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Envoy: Russia May Deploy Troops to Tajik-Afghan Border

By Jason Ditz

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Following up on last week's comments by President Vladimir Putin, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Andrey Avetisyan has detailed his nation's military plans to enhance security across Central Asia in the coming years.



The policy stems from Russian concerns that, much as the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan failed, NATO's own is rapidly speeding to a similar conclusion, potentially leaving the nation even more destabilized and the whole region at risk.

According to Avetisyan, the plan under consideration right now is to deploy Russian border troops in an undefined number to the Tajikistan border with Afghanistan. He said the presence the Soviets had along the border in the past had made the situation "much better," and that Russia believes a similar deployment is needed now, with NATO's own war struggling.

Such a program could be pushed through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CTSO), which Russia and Tajikistan are both members of. The deployment may spark criticism of a return to Soviet-era policy in Central Asia, but is unlikely to be opposed by Tajikistan, given the powderkeg they have along their southern border.

Interestingly, Avetisyan indicated that Russia does not welcome the idea of a protracted NATO deployment inside Afghanistan, insisting that the last 12 years have accomplished nothing, and that they would only support extending the war if NATO gave them some idea of what they hoped to actually accomplish.