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Taliban, IS may invade Central Asia, warns Russian intelligence

October 29, 2015

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) has warned that Taliban or Islamic State (IS) fighters may invade central Asia.

FSB director Alexander Bortnikov said that a concentration of Taliban fighters, some of whom had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, at Afghanistan's northern border make the risk of invasion tangible, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday.

Russia's biggest concern is Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan towards which Taliban are nearing.

Besides Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that recently announced allegiance to IS also operates in the northern part of the country.

The group is believed to have links with other militant groups such as Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and is considered comparatively a strong group.

It has been reported that IMU was involved in several deadly TTP attacks in Pakistan including one on Karachi airport that left at least 36 people killed in 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in the meeting of Commonwealth of Independent States Council of Heads on October 16 that Situation in Afghanistan is close to critical, adding that it is important to closely monitor the situation on the CIS' external borders.

“We need to ensure the CIS Antiterrorist Centre's effective operation and continue coordinating the work of our intelligence services and keep up a constant exchange of information. It is especially important to monitor closely the situation on the CIS' external borders, and in this respect, I agree with the President of Uzbekistan, who expressed his concern over the situation taking shape in Afghanistan.” He said in the meeting.