

## US plans another Kyrgyzstan base

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, August 08, 2010

8 August 2010

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

The US is planning to construct a USD 10 million military base in the southern city of Osh, Kyrgyzstan, where more than 300 people died in deadly clashes in June, Press TV reported.

The US Defense Department says the base, called Osh Polygon, will feature a range of facilities and weapons training services, including a secure garrison compound with officers' quarters and barracks for enlisted personnel, range facilities, crew-served weapons and explosive ordnance, the Washington Post reported on Saturday.

US officials raised the issue of the base under ousted Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev for training Kyrgyz troops for alleged counter-terrorism operations.

According to US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake, Kyrgyzstan is still highly unstable as tensions continue to rise between Kyrgyz government soldiers and the Uzbek minorities living in the southern part of the country.

In a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, Blake expressed concern about the security along the southern border as some militants from Afghanistan might try "to come up through that border, the Washington Post quoted Blake as saying.

Keeping the other US base in Manas near the capital Bishkek is a national priority for Washington, as it serves as the entry and exit points for US troops in Afghanistan.

The United States has paid USD 45 million to the Kyrgyz government this year and USD 13 million in fees for use of the Manas base, according to the Bishkek embassy website.

Osh was the site of a bloody uprising in June against the new Kyrgyz government, which reportedly claimed more than 300 lives. The unrest had reportedly forced more than 300,000 people across the border into Uzbekistan.

The inter-ethnic violence was the worst to hit the country in years.

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