
CHINA TO BUILD OUTPOSTS FOR TAJIK GUARDS ON TAJIKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN BORDER

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China plans to finance and build several outposts and other facilities to beef up Tajikistans defence capabilities along its border with Afghanistan, the Tajik government said on Monday.

The Central Asian nations 1,345-km border with its southern neighbour is leaky and Dushanbe routinely reports clashes between border guards and armed drug smugglers there.

The increased activity of Afghan Taliban in the northern Kunduz province is another source of concern.

A large part of the main highway connecting Tajikistans most populous regions to China lies along the same border and armed trespassers this year kidnapped several Tajiks doing maintenance work on that road.

In a decree published on Monday, the government instructed the State National Security Committee to sign an agreement with the Chinese side that provides for the construction of 11 outposts of different sizes and a training centre for border guards.

China, which according to official statistics sells goods worth US\$2.5 billion a year to Tajikistan has already built one outpost on the Tajik-Afghan border, its first, earlier this year.

Russia used to station its own border guards on the frontier until 2005, and after that kept a regiment in the Tajik city of Kulyab, 42km from the Afghan border. But Moscow pulled the regiment out in December last year and moved it to the capital, Dushanbe, about 200km further away.

China confirmed last year that it would build a military logistics facilities in Djibouti to support Chinese peacekeeping and anti-piracy missions. No completion date has yet been given for the base.

It is seen as a move to strengthen Chinas presence in Africa.

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