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Moscow Signs Military Partnership With the Taliban

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Taliban fighters. **AFP**

Russia and the Taliban government in Afghanistan have signed a military cooperation agreement, Russian news agencies reported Wednesday.

The deal was finalized during an international security forum in the Moscow region following a meeting between Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu and Afghan Defense Minister Mohammad Yaqoob. Yaqoob is the Taliban's former military chief and the son of its founder, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The specific terms of the deal have not been made public, according to the Interfax news agency. Bilateral frameworks of this nature generally involve the exchange of weapons, manufacturing licenses and defense technology, alongside joint research projects.

Some analysts downplayed the immediate impact of the agreement, describing it as a symbolic effort by Moscow to formalize its relationship with Kabul on paper rather than the start of a deep partnership.

“In reality, we’re definitely not going to see a full-blown military alliance or a mutual defense coalition,” Ruslan Suleimanov, an analyst at the New Eurasian Strategies (NEST) Center, told the independent outlet The Insider.

The Taliban swept back to power in 2021 after overthrowing the U.S.-backed government and re-imposing an austere version of Islamic law in Afghanistan. In 2024, President Vladimir Putin called the Taliban “allies in the fight against terrorism.”

Russia was the first country to recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan last July after removing the Taliban from its list of terrorist organizations and accepting its ambassador to Moscow.

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