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FEATURES OF THE AFGHAN VECTOR OF FOREIGN POLICY OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

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"The most difficult decision I made at the beginning of my term as President, when I ordered another 30,000 troops to Afghanistan, being the one who wanted to put an end to the vast presence of the (US) military in other countries."

Barack Obama, President of the United States (January 8, 2017)

The international community is well aware that the Afghan crisis has not been resolved for more than forty years and continues to be one of the key problems of regional and international security. Started in 2001 at the initiative of the United States, the "anti-terrorist campaign" in Afghanistan did not contribute to the stabilization of the military-political and economic situation in this Middle Eastern country. While under the strategy of former President Barack Obama's withdrawal from Afghanistan of coalition forces NATO/ISAF is causing serious and justified concern not only neighboring countries but also to States far beyond the region.

Today, we can safely state that the current realities in Afghanistan do not allow us to state any positive prospects for stabilizing the internal political situation, especially since the agreements between the US and the Taliban reached in February 2020 in Doha (Qatar) are ignored by the Taliban, causing a new round of escalation of tension in the IRA, as well as complicating the process of Afghan settlement.

In this regard, it seems scientifically and pragmatically justified to attempt to analyze the specifics of the Obama administration's policy in Afghanistan, under whose rule

more sober assessments of the overall situation in the IRA, its prospects, and the role of US and NATO actions in this country began to be expressed for the first time. At that time, the current situation in world politics required the American political establishment to find alternative and effective ways to resolve the Afghan crisis, which would simultaneously take into account the problems of ensuring security and sustainable development of the Afghan state and society. In this context, Washington's plans for withdrawal by the end of 2014 should have been considered. international coalition troops from the IRA, whose geopolitical consequences have directly affected and are reflected in the strategic interests of major and regional powers, as well as security and stability in Central and South Asia.

The Obama administration was forced to make serious adjustments to its policy in Afghanistan. Afghanistan, rightly called the "gravedigger of empires", has become a severe historical test for the United States, which has taken on the heavy burden of "global leadership" in the fight against international terrorism. Terrorism was one of the most real threats on this list, which also includes nuclear non-proliferation and climate change. As Barack Obama noted in

his article "Renewing American leadership", "America cannot counter these threats alone."

On December 1, 2009, after holding numerous meetings and consultations with NATO allies and other partner countries, Barack Obama announced a new stage of the Afghan war in his Address to the nation at West point Academy. By this time, 11 of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan had come under the control of the Taliban, while the number of US armed forces had increased from 32,000 to 68,000. The head of the US administration said that "our goal remains the same: to achieve the destruction of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and prevent the threat of attacks on the US and our allies in the future." To implement this, Barack Obama set the following main tasks: first, the destruction of al-Qaeda fighters; second, stopping the advance of the Taliban and preventing the possibility of overthrowing the Afghan government; third, strengthening the security forces and state institutions in Afghanistan so that they can take responsibility for the future of their country.

According to the plans announced in December 2009, Barack Obama, despite doubts about their likely effectiveness and justification, decided to increase the number of troops in Afghanistan, which is partly due to the aggravation in 2009. the General situation in the IRA due to the discontent and extremely negative reaction of Afghans to the essence and results of the presidential elections in the country. The Pentagon and S. McChrystal, appointed in June 2009 the commanders of the coalition forces and ISAF were convinced of the need to make changes in operational tasks and tactics in the fight against the armed opposition in

Afghanistan. Otherwise, as S. McChrystal said at the time, the United States will get bogged down in Afghanistan without any guarantees of victory. Subsequently, the Obama administration said that it was thanks to the increase in the contingent that the United States achieved "incredible success" in the Afghan campaign.

The next important element of the Afghan policy of the Head of the US administration was the designation of a phased withdrawal of the US and NATO military contingent from the IRA. This decision provided for by the end of 2011 withdraw 10 thousand American troops from Afghanistan, and by the summer of 2012 - 33 thousand; by 2014 - a complete withdrawal of foreign troops. The move then meant that the US mission in Afghanistan would gradually be reduced to providing support to the Afghan national army and police, while US military personnel would gradually withdraw from participating in combat operations in the country.

