

US plans to expand raids in Pakistan

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US military officials have made a proposal for expanding Special Operations ground raids into the tribal areas of Pakistan. The decision was made in the light of a recent intelligence report describing the insurgent camps in the Pakistan as one of the main threats to the success of US operations in Afghanistan. While the plan has not yet been approved, both military and political leaders admit the necessity of serious measures as the deadline for withdrawing forces from Afghanistan approaches.

Since Barack Obama declared the solution of Afghanistan problem one of the main directions of his foreign policy, the failure to meet the deadline could become critical for his political reputation. The report recently provided by American intelligence agencies states that despite the fact of some progress made by US forces during the last year, the military operation is still far from being a success....

Up till now, the movement of US forces inside Pakistani territory has been prohibited to prevent a negative reaction from the Pakistani authorities. Several infiltrations made by the US forces are known to have infuriated Pakistani officials.

The main role in a secret war on Pakistan territory has belonged to the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA has operated the armed drones to hunt down insurgent leaders and also organized a number of secret missions carried out by Afghan operatives, known as Counterterrorism Pursuit Teams. While their missions have been reported as intelligence-gathering only operations, recent interviews have demonstrated that at least in one case the Afghan militia destroyed a militant weapons depot.

[T]his decision would open a new front in the war that is becoming more and more unpopular in America. It also could ruin relations with such an unreliable ally as Pakistan, especially considering the risk of civilian casualties.. .. US military leaders aim to receive approval for their plan to send American special forces across the Pakistani border. An anonymous senior American officer stated, "We've never been as close as we are now to getting the go-ahead to go across."

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Meanwhile, even the supporters of Obama are starting to lose patience with the war. Adam Smith - a Washington Democrat who serves on the Armed Services Committee and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, stated that the political left plans to increase pressure on the President to end the war and that the Democrats in Congress are likely to oppose continuing to spend \$100 billion annually on Afghanistan.

"We're not going to be hanging out over there fighting these guys like we're fighting them now for 20 years," said Adam Smith.

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