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Russian envoy: ISIS in Afghanistan eyes expansion to Central Asia and Russia

By Khaama Press

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The Russian Presidential Special Envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has said the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group in Afghanistan are looking to expand to Central Asia and Russia.

Kabulov, who is also the head of the Asia and Middle East department of the Russian foreign ministry, said the number of the loyalists of the terror group has significantly increased in Afghanistan.

“There are now 10,000 IS fighters in Afghanistan. A year ago there was a hundred. This growth over a year is spectacular,” he told reporters.

Kabulov further added “The Afghan branch of IS is definitely specialized against Central Asia. Russian is even one of their working languages,” Kabulov added. “They are being trained against Central Asia and Russia.”

The remarks by Kabulov comes as a spokesman for the US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan earlier said the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group has the potential to be an ‘enormous’ threat in Afghanistan.

The chief of communications for the coalition, Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, has said the threat exists despite the group has received major setbacks during the recent months, pointing towards the growing US forces airstrikes against the loyalists of the terror group.

“Obviously, we’ve all seen them, how rapidly they are able to spread, in other parts of the world,” Gen. Cleveland said during a briefing at Pentagon.

According to Gen. Cleveland, between January and March, the United States has carried out 70 to 80 airstrikes against ISIS in Afghanistan.