

REGIONAL SECURITY

STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS OF AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Introduction

At all times, armed forces have dominated and still dominate the development of statehood: they protect the fundamental interests of states—sovereignty and territorial integrity—and their capabilities are widely used as an effective instrument for implementing foreign policy, determining, along with the economy and ideology, a state’s impact on world politics.

Armed forces have retained their adequacy amid the current globalization trends when traditional (military) threats are retreating, states’ security interests are growing increasingly interdependent, and the principle of their indivisibility is being widely recognized, while the world has acquired alternative forces and means

to ensure security, etc. Today, however, military spending is constantly climbing, while the “responsibility zone”/“geography of functioning” of armed forces outside their state borders is widening. The national interests of the sovereign entities of world politics suggested by the very nature of international relations and security threats presuppose a wider network of military bases overseas.

The foreign military presence is directly connected with events and processes that reverberate across the world and which, at different periods in human history, have been the driving force behind progress. In the past, in the 17th-20th centuries, military bases in foreign countries

were set up by colonial powers or by the great powers locked in the ideologically driven Cold War.¹ Early in the 21st century, this trend survived

¹ At the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union had military facilities in nineteen countries of the world staffed by about 600 thousand military (see: Military Bases, available at [http://www.scribd.com/doc/3885923/5-Warfare-or-Welfare-Complete-VersionEng]); the United States deployed over 1,500 military bases and facilities in the territories of its 32 allies manned by 514 thousand servicemen (see: *Diplomaticheskii slovar*, ed. by A.A. Gro-

because of transnational threats (mainly from international terrorism and the proliferation of WMD), as well as due to the struggle for strategic resources.

Here I will analyze the foreign military bases that appeared in Central Asia along with the “global war against terrorism” and the prospects for new military facilities in conjunction with the interests of the Central Asian states.

myko, A.G. Kovalev, P.P. Sevostyanov, and S.L. Tikhvinsky, Vol. 1, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1985, p. 7).

Aims and Tasks of Foreign Military Bases

The term “military base” is applied to an advantageously situated, in the military-strategic respect, and adequately equipped region which allows the state to deploy its armed forces and armaments on a temporary or permanent basis.² Military bases are set up as bridgeheads to be used in the event of a military operation and for the purpose of material and technical backup. These are their main functions. They can be national or foreign, that is, set up and functioning in their own territories or outside them.

As a rule, the legal status of a foreign military base is determined by an international agreement which defines it as an extraterritorial facility and relieves its military personnel of criminal and civilian jurisdiction of the host country. In some cases, the personnel enjoy diplomatic immunity; on the strength of a special agreement they are exempt from international legal jurisdiction. In other words, the host country has no power over the territory occupied by a foreign military base and its personnel.

Overseas military bases are the privilege of states with strong military, political, and economic capabilities (*primus inter pares*); this means that they have adequate economic, financial, and international legal power and instruments and global/comprehensive interests. The permanent U.N. Security Council members, that is, the traditional “great powers,” are the monopolies in this sphere: practically all foreign military bases in the world belong to them.³ The United States has the largest number of military bases in other countries; according to some sources, it has signed agreements on the legal status of military facilities with more than 90 countries,⁴ that is, with nearly half of the U.N. member states.

A military base is the result of a mutual agreement of sovereign states that pursue their own specific aims. A state that allocates part of its territory to a foreign military base is, in most cases, seeking protection. In other words, by allowing a foreign military facility to be set up in its territory, a weaker state is seeking stability and an instrument for keeping a stronger neighbor or third countries in check. A foreign military base can be used in domestic policy to strengthen the ruling regime—a fairly frequent occurrence in the recent history of international relations.

In fact, a foreign military presence in general and a foreign military base in particular help to develop the national economy and bring money into the coffers of the host country. The advantages

² See: *Politicheskaya entsiklopedia*, in two volumes, Project head G.Yu. Semigin, Vol. 1, Mysl Publishers, Moscow, 2000, p. 89.

