The Moscow Times
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Russia in Talks to Help Tajikistan Build Afghan Border Outpost

July 22, 2021



Moscow's largest foreign military base is located in its post-Soviet ally Tajikistan. **TASS**

Russia will help Tajikistan build an outpost on the ex-Soviet state's border with Afghanistan, a senior diplomat said Friday as Moscow stepped up activity in the region amid a Taliban offensive that has seen the group capture swathes of Afghan territory from government forces.

Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency that the terrorist group controls almost all of the Tajik-Afghan border and warned of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State strengthening their positions there.

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"An intergovernmental deal to provide free help for the construction of a Tajik-Afghan border outpost is now being drafted for signing," Rudenko said.

“We’ll certainly continue to provide assistance in strengthening Tajikistan’s defense capability,” he said.

Russia plans to stage military drills with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan near Afghanistan on Aug. 5-10, as well as joint Russian-Uzbek drills involving around 1,500 troops on July 30-Aug. 10.

Moscow, which maintains its largest foreign military base in Tajikistan, has said it does not plan to invade Afghanistan or carry out airstrikes there.

Russia has said the United States failed its mission in Afghanistan and blamed the withdrawal of U.S.-led forces for the rapidly deteriorating stability in the war-torn country.

On Thursday, Tajikistan relocated 20,000 troops to reinforce its border with Afghanistan and conducted early-morning combat readiness checks of its 230,000 security forces.

The Taliban, al-Qaeda and Islamic State are terrorist organizations banned in Russia.

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