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# THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S MILITARY BASES ABROAD

REPORT



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## INTRODUCTION

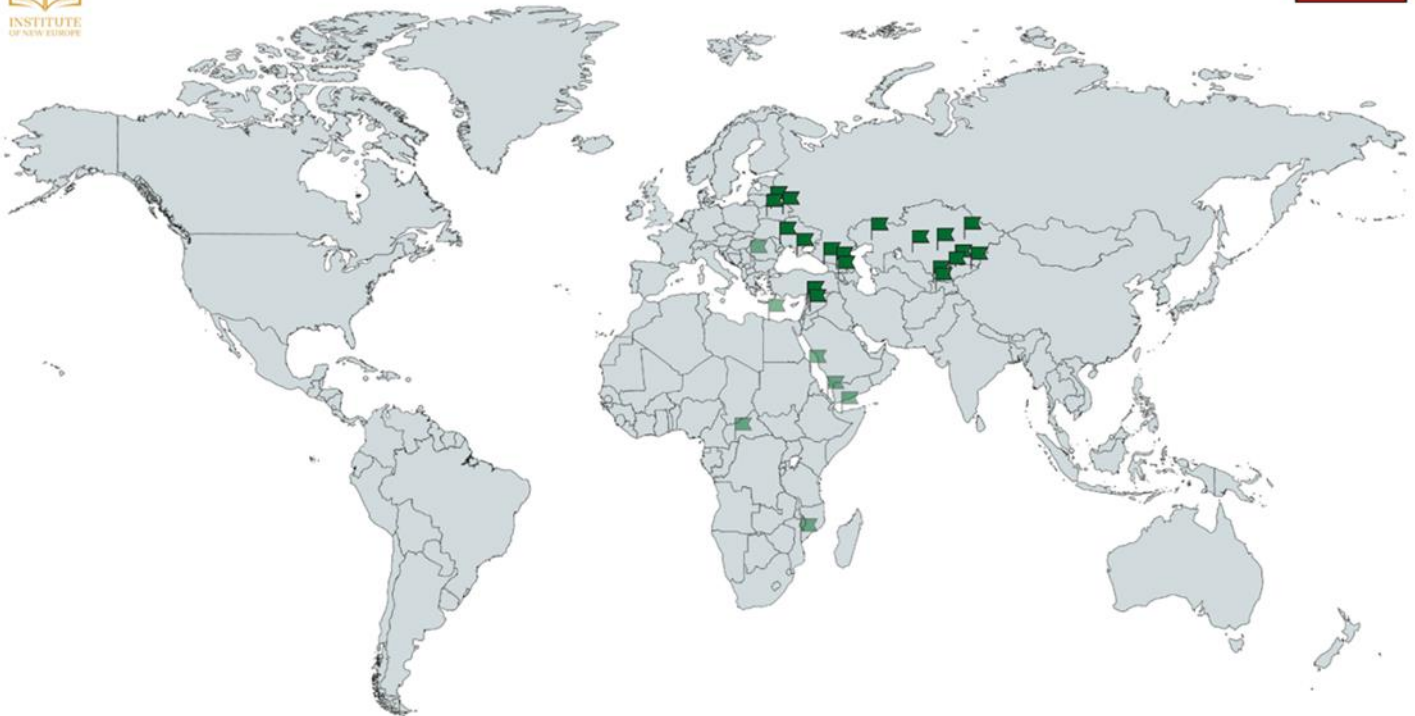
The Russian Federation is involved in at least three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa) where it owns military facilities. Their infrastructure in foreign territories includes airports, bases, proving grounds, radar stations and navy installations. The process of expanding the military potential has begun in the previous century but strategic investments and contract extensions are being undertaken nowadays. The Russian Federation is aware that global rivalry is unlimited and that the key to maintaining the status of a world power is constant, intensive and unconventional use of influence in several regions at the same time. Only such a strategy makes it possible to enter into negotiations in a privileged position.

