

Development of US Military Facilities in Former Soviet Union: U.S. To Build Training Center In Tajikistan

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DUSHANBE: The United States plans to build a facility for training local troops in the ex-Soviet Central Asian state of Tajikistan, the U.S. ambassador said here June 25.

"The plan ... is almost \$10 million to build this national training centre for the Tajik armed forces," Ken Gross said at a news briefing in the capital, Dushanbe.

Gross said the facility would be run by the Tajik national guards' service, and no U.S. troops would be based there, though he said U.S. military personnel could be brought in to assist in training.

"If requested, we might have people come in to help in training missions," the Gross said.

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These include Georgia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus as well as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. The U.S. airbase in Uzbekistan was shut down by President Islam Karimov in 2005.

Russia has kept a close eye on such "military-to-military" contacts between the United States and neighboring ex-Soviet republics, wary of any perceived U.S. strategic encroachment into what the Kremlin has long regarded as its "sphere of influence."

The center in Tajikistan is scheduled to open in 2011, although no contracts have yet been signed with the Tajik government, Gross said.

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