³ China is the only permanent member of the U.N. Security Council with no military bases outside its territory; there is information, however, that Beijing has a military base in Burma (see: Military Bases).

⁴ *Ibidem*.

of a foreign military presence are not limited to security issues; it boosts non-military sectors funded by the money no longer needed for military purposes. This is fully confirmed by the postwar economic rehabilitation of Europe and Japan, which developed their economies under the U.S. umbrella.

In Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan enjoys the advantages of the U.S. military presence in its territory: according to the press service of the Manas Transit Center, in 2010, the United States invested \$123.5 million in the economy of Kyrgyzstan.⁵

In the post-bipolar world, military bases have retained their importance as an instrument of containment of geopolitical rivals and continued international balance. At the same time, the aims and tasks of the military bases are better described as being of an integrated nature; they have gone beyond the framework of their military-political functions or traditional aims to prevail over the geopolitical, economic, and military-strategic interests of the host countries.

An analysis of interstate relations and relevant writings has produced the following list of aims and tasks of military bases, which can be described as driving forces behind the foreign policy and/or national security strategy of the world's leading states:

- Military-political containment of the enemy/geopolitical rival and/or power balance maintenance;
- Protection of allies against external military threats;
- Counteraction of contemporary threats;
- Ensuring access to hydrocarbon resources and establishing control over them;
- Control over the world's main transportation routes;
- Protection of state and private economic interests;
- Intelligence;
- Support of friendly regimes during periods of internal political struggle, armed conflicts, etc.

Military Bases of the United States in Central Asia

The events of 9/11 forced the United States to revise the priorities of its national security strategy. In the wake of the tragic events of September 2001, the country armed itself with President George W. Bush's foreign policy doctrine. He rejected the traditional containment strategy as no longer applicable to the threats of terrorism and WMD proliferation. On 1 June, 2002, when talking at West Point Military Academy, the American president said: "We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge."⁶

The Bush doctrine not merely perpetuated the status quo of the overseas military bases but encouraged the widening of their network, mainly close to the seats of threats to America's national

⁵ Direct payments amounted to \$122,862 million, of which the government got \$60 million; the Manas airport, about \$22 million; the intermediaries, \$38.6 million; the land rented outside the airport cost the U.S. \$66.5 thousand and humanitarian aid, \$2.3 million. Oncosts (the American military's shopping, their visits to museums, etc.) amounted to \$1.16 million (see: V. Panfilova, "Manas nadolgo ostanetsia amerikanskim. SShA gotoviat voyska k perebroske iz Afghanistana v Tsentralnuiu Aziju," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 9 June, 2011).

⁶ [<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>]; these ideas found their way into two U.S. National Security Strategies of the George W. Bush Administration of 2002 and 2006 and laid the political and legal foundation of the *preemptive strike* concept in the national security policies of members of international community.

security. The Pentagon selected “focusing on and functioning in various regions of the world”⁷ as a strategic aim of the policy to enlarge the U.S. global military presence and described “South and Central Asia as a region of great strategic importance where American interests and values are engaged as never before.”⁸

The phenomenon of international terrorism affected the structure of military bases; from that time on America preferred to set up small mobile facilities staffed with special units trained to oppose the new security challenges; new types of bases (land, naval, and air) replaced the old combined bases.

Today, the United States is actively using so-called “lily-pads” to oppose international terrorism; they are minimally equipped military facilities used to train and deploy military forces set up in places where there is no infrastructure to be used for permanent military bases.⁹ These bases “will protect the rapid reaction forces from the air and will serve as the main transshipment base, a ‘lily pad’ in the Pentagon parlance”¹⁰; as well-armed “frogs” they will leap to where they are needed and leap back.

The “global war on terror” made Central Asia one of the U.S. long-term foreign policy priorities; all the Central Asian states were prepared to cooperate with the counterterrorist coalition during its operation in Afghanistan.¹¹ It was only in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan that American military bases were set up on a permanent basis.¹²

On 7 October, 2001, Tashkent and Washington signed an agreement under which the U.S. acquired the military airbase in Khanabad (in the country’s south) to be used as an American airbase for a squadron of military transport aircraft, about ten helicopters, and up to 1,500 American servicemen.

