Saudi Arabia: Preparing for aggression?

Recent information from the Saudi Arabia gives sufficient evidence that the Saudis are preparing for a war. Will this be an internal disturbance with the possible involvement of the army, will the Saudi-Iranian hostility transgress into open combat, or will Saudi tanks cross the Syrian borders as the Arabic media predict – even the top officials in Riyadh do not know it yet. Nevertheless, the beginning of this year was heralded by purchases of vast amount of arms, which tripled the country's military budget.

In addition to American weaponry worth dozens of billion dollars purchased recently (in 2010, the Saudi Ministry of Defense ordered U.S. weapons for a total amount of 60 billion dollars), Riyadh has made the following purchases not so long ago.

It purchased new DF-21 East Wind, mid-range liquid fuel missiles, which are easy to use and have good accuracy, Claudio Gallo writes in his article published on the website of the newspaper La Stampa. The Chinese missiles in the Saudi hands are not the weapon to reverse the situation, but they rather bring more tension into the psychological war, i.e., the type of confrontation that can result in most unpredictable consequences. It should be added that in 2007, the Saudis purchased ballistic missiles – again from China and with assistance of American intelligence agencies, which ensured that the missiles could not be equipped with nuclear warheads.

At the same time, the Saudi Ministry of Defense intends to purchase one hundred patrol boats from Germany for a total amount of 1.4 billion euros, as was reported in Der Spiegel magazine with reference to a confidential letter written by Steffen Kampeter, Germany's Secretary of State for Finance. In November 2013, it was learned that Saudi Arabia intended to purchase from Germany five Type 209 submarines, with the opportunity to increase the order to 25 vessels. The cost of purchasing this fleet is estimated at 12 billion euros.

Besides this, the story of possible sale of German Leopard 2 tanks is close to realization. The agreement for delivery of the first batch (about 270 vehicles at an estimated cost of 3 billion euros) has already been agreed on, and is now awaiting official approval from the Federal Republic of Germany's Security Council. According to the Bild newspaper, Riyadh is willing to purchase up to 800 Leopard 2S armored vehicles. This is the version specially designed to suit Saudi requirements, and which has successfully passed testing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia began negotiations for the supply of new Al-Khalid main battle tanks and JF-17 Thunder fighter jets to Riyadh. The contract for supply of military hardware may be signed within the framework of a more large-scale agreement on military and scientific cooperation between Islamabad and Riyadh. The exact number of armored vehicles and planes planned for purchase remains unknown.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that all military equipment in Saudi Arabia is maintained by numerous foreign specialists. Of course, these are chiefly Americans who have several military bases here. The missile systems are supervised by Chinese engineers; there are many military personnel from Pakistan in the country, and their numbers will increase as new deliveries come in. German specialists intend to work on the maintenance for their most complicated tanks and even more complicated vehicles, like the submarines. It should be noted that the Saudis are mostly Bedouins, people of the desert, and they fear the sea from their birth. It is interesting as to who will form the
crews of these new submarines?

The world press writes in a straightforward way that the Saudis have decided to add a mailed fist to their uncounted wealth. Then there is the question: Why would the Saudis need such military power, when no one is going to attack them, and the Americans have opened their antimissile umbrella over Saudi Arabia long ago?

In addition, the Saudis have almost no combat experience. In fact, back in 2010, Saudi Arabian troops did participate in a military operation in Yemen against rebels, given a simple and comprehensive name of “Scorched Earth”, and in March 2011, Riyadh sent a limited military contingent to Bahrain. This is all we know about Saudi military victories.

However, these detachments may come in handy for creating a large-scale provocation. We must not forget how Prince Bandar ibn Sultan offered his help to the President of Russia V. Putin in ensuring safety for the Sochi Olympiad, referring to the Saudis having full control over terrorist groups. Back then, Putin made them understand that Russia is quite capable of ensuring security at the Olympiad. However, now the Saudi prince may try to play this card again, and organize a provocation during the Olympic Games. By the way, the Arabs have a saying that a Saudi never forgives an offence, just like a camel.

For example, the article by Ahmed Sherkawi entitled “Saudi Arabia is preparing an attack against Syria and the Hezbollah” has recently become one of the most popular articles in the Arabic Internet. The author writes that the Saudis took an irrevocable decision to change the balance of power in the region, discard their old strategy and begin a military campaign (indirect, as it is performed through their puppets) against Syria and the Hezbollah in Lebanon. First of all, implementation of this project will involve regular mercenary armies. In this connection, security experts informed that Saudi and Israeli commanders had been holding a continuous meeting for 10 days already. They are working on developing an agreement for cooperation in the field of security, and the Saudis have already promised to grant the Israeli Air Force the right of passage over their territory if they decide to ‘solve’ the Iranian problem.

Other media reports suggest development of plans to attack the capital of Syria, Damascus, during the Sochi Olympiad, as well as different important military facilities in Syria; preparations for aggression in Lebanon, intending to strike the Hezbollah, are underway. In Lebanon itself, the fifth column is getting ready for action under the guise of the “March 14 Movement”. Activities of these powers are coordinated by Ashraf Rifi.

Moreover, Dr. Navaf Ubayad, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed the Western press about details of a plan to form two new Saudi armies. The first army will be formed from the kingdom’s citizens, while the second will include foreigners, primarily from Morocco, Yemen and Jordan. The two armies will be used in various regional conflicts, and first of all in the aggressive campaign against Syria.

On this subject, Syria’s Minister of Information Omran az-Zoubi has put things quite succinctly: “The same powers are behind the acts of terror in Syria, Iraq, and Russia. If some party has billions of dollars to spend, this does not mean that it can go unpunished for staging terrorist attacks here and there.” In this case, he meant the current rulers of Saudi Arabia.

Konstantin Orlov, political observer, exclusively for the online magazine New Eastern Outlook.