

Russia Deploys S-300 Missile System Near Afghanistan for First Time

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The Russian military has for the first time deployed the S-300 surface-to-air missile system at its military base near Afghanistan, the Defense Ministry has announced.

Russia maintains troops at its military base in the ex-Soviet republic of Tajikistan, near the Afghan border, as a bulwark against the threat of Islamist radicals and drug trafficking. The United States fields 13,000 troops in Afghanistan as part of a NATO-led support mission.

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Russia's military [said](#) Saturday that it had sent a battalion of 30 launchers and other vehicles from central Russia to the base in Tajikistan to protect it from attacks. It said the S-300PS deployment also aims to provide air defense capabilities to the wider Central Asian region.

“This is the first [S-300] missile system that will be on the border with Afghanistan, where

international coalition forces are active,” an unnamed military source [told](#) the RBC news website.

Russia’s Defense Ministry-run Zvezda channel [published](#) footage of the S-300 being loaded and transported to Tajikistan by rail.

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Russia has in recent months stepped up its role as power broker between the Afghan government and the Taliban. U.S.-led forces ousted the Taliban in 2001, but the group has staged near-daily attacks and is either in control of or contesting districts across nearly half the country.

The Moscow-hosted talks between the Taliban and Afghan politicians underline the increasing role that Russia is playing in Afghanistan, decades after Soviet forces withdrew from the country.

Russia has also increased its shipments of S-300 and S-400 missile systems around the world, including to China, Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Syria.

The S-300 is a family of air defense missile systems capable of engaging aerial targets, from helicopters to cruise and ballistic missiles. Its radar can destroy targets as far away as 150 kilometers, launching one missile every three seconds.

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