In the summer of 2005, the government of Uzbekistan decided to denounce the agreement; as the upper chamber of the parliament put it, the country “no longer sees any reason to prolong the term of the U.S. airbase in the territory of Uzbekistan ... the airbase was rented out to the U.S. to carry out search and rescue and humanitarian operations in Uzbekistan on the basis of an agreement signed in 2001. Uzbekistan has fulfilled its obligations.”¹³ On 21 November, the last American aircraft left the base.

Today Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian state with an American military base and the world’s only state with a Russian and an American base deployed in its territory. The Manas airbase, which began functioning in December 2001, is a forward operating base; such bases are normally set up in direct proximity to potential seats of instability and borders of states that interfere with the promotion of American national interests; they are served by limited military contingents on a rotational basis.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, “U.S. Outlines Realignment of Military Forces,” 16 August, 2004, available at [<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2004/Aug/17-437847.html>] (quoted from: Z. Lachowski, “Foreign Military Bases in Eurasia,” *SIPRI Policy Paper*, Stockholm, No. 18, 2007, p. 13).

⁸ U.S. National Security Strategy, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/index.html>].

⁹ See: Z. Lachowski, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁰ D. Malysheva, “Central Asia and the Central Caucasus: Regional Security in the New World Order,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (26), 2004, p. 50.

¹¹ In 2002, Turkmenistan, a neutral country, also signed an Agreement on the use of its air space by U.S. military transportation aviation and the international airport in Ashgabat as a refueling base. In April 2008, at the NATO/CEAP summit, President Berdimukhammedov announced that his country was ready to open training centers for NATO peacekeepers and allot space to NATO depots and supply bases (see: “Turkmenia rasshiriaet sotrudnichestvo s NATO,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 13 May, 2008). There is information that a small contingent of maintenance personnel has already been stationed in the country (see: A. Bohr, Central Asia: Responding to the Multi-Vectoring Game, available at [http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Americas/us0510_bohr.pdf]).

¹² As members of the counterterrorist coalition, France and Germany also have limited military contingents in the region: in Uzbekistan (Germany) and Tajikistan (France). According to the Foreign Ministry of Tajikistan about 200 French military, six Mirage aircraft, and four military transport aircraft are stationed at Dushanbe airport (see: L. Gevorgian, “Tajiksko-frantsuzskie ucheniia—eto message Talibam,” 28 May, 2011, available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1306560600>]).

¹³ “Senat Uzbekistana vyskazalsia za vyvod kontingenta SShA s bazy v Khanabade,” available at [www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1692645,00.html].

Before 2009, when the government of Kyrgyzstan decided to denounce the agreement with the states that rented the base, it was used by military units of eleven members of the counterterrorist coalition. In the summer of 2009, the United States and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on a transit center at Manas; today, over 1,000 American military are permanently stationed there. Every month, up to 15 thousand NATO servicemen go through the Manas Transit Center to Afghanistan and back, which testifies to its importance in the counterterrorist operation. According to the Pentagon, every year about 24 thousand tanker aircraft rise from the Manas Transit Center to refuel American fighters in the air.¹⁴ This means that the transit center will acquire even more importance when NATO starts pulling out of Afghanistan.

As “an established instrument of power projection”¹⁵ the importance of military bases is not limited to their stated purpose. It is strongly suspected that the United States is attracted to the region due to its close proximity to Washington’s geopolitical opponents (China, Iran, and Russia), which will allow it to encircle them with its bases.

Today, the United States has already encircled Iran with its bases in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and the Gulf states. Thirty-five kilometers separate Iran from the Shindad airbase in the Herat Province (Afghanistan).

