

Azerbaijan's New military doctrine: Open Door to Establishment of US Military Bases

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The parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan has approved a new official military doctrine allowing the former Soviet state to host foreign military bases.

The military doctrine was approved during a Tuesday parliamentary session by a vote of 110 to 2, AFP reported.

The new policy would allow "the temporary accommodation of foreign military bases" in Azerbaijan under international accords and "in the case of radical changes in Azerbaijan's military-political situation."

The move comes after a visit to Baku earlier this week by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

"It's important to touch base and let them know they do play an important role," Gates said during his short visit.

Washington has long been seeking out bases and transit corridors to reduce its dependence on supply routes to Afghanistan via Pakistan.

The new doctrine could increase Azerbaijan's role as a crucial route for the transit of supplies to US-led forces based in Afghanistan.

Since the Afghan war began in 2001, tens of thousands of flights to the war-torn country as well as around 100,000 US-led forces have passed through Azerbaijan.

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