

# Why Does NATO Need Military Bases In Afghanistan?

By [Ilya Kharlamov](#)

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[Voice of Russia and Stop NATO](#)

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*The absence of a productive dialogue between Moscow and the alliance on the issue of European missile defence obliges Moscow to insist on knowing the West's plans with regard to Afghanistan.*

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*In the case of Syria, Moscow and Beijing have already shown that they can block the West's militarist plans in the Security Council.*

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Moscow intends to find out about the future of NATO military contingents in Afghanistan after 2014. NATO leadership has repeatedly announced that by that time its troops will be withdrawn from that country.

However, there is information that foreign bases will remain in Afghanistan. Russia proposes to clarify this issue at the UN General Assembly session, which began recently, and also at a meeting of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

The absence of a productive dialogue between Moscow and the alliance on the issue of European missile defence obliges Moscow to insist on knowing the West's plans with regard to Afghanistan. Russia's security is at stake and also that of the region bordering on Russia, so Russian diplomats' insistence is absolutely natural. Russian permanent representative at the UN Vitaly Churkin believes that leaving NATO bases in Afghanistan raises many questions. If the alliance announces an end to the anti-terrorist operation in 2014, the presence of foreign military forces will have different aims and nothing is known about such aims yet.

In essence, Russia intends to clearly formulate its position: if the fight against terrorism must be continued, the UN Security Council's mandate should be prolonged. It is possible that this issue will be discussed on the 27th of September during consultations between members of the UN Security Council and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko believes that Russia is prepared to pragmatically cooperate with the alliance to solve the Afghan problem on the basis of the UN Security Council resolution.

"We are concerned about the character of international military presence in Afghanistan after 2014 and we are worried by the information that at present new bases are being built there that can deploy tens of thousands of servicemen. All this is superfluous if we only mean stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. We proceed from the assumption that no superfluous military presence in Afghanistan is required."

Alexander Grushko added that Russia understands the need to leave foreign military instructors in Afghanistan to train personnel for the Afghan army and security service. If any other plans are implemented there, it will further complicate Moscow's relations with NATO.

Russia is also planning to ask the US to provide a report on the Afghan campaign at the UN General Assembly session. This could give rise to a contradictory situation. It is common knowledge that no special progress has been achieved there. Neither terrorism nor huge economic and social problems have been solved in Afghanistan since NATO's arrival. The admission of a failure is unlikely to impel the UN Security Council to prolong the mandate. Moreover, it will be a good reason not to provide similar mandates in Syria and Iran. On the other hand, if Americans prove their success, there should logically be no bases left in Afghanistan and all the troops have to be withdrawn.

Political scientist Pavel Zolotaryov has shared his opinion with The Voice of Russia.

"It is not clear at present whether Americans have completed their operation or if it should be continued. In any case, it should be decided by the UN. It would not be correct to continue any activities relying on the US administration's decisions only. The same is true about NATO, which has assumed responsibility for security outside their traditional zone of influence, Europe. So Russia's raising this issue is absolutely legitimate."

It is clear that Washington has room to manoeuvre. For example, it can ignore Russia's requests or act without the Security Council's permission because more and more Americans are in favour of this idea. In the case of Syria, Moscow and Beijing have already shown that they can block the West's militarist plans in the Security Council. In addition, Russia could revise its cooperation with the alliance in Afghanistan, starting with cargo transit and finishing with training Afghan personnel.

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