Some experts insist that the Manas Transit Center is being used to monitor the air space along the Chinese border and for reconnaissance.¹⁶ Chinese experts, likewise, wrote that America’s continued presence in Central Asia (that is, close to China’s borders) is threatening their country’s interests.¹⁷

Access to the huge resources of fossil fuels in Central Asia and the Caspian constitutes one of the pillars of the U.S. vital interests in the region.¹⁸

It is common knowledge that foreign military bases occupy an important place in the system of forces and assets used to protect and defend the interests of states (in the energy sphere among other things). This means that America’s military presence in Central Asia is part and parcel of the country’s comprehensive strategy; it is a strictly regional antiterrorist project of a global nature.

Russia’s Military Bases in Central Asia

Today the Russian Federation has over 20 military facilities mainly in the territories of the post-Soviet republics¹⁹: Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine, which are CIS members, and Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which belong both to the CIS and CSTO. The naval base in Sevastopol (Ukraine), the space complex in Baykonur (Kazakhstan),²⁰ the 201st base in Tajikistan, the radar stations in Qabala (Azerbaijan)²¹ and Nurek (Tajikistan), and a military base in Kant (Kyr-

¹⁴ See: O. Bozh’eva, “Voennye ministry NATO zachastili v Sredniuiu Aziiu. Shef Pentagona khochet sokhranit bazu ‘Manas’,” *Moskovskiy komsomolets*, 14 March, 2012.

¹⁵ Z. Lachowski, op. cit., p. 3

¹⁶ See: V. Panfilova, “Kirgiziia stanovitsia aziatskim avianostsem,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 February, 2006. According to A. Knyazev, “at the turn of 2005 Kyrgyzstan and the United States were engaged in fairly intensive talks. The American side tried to wrench an agreement on stationing E-3A aircraft of the AWAKS type and on regular reconnaissance flights along the Chinese border” (A.A. Knyazev, *Gosudarstvenny perevorot 25 marta 2005 g. v Kirgizii*, Bishkek, 2007, p. 128).

¹⁷ See: X. Guangcheng, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Fight against Terrorism, Extremism, and Separatism,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16), 2002, p. 19.

¹⁸ See: U.S. National Security Strategy.

¹⁹ The Syrian port of Tartus is Russia’s only military base outside the old Soviet Union (see: “Syria and Russia,” *The Economist*, 14 January, 2012, p. 50).

²⁰ Under the 1995 agreement, the complex was transferred to the Russian Federation for 20 years.

²¹ Russia rents the Qabala radar station, with the radius of 6,000 km, for \$7 million a year (see: N.N. Efimov, *Politiko-pravovye aspekty natsionalnoy bezopasnosti Rossii*, KomKniga, Moscow, 2006, p. 188).

gyzstan) are the most important. This fully coincides with the space the expert community has defined as the zone of Russia's vital interests; the military bases were set up to protect Russia's interests in three strategic sectors: Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East.

Its geopolitical location and historical and civilizational contacts with the Central Asian countries keep Russia involved in regional relations.

Its continued military presence in Central Asia has been and remains one of Russia's foreign policy priorities; the counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan, which brought the military of America and its allies to the region, merely added vigor to the process. The 2010 Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation says, in part, that "the deployment (buildup) of troop contingents of foreign states (groups of states) in the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies and also in adjacent waters" will be defined as an external military danger.²²

Unlike the United States, which operates on a bilateral basis, the Russian Federation prefers to set up multisided structures in Central Asia (particularly within the CSTO) as one of its foreign policy instruments. Significantly, it was in 2001 that the Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF) of the Central Asian region transformed the Collective Security Treaty into the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Today, the CRDF consists of military units of the RF (about 4 thousand people) and three Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan).²³ The 999th airbase of the RF Air Force in Kant (up to 750-strong military personnel and over 20 aircraft and helicopters) forms the aviation component of the CRDF. This was the first Russian military base set up in a foreign state in the post-Soviet period. The fact that President of Russia Vladimir Putin attended its opening in April 2003 speaks volumes.²⁴

