

Russia Says U.S. Troop Pullout from Afghanistan Risks 'Escalation'

By [AFP](#)

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The Foreign Ministry warned that Biden's new pullout deadline risks escalating the long-running conflict and derailing peace talks. **U.S. Army Reserve photo by Spc. DeAndre Pierce / The National Guard / Flickr (CC BY 2.0)**

Russia said Wednesday that Washington's plan to pull out troops from Afghanistan by September could lead to an escalation of the long-running conflict and derail peace talks.

U.S. President Joe Biden announced earlier this week that all American forces would withdraw from Afghanistan by this year's 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

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The Russian Foreign Ministry responded Wednesday saying that an American pullout in September amounted to a "clear violation" of a previous U.S. promise to withdraw troops by

next month.

The drawdown, finally ending America's longest war despite mounting fears of a Taliban victory, delays by around five months an agreement with the Taliban inked by former president Donald Trump to pull troops.

"What is concerning in this context is that the armed conflict in Afghanistan might escalate in the near future, which in turn might undermine efforts to start direct intra-Afghan negotiations," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Under the Trump administration's February 2020 deal with the Taliban insurgent group, all U.S. troops were to leave by May 2021 in return for the insurgents' promise not to back Al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists — the original reason for the 2001 invasion.

Biden's decision came as Turkey said it will host a U.S.-backed peace conference from April 24–May 4 that would bring together the Afghan government, the Taliban and international partners.

Moscow said it had been notified of the conference and was awaiting a formal invitation and more information including the event's agenda.

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