

Is Kyrgyz NATO base closure a done deal?

By [Global Research](#)

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The Kyrgyzstan government's decision to close a NATO airbase on its territory has upset Washington. Although it now needs the parliament's and president's approval, the closure looks a done deal.

The Manas base in Kyrgyzstan has been used for years by the Pentagon as a major supply depot for NATO troops in Afghanistan. The Kyrgyz government has already approved the closure of the base, and the decision just needs to be ratified by the president. Judging by the mood among many politicians as well as the locals, the closures seems inevitable.

"It's been eight years since the launch of the Manas base. At that time there was severe fighting in Afghanistan, they were using bomber air forces," said Aybek Sultangaziev, spokesperson for the Kyrgyz Prime Minister.

"But today the situation in Afghanistan has changed - it has its own government, president and parliament. We think the air base has accomplished its mission," he added.

Locals in a village near Manas say the base is harmful for the local environment. There have been incidents when US planes have jettisoned excess fuel directly onto the village.

"We are living here and raising our children. Why do we need this US air base?" one of the villagers wonders. "We don't need it at all. We are living in a peaceful time. I remember how frightening it was when American planes were flying above our heads."

Some of the locals also fear that the US may engage in a war with Iran and if that were to happen, they are afraid the base might come under attack in the future.

Washington has been using the Manas base since 2001 to provide assistance to its operations in Afghanistan. Initially it was planned that the base would have been used just for one year, but then that time was extended to eight years.

There have been also reports of many civilian casualties in Afghanistan, and Kyrgyz authorities say they don't want to be involved in that.

There have also been a number of incidents near Manas between locals and foreign troops, such as fights, traffic accidents, and in the latest case an American soldier shot and killed a Kyrgyz citizen. The soldier has not yet been prosecuted because the staff of the base enjoys diplomatic immunity.

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