

Russia Warns West Against Blocking Afghanistan's Gold Reserves

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Russian presidential envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov. **Russian Foreign Ministry / TASS**

Russia has urged Western countries not to freeze Afghanistan's gold and foreign exchange reserves abroad following the Taliban's takeover of the country.

In an interview with the state-run Rossiya 24 broadcaster, Zamir Kabulov, Russia's presidential envoy to Afghanistan, warned that such a move ultimately harms ordinary Afghans.

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"If our Western colleagues really care about the fate of the Afghan people, then there is no need to create additional problems for them in the form of freezing the gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Afghan state," Kabulov [said](#).

Shortly after the Taliban's shock takeover of Kabul, the Biden administration [froze](#) about \$9.5

billion of the Afghan government's reserves in U.S. banks, including \$1.3 billion worth of gold reserves in New York. The International Monetary Fund has also blocked Afghanistan from accessing the lender's resources.

In the same interview, Kabulov [said](#) that Moscow is actively forging ties with the Taliban as the country considers it important to maintain good relations with any government in power in Afghanistan.

"We have had long-standing relations with [the Taliban], we will continue to forge these ties," Kabulov said.

Russia has not yet recognized the authority of the Islamist militant group, which is officially considered to be a terrorist organization by Russia and banned within its borders. However, Russia's leadership has repeatedly said it was open to working with the Taliban, describing its members as "reasonable people."

At the same time, top Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin have [raised](#) concerns that the instability in Afghanistan might spill over to neighboring countries in Central Asia, a region of strategic importance to Russia.

On Monday, Russia's Defense Ministry said around 500 Russian motorized infantry troops carried out drills in the mountains of Tajikistan which neighbors Afghanistan.

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