However, the "uncompromising" position of former IRA President Hamid Karzai on the security agreement with the United States, which reflected his intention to obtain concessions and political security guarantees, led to significant changes in Barack Obama's strategic plans in Afghanistan. This state of Affairs is reflected not only in bilateral US-Afghan relations, at least, but also in the security and stability situation in the regions of the Middle East, Central and South Asia.

It should be noted that the practical implementation of American plans in Afghanistan faced serious security problems that negatively affected the military and political situation in the country. Forceful pressure from the us and NATO forces on

the armed opposition, the tactic of using special forces primarily to eliminate its leaders, did not make significant changes in the balance of forces. Moreover, the tactic of “squeezing” the militants into relatively stable areas actually resulted in them gaining additional opportunities and an impulse to expand their geographical representation.

According to the Pentagon's estimates published on May 3, 2011, a serious security challenge in Afghanistan was the merger of armed groups, and their unifying force remained the American military and political presence in Afghanistan, which was perceived as a threat to their interests, primarily political and ideological.

The Taliban movement remained the most serious obstacle to the implementation of US Afghan initiatives, primarily in the field of security, which is considered a primary step towards an Afghan settlement. In order to reduce the Taliban threat, the Obama administration began to take active political, diplomatic and other measures. In particular, the White house has focused attention on the sources of funding for the Taliban, primarily from countries in the Persian Gulf. As part of this, the task was set for the international fight against the financing of the Taliban in General, not limited to drug trafficking. American officials, in dialogue with partners from the Gulf States, sought to attract them to cooperate in this area.

At the same time, the US President said that all groups of the Afghan people, including the Taliban, will be able to participate in the political settlement process in Afghanistan. According to him, the participation of the Taliban in the post-war life of the country is possible if they renounce violence and links with al-Qaeda, as well as submit to the Afghan Constitution. This tactic was well

within the framework of the policy of reintegration and reconciliation, creating and developing channels for dialogue between the Afghan government and the militants.

According to analysts, the military and political efforts made by the United States in Afghanistan, coupled with diplomatic steps, have led to certain positive developments. These steps include the one that took place in may 2012. the “unannounced” visit of President Barack Obama to Afghanistan, which then seemed to clarify the long-term relationship between the two countries and set specific goals and objectives of the us Afghan strategy for the future. Moreover, with this visit, Washington sent a clear message to the international community that the United States is a strategic partner of Afghanistan, will not repeat the “historical mistake” made by the former Soviet Union in 1989, and will actively provide all-round assistance in strengthening the Afghan state. The main result of this visit was the signing of the agreement on strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan (Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America). The document defines the nature, level and main directions of long-term cooperation between the two countries before and after 2014.

The main task for Washington and Kabul in the field of security was to transfer full power over Afghanistan to the hands of the Afghan government. In this regard, the United States should have committed itself to seeking funding to train, equip, advise, and support the Afghan national security forces (ANSF) so that Afghanistan can independently protect itself from internal and external threats, as well as assist in

preventing terrorist threats to the security of Afghanistan, the region, and the world.

At the same time, the agreement was particularly important because the United States would consider any aggression against Afghanistan with serious concern. In this case, Washington and Kabul will immediately hold consultations to jointly develop and implement response measures, including political, diplomatic, economic or military ones.

Summing up the presented brief analysis of the activities of the US administration in Afghanistan under Barack Obama, it should be noted that its assessments by international experts and observers are ambiguous and contradictory. This is eloquently reflected, in particular, in the statements of Stephen Skowronek, a Professor of political and social Sciences at Yale University, who believes that "the inability to redirect the events of the Arab spring in a positive direction, the failure of attempts to lead the United States out of the "quagmire" in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the tragedy in Syria seriously spoil the results of his (Barack Obama's) work, although it is difficult to determine the extent of the President's responsibility for what happened. "Despite this, most politicians tend to believe that the strategy of reducing US involvement in the Afghan conflict began to be implemented during Barack Obama's tenure in the White house, which generally corresponds to Washington's long-term goal of more prudent and pragmatic-selective involvement in conflicts on the periphery of the world system.

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