

ISIL Death Squads Dispatched to Afghanistan. Who is Behind Them?

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The increase in the level of terrorist activities of ISIL in Afghanistan has recently been the topic of various reports being published in the international media. Along with the massacre of the local population which seems to be a trademark of this Islamist group it has recently entered in a direct confrontation with the Taliban. It's now safe to assume that there's well over two thousand ISIL militants operating in Afghanistan.

A significant number of reports suggests that ISIL militants that infiltrated Afghanistan are engaged in recruiting locals, spreading radical propaganda, and establishing training camps. Additionally, some articles suggest that former members of the Taliban are pledging their allegiance to ISIL in the southern provinces of the country.

Thus, [The Independent](#) quotes the statement of the Afghan army General Qadam Shah Shahima that said that ISIL managed to overshadow ISIL in the Afghan province of Helmand.

In turn, [The Times](#) states that the ISIL has launched a major offensives to the south of Jalalabad - the capital of the Afghan province of Nangarhar. Around 1,600 ISIL militants established control over four districts, while using particularly ruthless methods of demanding obedience, like the do in Iraq and Syria, which led to a massive exodus of the local population. The Afghan army units are engaging them daily to prevent ISIL from advancing any further. According to this newspaper, Afghan security forces are losing up to 500 soldiers monthly in different parts of the country due to terrorist activities.

Western experts are convinced that ISIL is pursuing the goal of creating a new province of the "caliphate" on the border with Pakistan, and that their success is the direct result of the departure of US and British troops from Afghanistan and the split within the Taliban ranks. It is often noted that former supporters of the Taliban and other groups are deflecting to ISIL.

The West is using such reports to present the situation in Afghanistan in the grimmest colors one could imagine to persuade the general public to support the expansion of the US military presence in the country. We are being told that Washington, which is allegedly the ardent fighter of ISIL, won't be able to do anything once the US military forces leave the country. Western media sources argue that Afghan troops are not strong enough, so should the US get through the door, we are going to witness a sharp aggravation of the internal political situation.

However, back in November NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that the members states are generally satisfied with the situation in Afghanistan. What's even more curious is that a senior Italian diplomat at the recent meeting of NATO has even labeled

Afghanistan a “NATO’s success story”.

To properly assess the situation on the ground in Afghanistan we must recall what has been happening there all along.

Back in 2014 one could start noticing initial reports on ISIL making attempts to extend its activities to Afghanistan, when the so-called “masked men” started appearing in the province of Kunar. At that time nobody could have thought those were actual supporters of ISIL, since they were mistaken for Pakistani secret service officers that used to train the Taliban fighters.

But it didn’t take long before the the activities of armed men under the black flag to become more vicious and apparent. In 2015 a spokesman for ISIL’s leader Abu Muhammad Al Adnani released a video message that was announcing the creation of the province of Khorasan of the Islamic State, that should have absorbed Afghanistan, Pakistan and certain areas of India, Iran, and China. It has also been announced in the video that Hafiz Saeed Khan has been appointed the governor of this province to be, and his deputy – Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadem, a former Guantanamo prisoner.

Experts argue that the Taliban project, which essentially is nothing more than Washington’s brainchild, just like al-Qaeda, has outlived its days and will be brought down. It will be replaced by a new project – the so-called Islamic State, that is a US creation too. Taliban’s ideology is pretty close to the one pursued by ISIL, and those two groups have similar goals and methods they would use to achieve them. The Taliban has been demolishing historical monuments just like ISIL, they harbored jihadi supporters and carried out public executions. The Taliban has forced thousands of people from their homes and massacred those who would show any form of resistance. This tactics, designed to spread panics and fear, has now been adopted by ISIL. It’s not a coincidence that Afghan experts are calling the Taliban and ISIL “two sides of the same coin.”

One shouldn’t downplay the fact that the current leader of ISIL Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi received training in the Mujahideen camps in Afghanistan back in the eighties. A former Pakistani intelligence chief Hamid Gul claimed in an interview with the news agency Antalya that he personally saw al-Baghdadi in those camps in 1988. It’s also noteworthy that Osama bin Laden, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and al-Baghdadi himself maintained close, friendly relations with the leaders of the Mujahideen, and worked closely with them. According to reports in the Afghan media, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at one time was entrusted with the mission of maintaining the security of Herat province, and in a short while he was running a Taliban training camp near the town of Islam Qala that could simultaneously prepare up to two thousand fighters.

Under these conditions, instead of saying that ISIL is expanding its influence in Afghanistan, as the Western media tries to convince us, we can speak about the United States using its creation to destabilize Afghanistan once again, which will allow it to get closer to its geopolitical rivals – Russia and China, by using the methods that have already been tested in Iraq, Syria and across the Middle East.

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