

Central Asia Geopolitics: Another US Military Base in Southern Kyrgyzstan?

By [Global Research](#)

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Before the debate on the deployment of an OSCE police mission in southern Kyrgyzstan died off, a new statement appeared in the western media, concerning Washington's intention to establish another military base in the republic. It may be built in the city of Osh which has recently recovered from severe ethnic violence.

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The Pentagon is said to be prepared for investing up to \$10 million for the new base outside Kyrgyzstan's southern capital. The project's managers say the facility will prove helpful in case interethnic clashes between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks once again aggravate the situation in the region. Among other objectives, the new base's command will have to counter the possible Taliban's penetration from the neighboring republic of Afghanistan. The White House and the Pentagon say that soldiers to be deployed at the Osh base will be armed with small weapons only, with no hardware. But still it is a military base, located thousands of miles away from the US border, but in close proximity to Russia, says Adzhar Kurtov, an expert with the Institute of Strategic Studies:

"Whatever it appears, a US base in Kyrgyzstan is unlikely to add stability in the region. Formally, the new site is, among other things, designed to provide anti-terrorist training for Kyrgyzstan's armed forces. But the republic is part of such organizations as the SCO, the CSTO and the CIS, which have their own training and counter-terrorism centers. Unlike an American base in the Kyrgyz city, these organizations are all regional, located in Central Asia. Therefore, combating terrorism is hardly linked to the republic's security personnel training, Adzhar Kurtov says, adding that one should seek other reasons prompting Kyrgyz residents to enter the track of terrorist and anti-government activities. As a general rule, these reasons belong to the socio-political area."

The expert believes there is another threat in this respect. In case of a military conflict with Iran, the new American base in Kyrgyzstan may become a target for a retaliatory strike. The war will partially involve Central Asian countries all of which are part of different political and military blocs and are therefore obliged to defend each other from external aggression. For the time being, official Bishkek is ambiguously commenting upon the US statements. President Roza Otunbayeva has not entered any talks on the issue as yet and "this decision will be the prerogative of a popularly elected parliament", said Farid Niyazov, the head of Presidential Administration's Information and Coordination Center.

Today, the US presence in Kyrgyzstan is limited to a transit center at the republic's Manas

international airport used to transport commercial cargo to NATO forces in Afghanistan. Building of a base in Osh will enhance military capabilities of Washington in Central Asia which has been recently declared "a zone of interests."

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