

No Plans to Halt Helicopter Deal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Pentagon has no plans to halt a \$550 million deal with Russia to acquire helicopters for the Afghan Special Mission Wing, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said.

In late June, the Special U.S. Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction urged the Pentagon to put the deal on hold until the unit was fully recruited and properly trained.

"On the Mi-17 [helicopters], ... I support continuing on the path we are on," JCS Chairman Martin Dempsey said. "To get the Afghans as capable as possible by the end of 2014. And that will require us to stay committed to that fleet."

"There is no way we can transition at this point to give them anything other," he said.

Responding to lawmakers' criticism of the deal over Russian arms supplies to the Syrian government, Dempsey suggested that did not mean there could not be collaboration elsewhere.

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