

Russia Says Ready to Activate Tajik Military Base Amid U.S. Pullout, Taliban Advance in Afghanistan

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More than 1,000 Afghan government troops were reported to have fled north into Tajikistan this week amid a Taliban advance. **Artur Lebedev / TASS**

Russia is prepared to activate a military base in ex-Soviet Tajikistan against advancing Taliban forces on its southern border as U.S. troops finalize their pullout from neighboring Afghanistan, its top diplomat [said](#) Wednesday.

Tajikistan is host to more than 6,000 Russian servicemen deployed to the Russian Ground Forces' 201st military base, one of Russia's few military sites on foreign soil. More than 1,000 Afghan government troops were reported to have fled north into Tajikistan this week as hardline Islamist group the Taliban seized dozens of districts in the past two months.

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“We’ll do everything, including using the capabilities of the Russian military base on the border of Tajikistan with Afghanistan, to prevent any aggressive encroachments against our allies,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

Tajikistan is a member of a loose Moscow-led security alliance of several ex-Soviet states known as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Lavrov, who was speaking during his visit to Laos, said Russia’s obligations under the CSTO “remain fully in force.” He added that CSTO representatives had visited the Tajik-Afghan border to report the situation on the ground to the main office.

“The situation is rapidly deteriorating, including in the context of the hasty withdrawal of American and other NATO troops, who over their decades of their stay in this country have not achieved visible results in terms of stabilizing the situation there,” TASS quoted him as saying.

Last year, the United States accused Russia of offering the Taliban bounties to kill American troops in Afghanistan. Moscow, which has hosted Taliban delegates for a series of talks attempting to mediate peace with the Afghan government, has [denied](#) the claim.

Russia and Tajikistan have staged military exercises along the 1,400-kilometer Tajik-Afghan border in recent years amid the risk of an incursion by Islamist extremists.

Tajikistan is also among the world’s most remittance-dependent countries, with millions of its migrant workers in Russia sending around 30% of its entire GDP back home.

The Taliban is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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