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Russia seeks role in Afghanistan stability after NATO pullout

March 28, 2013

A senior Russian military official on Wednesday said that Russia wants to maintain government military hardware on Afghan soil in a bid to play a role in keeping Afghanistan stable after the withdrawal of most NATO combat troops.

Sergei Koshelev, Russian military's point man for foreign ties during a meeting with the foreign military attaches in Moscow underscored that Russia is worried about threats to its security after the pullout of most foreign forces from Afghanistan, which borders ex-Soviet states in Central Asia.

“We cannot fail to be concerned by the danger of the restoration of a regime on Afghan territory that would foster the spread of terrorism, drug trafficking and instability,” Koshelev quoted by Reuters said.

Russia has supported U.S. and NATO operations since the US-led invasion in 2001 by allowing transit across its territory and contributed small arms and ammunition to Afghan security forces.

This comes as majority of the NATO combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

However Koshelev said, “With the withdrawal of ISAF, keeping the weapons and equipment of the Afghan national security forces in repair and working condition will be of major importance.”

Mr. Koshelev also said that Russia would like to discuss “the creation of repair facilities on the territory of Afghanistan to keep their military equipment in working condition.”

Russia is expected to discuss the issue during a conference to be hosted in Late may on European security.

Without elaborating further details regarding the projects, Mr. Koshelev said, “I am not talking about political dialogue but about the possibility of determining concrete projects the militaries would be responsible for.”