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## Washington will not let Moscow reconcile Kabul and Taliban

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The United States refuses to participate in the settlement of the crisis in Afghanistan, and the situation in the region will soon aggravate again giving rise to a hotbed of tensions along the borders of Central Asian states. Most likely, Washington is ok with it, because the US administration seeks to use the civil war in Afghanistan as a lever of pressure on Central Asia and the CSTO.

While world media pay most of their attention to the crisis around the DPRK, the sluggish civil war in Afghanistan has receded into the background. Nevertheless, the situation in this country can worsen any moment.

Experts say that the strengthening of the US military presence in Afghanistan appears to be a desperate attempt of the Pentagon to save the puppet government in Kabul from defeat. The latter tries to stop the offensive of the Talibs, who gradually take more territories in Afghanistan under control.

In this situation, Moscow calls the two sides of the conflict to sit down at the negotiating table. "It is becoming increasingly clear that a stalemate situation has developed in the confrontation between Kabul and the Taliban, and neither side is able to change the situation to its own

benefit," said Zamir Kabulov, Russia's special envoy for Afghanistan. "Under these conditions, one needs to take maximum effort to find ways to launch the inter-Afghan dialogue," the official added.

However, the United States does not seem to hear Moscow's calls for a truce. The United States has been increasing its military presence in Afghanistan. Washington continues to rely on a military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Investments of the United States and NATO countries in the air force of Afghanistan before 2021 will amount to \$6 billion, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said. In turn, American General Philippe Stewart said that Washington was expecting the Afghan Air Force to be professional, reliable, efficient and independent. "This is the purpose of our activities here," he added.

In other words, the Pentagon expects to create a strike group of the Afghan Air Force in the next four years to destroy the Taliban from the air. Military experts believe that the hope of the United States to set up combat-capable air force of Afghanistan is nothing but an illusion. After all, 16 years since the US invasion of the country, Washington, despite huge investments, has never been able to establish a modern army there.

In the first half of October, a meeting of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group will be held on the initiative of Moscow. In addition to Russia, Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Iran and India), five countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) will also take part in the meeting.

Washington flatly refused to participate in the talks. To justify the failure of its policy in Afghanistan, the White House accused Russia of supplying arms to the Taliban. Traditionally, no evidence was provided. Russia rejected the accusations.

According to Ajdar Kurtov, leading expert of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISI), Bush's and Obama's attempt to eliminate the Taliban failed. It is unlikely that the administration of Donald Trump will be able to change anything at this point.

"Talibs do not believe the Americans - they know that all the talks about stabilisation in Afghanistan and attempts to bring peace to this country do to cost a thing. That is why they are stepping up their offensive on the positions of government troops on the whole front and already control a half of Afghanistan," the expert believes.

Thus, the situation in Afghanistan will inevitably aggravate in the foreseeable future, taking into account the refusal of the USA to participate in the dialogue. Instead, Washington will use the civil war in Afghanistan as a lever of pressure on Central Asia and the CSTO.