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Russia Ready to Give Tajikistan $1.2 Billion Military Aid to Fight ISIS

By The Moscow Times

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Kurdish forces celebrate on the eve of Newroz Day, a festival marking their spring and the Persian New Year, that is also celebrated in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Russia may provide Tajikistan with around 70 billion rubles ($1.2 billion) worth of military hardware to thwart efforts by Islamic State fighters to destabilize Central Asia, newspaper Kommersant reported Friday.

Tajikistan is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a loose Moscow-led security alliance of several former Soviet states. Russia provides most of the organization's military hardware and personnel.

Russia is prepared to send to Tajikistan weapons ranging from communications equipment, small arms and ammunition to aircraft, artillery and anti-aircraft weapons worth a combined 70 billion rubles over several years, Kommersant said citing unidentified sources in Russia's General Staff.

The majority of the CSTO's efforts are focused on counter-terrorism. At a meeting of member countries' foreign ministers in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe on Thursday, Russia's Sergei Lavrov said fighters affiliated with Islamic State were already trying to enter Tajikistan from Afghanistan, which borders the country to the south.

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