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Russia May Give NATO Air Base for Afghan War

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Saying that such a move was in the nation's "national interest," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov threw his weight behind a proposal to provide NATO with an air base in Russian territory to use for the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan.



"We are helping the coalition," Lavrov said, **adding that he was opposed to any NATO deadlines to end the war, and believed that the war should continue as an effort toward "eradicating the threats of terrorism and drug trafficking in Afghanistan."**

The deal is far from finalized, but would see Russia giving NATO a base in the city of Ulyanovsk, potentially an opportunity for the occupation forces to replace the Manas base in Kyrgyzstan, which the [Kyrgyz government has said it will convert to commercial use after](#) the US lease expires in 2014.

It also gets Russia even more deeply involved in the Afghan War. Russia has been allowing NATO to ship certain supplies through its country to Afghanistan, and [has suggested providing some more direct training aid to the conflict](#). Giving NATO a base inside Russia is an unprecedented move, however, and underscores just how interested the Russian government is in keeping the war going.