While the reality of the Cold War allowed Russia to have an unlimited military presence, primarily in its own spheres of influence, after 1991 the Kremlin was forced to leave bases and strategic facilities in various parts of the world – from Cuba to Vietnam. In Europe this resignation was parallel to

the loss of Russian influence and the withdrawal of Russian troops from the former Eastern Bloc countries and some post-Soviet republics. Military degradation was taking place in those bases that were not defunct. Their main function in this period was to mark the Russian sphere of influence, and therefore to be a tool of political involvement and pressure on local authorities, as well as an element preventing NATO's further expansion into the post-Soviet area.

Military facilities abroad are an element of international competition and a manifestation of superpower ambitions. It is also a proof that the country still takes part in the global game, not staying behind the U.S. or China. The Russian Federation is trying to maintain its influence in the former U.S.S.R. territories and is constantly seeking opportunities to increase its military potential in Asia and Africa, which would enable the development of cooperation with countries in these regions – not only of a military, but also political and economic nature.

## Current and planned Russian military bases



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The report is a subjective analysis of the military infrastructure of the Russian Federation in selected regions. Countries belonging to the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the former Eastern Bloc were particularly taken into account. In their deliberations, the authors do not raise the issue and do not assess international armed conflicts, Russia's participation in foreign military missions, relations between particular countries, the use of private military companies or investments by Russian state-owned companies. The report aims to analytically show the military infrastructural potential of the Russian Federation in connection with the international security situation. In addition, the active political and military involvement of the U.S.A., France and China in several continents at the same time is an important element contributing to the expansion of Russia's military potential.

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The image shows a close-up, slightly blurred view of the Abkhazian flag. The flag features a red field with a white hand and five white stars in the upper left, and a green and white striped field on the right. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the top left portion of the flag, containing text.

ABKHAZIA

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(Abkhaz: Аԥсны, груз. აფხაზეთი)

## The Russian 7th Military Base in Gudauta

(7-я российская военная база)

After the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., the former Soviet airbase at Bambor Airport was transformed into the Russian 7th Military Base and was one of four Russian military bases in Georgia.<sup>1</sup> At the 1999 Istanbul summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia agreed to close all 4 bases, including those in Waziani and Gudauta, by 2001. After the change of president of Russia, Russian authorities decided that the Gudauta base would be transformed into a training center for the Russian peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States stationed in Abkhazia. The bases became the subject of a dispute between Georgia and Russia, as the Kremlin did not meet the deadlines and extended the stay of its troops in Georgia. It was only in November 2005 that Presidents Mikheil Saakashvili and Vladimir Putin agreed on the terms of closing all the bases in Georgia, but this did not apply to the base in Gudauta.

After the war in South Ossetia in 2008 and Russia's recognition of Abkhazia's independence, both parties signed an agreement that guaranteed the security of the disputed region. Subsequently, Russia decided to expand its military base in Gudauta, which is to ultimately consist of 3,700 soldiers.

During his visit to Abkhazia in August 2009, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced that Russia would invest significant funds in the expansion of the base in Gudauta, where T-62 tanks, light armored vehicles, S-300 air defense systems and the air force, among others, were to be stationed. On February 17, 2010 in Moscow, the defense ministers of Russia and Abkhazia signed an agreement on the operation of the Russian military base in Gudauta. According to the agreement, it is to be in force for 49 years with the possibility of its further extension.

The 7th Base in Abkhazia, like the 4th Base in Tskhinvali (South Ossetia) are directly subordinate to the command of the Southern Military District of the Armed Forces of the

<sup>1</sup> Others were located in Akhalkalaki, Batumi and Waziani near Tbilisi.

Russian Federation. Russia is also deploying new weapons there, including anti-aircraft missile batteries that have the airspace range over the entire territory of Georgia. This is not the first proof of the presence of Russian soldiers from Abkhazia in the Rostov group of invasion forces. In August 2014, a column of BTR armored vehicles was spotted near Sambek in the Rostov Oblast, and a battery of the "Akatsiya" self-propelled guns from the 7th Military Base, which participated in the shelling of the territory of Ukraine was revealed. The presence of the Russian 7th Military Base missile forces in this area was also documented.