This is not Russia's only military facility in Kyrgyzstan; the RF Defense Ministry also mans the 338th communication center of the RF Navy with radar surveillance capability in the region (situated in Kara Balta), the 954th torpedo testing center at Lake Issyk Kul, and a seismic control station of the RF Defense Ministry in the Mayлуу Suu settlement.²⁵ In March 2008, the parliament of Kyrgyzstan ratified an interstate agreement under which Russia's three military facilities could remain in Kyrgyzstan for the next 15 years.²⁶

The treaty between Russia and Tajikistan On the Status and Conditions for the Functioning of a Russian Military Base in the Territory of the Republic of Tajikistan signed in April 1999 envisaged that the largest Russian military base in Central Asia (the 4th military base of the RF Defense Ministry) would be set up on the basis of the 201st motor rifle division of the Volga Area-Urals Military District. The base started functioning de jure five years later (the treaty was enacted on 16 October, 2004). On 17 October, 2004, the presidents of the Russian Federation and Tajikistan attended the opening ceremony (in 2005, the 4th military base was renamed the 201st military base). Today, it consists of three battalions stationed in Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube, and Kulob (there are 5.5 thousand military in all).

²² [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf].

²³ See: N. Bordyuzha, "CSTO: Efficient Counteraction Tool against Modern Challenges and Threats," *International Affairs*, No. 1-2, 2007.

²⁴ The legal status of the military base in Kant is determined by the Agreement on the Status of the Military of the Armed Forces of the RF in Kyrgyzstan of 22 September, 2003 signed for 15 years with the possibility of extending it for another five years on the sides' mutual agreement.

²⁵ See: E. Bokoshev, "Voennye bazy Rossii v Tsentralnoy Azii—ugroza destabilizatsii regiona," available at [<http://en.caspianweekly.org/main-subjects/others/turkish-world/3750-2011-03-04-11-12-07.html>].

²⁶ See: The Law on Ratification of the Protocol to the Agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on the Procedure for Using Russian Military Facilities in the Territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Status of the Military of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Will New Foreign Military Bases Appear in Central Asia?

The answer to this question can be found in the context of geopolitical rivalry of the great powers in the region. The question and its answer have acquired particular urgency in view of the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO from Afghanistan (to be completed by late 2014) and possible stronger military position of the United States in the region. Today, the United States is moving toward setting up permanent bases in Afghanistan, while the United States and Russia will probably add military facilities to those already functioning in the region. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton declared at the 2011 Bonn Conference: “The United States intends to stay the course.”²⁷ On 2 May, 2012, this statement was confirmed by the Strategic Agreement between the U.S. and Afghanistan.

Under this agreement Afghanistan, which is not a member of NATO, became the U.S.’s Major Non-NATO Ally, which put it on an equal footing with Japan, Israel, and Australia. As a major non-NATO ally, it can expect certain military-technical dividends. The document outlined the prospects for the U.S.’s continued military presence in Afghanistan and confirmed that after 2014 American military personnel would gain access to the facilities that belonged to the Afghan army. The particulars will be discussed and registered in a bilateral security treaty. The United States has pledged not to use Afghan territory and facilities to attack third countries. The sides have already reached an agreement on urgent consultations in the event of external aggression against Afghanistan and on relevant joint political, diplomatic, economic, and military measures.²⁸

Peace in Afghanistan is seen as the main regional value; it is growing increasingly clear that only an agreement between the conflicting sides will bring peace to the country: stability in Afghanistan and sustainable security in this vast region depend on it.

The Taliban (the main opposition force in Afghanistan), which is sticking to its position that the foreign troops should be removed from the country, is the main, and highest, stumbling block on the road to implementing Washington’s strategy.

Asad Durrani, former ISI Director-General, has offered his opinion: “The foreign troops are the main irritant and factor that stirs up opposition and provokes war.” He is convinced that “operational contingents” at the bases in Afghanistan “will perpetuate the conflict in this country ... in fact one of the sides should leave Afghanistan.”²⁹

Seen from Central Asia, the continued foreign military presence in Afghanistan looks positive, albeit with certain reservations. American military facilities in the north of Afghanistan may help to oppose threats and challenges and serve as an important factor of border security of the Central Asian states. This might be true if the United States takes into account the regional reality and interests of the Central Asian states when shaping and realizing its Central Asian strategy, and if the American leaders are determined to oppose, in earnest, such threats as illegal drug trafficking.

