

Tajik Military to Get Support

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin has instructed the Russian military to assess the risks of the withdrawal of U.S. and international coalition troops from Afghanistan and help Tajikistan face potential threats after the pullout, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Thursday.

“President Vladimir Putin’s orders are straightforward: to assess all risks and to help the Tajik armed forces face these risks,” Shoigu said after talks between Putin and his Tajik counterpart, Emomali Rakhmon.

Shoigu said a program to modernize the Tajik army might cost up to \$200 million and involve repairs of existing equipment as well as purchases of new weaponry. The program would be implemented in three stages from 2013 to 2015 and in two five-year periods later on.

According to the Military Balance Report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Tajik armed forces personnel totaled 16,300 as of 2011 and include land-based and mobile units as well as an air force and an anti-aircraft force that use outdated Soviet-era military equipment.

At the same time, Tajikistan largely relies on the presence of a Russian base on its territory. A total of 7,000 Russian troops are stationed at three military facilities, collectively known as the 201st military base: in Dushanbe; the southwestern city of Qurgonteppa, some 100 kilometers from Dushanbe; and Kulob, about 200 kilometers to the southwest of the capital.

The base was opened in 2004 and hosts Russia's largest military contingent deployed abroad. Moscow and Dushanbe agreed in October 2012 that the base would remain in Tajikistan until at least 2042. Tajik President Rakhmon said Thursday that the Tajik parliament would ratify the agreement on the 201st military base this fall.

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