held a massive joint military exercise codenamed "Shield 2016". They were all types of units employed, as it's been reported that a total of 10 thousand men from both countries, and more than 1.5 thousand armored vehicles participated in these drills.

All these facts show that, despite the seriousness of the terrorist threat posed to the Tajikistan by the armed groups operating in Afghanistan, the situation remains under control. As the Tajik border guards are getting stronger and better equipped, they know that they will get the support from the CSTO and Russia at any given moment, since the main goal of the CSTO is to preserve the unity and the spirit of mutual assistance between states for the maintenance of global security.

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