

US Sponsored ISIS Terrorists Establish Foothold in Afghanistan, Extending into Central Asian Heartland

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ISIS militants have been gathering momentum and concentrating in northern Afghanistan. They see this region as a foothold for further expansion into Central Asia, according to Zamir Kabulov, Russian presidential envoy to Afghanistan, and the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Second Department.

"It seems like someone's hand is pushing freshly trained ISIL fighters to mass along Afghanistan's northern border.

They don't fight foreign or Afghan government troops. They conserve and gather strength," RIA cites Kabulov's words from the international forum on Afghanistan.

The threat is also growing in the South. Three months ago, SouthFront: Analysis & Intelligence already pointed out that the number of ISIS militants has been growing at the borders of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. We also noted serious domestic problems of the Central Asian states.

According to our information, additional Russian and Kazakh armed forces have been deployed in the region under the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) since June, 2015. The Chinese intelligence specialists have joined the Russian and Kazakh servicemen.

Experts believe that only the joined forces of Russia and Kazakhstan are able to counter the ISIS threat successfully. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan military have lack equipment and suffer from low military effectiveness.

The current general structure of the deployed allied armed forces in Tajikistan includes:

- The border guards' first line: Tajik border outposts, joint frontier posts and border control composed of troops from Russia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan; Russian and Kazakh military advisers present at the Tajikistan border outposts.
- Units of Tajik army have been bolstered by Russian and Kazakh military advisers, down to squad level in some rapid reaction and special units.
- There are Russian, Kazakh and Belarusian military formations (though Belarus' contribution is a small) being based at the 201st Russian Military Base around Dushanbe, Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube
- Other units and infrastructure of CSTO and the Regional Counter-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (RCTS) include Russian, Kazakh and Chinese intelligence assets

In general, we could argue that Russia, China, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states estimate the threat properly and are making intense preparations to meet it.

FOREIGN POLICY DIARY CENTRAL ASIA ADVANCE OF ISIS, from June 2015

Central Asia is a place of long-standing geopolitical confrontation. Now it turns into an active phase to destroy the peace in the region. After a roughly fail of public stated purposes of the U.S. policy in Afghanistan, the only power capable to maintain security and peace in the region are a Russian-lead SCTO military alliance and The Shanghai Cooperation Organization combating against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Central Asia is a place of long-standing geopolitical confrontation. Now it turns into an active phase to destroy the peace in the region. The situation is worsening in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. In 2014 37 civilians were killed in bloody terror attack in Xinjiang, China. Earlier, Afghan Taliban has been fighting in order to capture checkpoints and ground at the Turkmenistan-Tajikistan border. Now, they have focused on the south-north direction: from Gerat to Kandagar. It's intended way of TAPI gas pipeline in Afghanistan and high road A1. Islamic State has risen its presense in the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border. Turkmen borderguard has been taking high casualties and witnesses reporting mass beheadings there.

The appearance of US-trained Tajikistan Colonel Gulmurod Khalimov in an Islamic State propaganda video on 27 May has sent a chill across Central Asia. The head of Tajikistans Special Assignment Police Unit promised to wage violent jihad. IS and other foreign fighters, probably the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, are operating effectively on Tajikistan's southern border. The one of the most problem territories named Gorno-Badakhshan has a long, open border with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. The situation is also tense in Uzbekistan hit by series of terror. Terrorist groups operating in the region are supplied mostly from the territories of Afganistan.

After a roughly fail of public stated purposes of the U.S. policy in Afghanistan, the only power capable to maintain security and peace in the region is a Russian-lead SCTO military alliance, comprising Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Belarus with support of China and Iran. China and Russia are connected in The Shanghai Cooperation Organization combating against terrorism, separatism and extremism. The SCTO focused on providing security in the countries participants which face threat of security and stability. Islamic State is the biggest danger in the region. The SCTO proposed measures to ensure border security in member states in case of radical group advancement.

Currently, militants have been building up for an attack on Turkmenistan from two main directions: Murhaba and Amu-Darya. Advance from Murhaba direction threatens field Galkinish. Advance from Amu-Darya threatens the whole gas infrastucture of Turkmenistan supplying China, Bagtyryalyk field on the left bank of the Amu Darya and transitions across the river. Probably, Islamic State and Taliban don't plan full scale intervention because of complicated situation in their home front in Afghanistan. However, territory of Turkmenistan will be systematicaly hit by break-ins. These circumstances will probably stop developing of TAPI and TUKC gas projects. Tajikistan is in risk too. The most possible actions of militants are taking of Badakhshan, attack on Horog, intervention into Hatlon region, taking of border settlements and raids on Kurgan-Tube. Also, there is capacity of movement into Kirgiztan by Tahar-Tavildara-Garm direction. The one more opportunity for militants is to exercise mass

disturbances and establish an independent Islamic State in Badakhshan. Or to start water blockade of Turkmenistan by attacking on Karakum channel.

It's clear that Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border will be ground of hard security and humanitarian crisis in the region. One of the main reasons of it is rough presence of the US and NATO in Afghanistan and Iraq. In result of the Washigton's actions states have become bases of terrorists, often, armed by US armaments and trained by its military advisers. Meanwhile, the only success gained by US-led anti-ISIS coalition is that Islamic State had gained only more territories in Iraq and Syria. Apparently, solving of threats in Central Asia needs contrary approach.

Also internal situation in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is dangerous because of low standards of living and education, distrust of the authorities. The US puppeteers have been taking advantage of these factors by pursuing its own goals through various non governmental organizations.

It is not a secret that the US tries to hold a global domination. It uses all of the opportunities to kill two birds with one stone. Main geopolitical opponents are China and Russia. The plan of the US to set ablaze Central Asia in the fire of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

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