The United States has already announced that it plans to set up its military bases in Central Asia.³⁰ Military facilities in Central Asian states might hamper their bilateral relations and fan

²⁷ K. DeYoung, “Clinton: Afghans ‘Have More Work To Do’,” *The New York Times*, 5 December, 2011.

²⁸ See: Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01.u.s.-afghanistanspasignedtext.pdf>].

²⁹ “Vremya SShA proshlo. Els-glava razvedki Pakistana Asad Durrani o voyne, kotoruiu vedut Washington s Islamabadom,” *Rossiskaya gazeta*, 16 November, 2011.

³⁰ In particular, the U.S. Central Command’s counter-narcotics fund intended to pour over \$40m into building training compounds in Kyrgyzstan’s Osh and Tajikistan’s Karatog, plus a canine training facility and helicopter hangar near Almaty in Kazakhstan (see: A. Shustov, “SShA ukhodiat iz Afghanistana v Tsentralnuu Aziju,” 25 June, 2011, available at [<http://www.fondsk.ru/news/2011/06/25/usa-uhodjat-iz-afganistana-v-centralnuju-aziju.html>]).

geopolitical regional rivalry between the U.S., RF and China. The Central Asian states do not need this.

It seems that Russia might be interested in setting up a military base in the south of Kyrgyzstan (within the CSTO framework), using the Aini airfield in Tajikistan, and returning Russian border guards to the Tajik-Afghan border.

Russia will set up a military unit (no larger than a battalion) and a training center in the south of Kyrgyzstan under the aegis of the CSTO. A memorandum of intent was signed by the heads of state on 1 August, 2009 during an informal CSTO summit. Today, the sides are discussing a treaty on the status and conditions under which the joint Russian military base will function in Kyrgyzstan. It is expected to stabilize the military-political situation in Central Asia and block aggressive designs. Additional jobs may boost the local economy.³¹ It is expected that all of Russia's military facilities in Kyrgyzstan, including the Kant airbase, the largest of Russia's military bases in Kyrgyzstan, will be transferred to it.

It should be said that none of the Central Asian countries will profit from the foreign military presence in the Ferghana valley. This explains why Uzbekistan officially objected to possible foreign military facilities in this sub-region. The Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan issued a statement which said: "The Uzbek side sees no reason to set up an additional Russian military contingent in the south of Kyrgyzstan,"³² since, if implemented, these projects at the cross-border of three states might add vigor to militarization and nationalist and radical sentiments fraught with negative repercussions.

The geopolitical interests of Russia, the United States, and India in the Aini airbase in Tajikistan are easily explained by the republic's common borders with China and Afghanistan, its geographical proximity to Iran and Pakistan, and possible access to Karakorum (which links the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region of China to Pakistan).

In Soviet times, this facility, some 25 km to the west of Dushanbe, also had a helicopter repair plant and a landing strip. Russia is seeking access to the airbase for the aviation group of the 201st military base.³³

In the summer of 2008, Russia and Tajikistan signed an Agreement on the Joint Use of the Aini Airbase; it presupposed that aircraft and helicopters stationed at the international airport of Dushanbe would be moved to Aini and that Russia would invest \$5 million in its reconstruction.³⁴ So far, the document has not been enacted.

In September 2011, the heads of state of Russia and Tajikistan agreed to draft a new document on Aini.

India, which is also making claims to the airbase, has already poured from \$20 to \$70 million into its reconstruction³⁵; however, its efforts have not been crowned with success.³⁶

This is not all: until 2002 India had a field hospital in Parkhar in the south of Tajikistan, close to the Afghan border. Set up for the needs of the NATO armed forces it was used, according to certain sources, to supply the Northern Alliance with military equipment and helicopter spare parts.³⁷

³¹ See: "Rossiyskiy voennyi faktor v Osh: 'za' i 'protiv.' Obshchestvennyy rating," available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1117410360>].

³² "V Uzbekistane ne vidiat neobkhodimosti v razmeshchenii na iuge Kyrgyzstana dopolnitelnogo kontingenta rossiiskikh vooruzhennykh sil," available at [<http://www.uzinform.com/ru/news/20090804/01762.html>].

³³ A. Shustov, op. cit.

³⁴ See: V. Panfilova, "Tajikistan vystavil Rossii schet. Dushanbe i Moskva torguiutsia iz-za aerodroma Aini," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 28 October, 2008.

³⁵ See: A. Sodiqov, "India's Intensified Interest in Tajikistan Driven by Pursuit of Airbase and Uranium," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, Washington D.C., Vol. 11, No. 17, 16 September, 2009, p. 17.

³⁶ See: R. Muzalevsky, "India Fails to Gain a Military Foothold in Tajikistan," available at [<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5485>].

³⁷ See: A. Sodiqov, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

Alarmed by the growing illegal traffic of narcotics through Tajikistan,³⁸ Russia insists on returning the border guards pulled out in 2005 to the Tajik-Afghan border.³⁹ Nearly half of the total stretch of 3,000 km of border between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries divides Afghanistan and Tajikistan; its length and the rugged relief make this stretch of the border between Afghanistan and Central Asia more vulnerable.

Those powers seeking military facilities in the Central Asian countries do not spare arguments and use all the forces and assets at their disposal to win over the host countries to achieve a favorable political decision. They use a wide range of arguments: from political and economic to military: loans⁴⁰; arms deliveries on easy terms; debt cancelling; introduction of visas⁴¹; grants on fuel supplied to the military base; lobbying the interests of the host country in international organizations, etc.

Conclusion

A host country can set up a foreign military base on the strength of a sovereign decision if it meets its national interests. It should, however, take into account the interests of its neighbors as is required by the principle of good neighborly relations and the prospects for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to avoid a security dilemma. In other words, a state wishing to strengthen its security mainly by strengthening its military power might stir up concern beyond its borders.

Today, force as a component used to keep terrorism in check is indispensable, but not entirely efficient. The nature of threats in Central Asia as a whole (and in Afghanistan in particular) presupposes the use of non-military methods to prevent and neutralize the challenges to national and regional security.

It should be said that new foreign military bases in the region cannot be regarded as an adequate response to the contemporary threats and an efficient/indispensable component of the security system that is taking shape in Central Asia. In fact, the foreign military presence in the region might add to the tension in relations between states, intensify geopolitical rivalry, and upset the military-political balance in the region, thus making the Central Asian states even more vulnerable.

³⁸ According to Director of the Federal Drug Control Service Victor Ivanov, about 60% of the heroin produced in Afghanistan arrives in Russia from Tajikistan (see: A. Sodiqov, "'Jamestown': Moskva shantazhiruet Dushanbe, chtoby vernutsia k afganskoy granitse," 16 August, 2011, available at [<http://tjknews.ru/3255>]).

³⁹ According to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on the Legal Status of the Border Guards of the Russian Federation Stationed in the Territory of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Task Group of the Federal Border Guard Service protected the state border with China and Afghanistan. The group was set up in October 1992; its numerical strength was 14.5 thousand (see: R. Burnashev, I. Chernykh, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Tajikistan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (18), 2002, p. 102).

⁴⁰ In 2004, for example, Russia announced that it had invested \$2 billion in the Tajik economy, mainly in construction of the Rogun hydroelectric power station. There was, however, a political tag attached: a controlling interest in the Rogun power station and the right to use the Aini airbase.

⁴¹ See: "B. Gryzlov prigrozil zapretit trudovuiu migratsiiu v Rossiiu grazhdan Tadjikistana," available at [<http://tjknews.co/?p=4875>]. According to certain sources, nearly one-and-a-half million Tajik guest workers (one quarter of the country's able-bodied population) send back over 40% of the republic's GDP in remittances.