The largest military airport on the southern side of the Caucasus was built in Gudauta. Officially, at least four

planes are stationed there: two Su-27 and two MiG-29. Gudauta is also the base of the 131st Separate Motor Rifle Brigade (at least 41 T-90 tanks and 170 infantry fighting vehicles). At least 100 Russian soldiers are stationed in the Gali region near Georgia, in the village of Otobaya. 30 km from the controlled by Georgia shore lies the small but strategically important port of Ochamchire. Russians maintain a small flotilla of fast patrol boats there.

7. The Military Base, as well as other facilities located in the separatist territories in South Ossetia and Transnistria, and the military component located in Crimea and the Donbass, serve to influence Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Russian military presence in these areas is crucial to maintaining the status quo of the frozen





conflicts in these countries. It makes them unable to regain control over their entire territory, causes economic losses and social conflicts and delays the implementation of reforms. Moreover, in the face of a constant threat, Georgia and Ukraine must maintain a high level of expenditures on the armed forces and keep them in constant increased combat readiness.

The latest published agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 8/23/2019.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on financing the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia.<sup>2</sup>

Signature date: 7/29/2017.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Abkhazia on cooperation in the field

of military courier and postal communication.<sup>3</sup>

Signature date: 11/21/2015.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on a joint grouping of troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Абхазия о финансировании расходов на модернизацию Вооруженных Сил Республики Абхазия.

<sup>3</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Абхазия о сотрудничестве в области военной фельдъегерско-почтовой связи.

<sup>4</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Абхазия об Объединенной группировке войск (сил) Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации и Вооруженных Сил Республики Абхазия.

# THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

(Armenian: Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն)



The Russian 102nd Order of  
Alexander Nevsky Military Base,  
the Southern Military District

(102-я ордена Александра  
Невского военная база Южного  
военного округа)

The base is a part of the Group of the Russian Forces in Transcaucasia (Группа Российских войск в Закавказье). It is also a part of the United Forces Group of the Armed Forces of Armenia and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Объединенная группировка войск ВС Армении и ВС Российской Федерации). The nineteenth century Russian Alexandrian fortress in the city of Gyumri, occupied by Russian soldiers till today, can be considered the progenitor of the 102nd Military Base. Currently, in its history, the base refers to the Soviet unit, formed during World War II. In its contemporary form the base has existed since September 1, 1994 when it was formed in lieu of the 127th Motor Rifle Division. The last organizational change was the inclusion of the 73rd Separate Motor Rifle Brigade on April 1, 2010.

The legal basis for the deployment of Russian military units in

Armenia is the Treaty on the Legal Status of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the Territory of Armenia, signed on August 21, 1992, and the Treaty on the Russian Military Base on the Territory of the Republic of Armenia from March 16, 1995. The 1995 treaty was to be in force for a period of 25 years (until 2044), and in 2010 it was extended to 49 years. On September 27, 1996, an agreement was signed on the development of Russian military potential in Armenia, which was expanded in 1999. Moreover, according to the provisions in the treaty, it is automatically extended for further five years if neither party communicates its intention to cancel it at least six months before its expiry. Russia does not bear the cost of the lease, moreover, Armenia provides the base with the necessary utilities.

The declared goals of the base are: ensuring the security of Armenia and Russia as members of the CSTO by preventing threats from the southern direction, fulfilling the duties of the containment doctrine, performing combat duty as part of the CIS air defense and cooperation with border units of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation stationed in

Armenia. Russia does not have a land border with Armenia so majority of the deliveries to the base are made by air. For this reason, its potential lies not so much in military power as in a political sense. According to the bilateral agreements, Russian units in Armenia are obliged to support the Armenian armed forces in the event of direct aggression,<sup>5</sup> which would mean joining an armed conflict by the Russian Federation.

The base has been regularly modernized since 2009. Currently, it is in constant combat readiness. The medical base of the unit is a branch of the 1602nd Russian Military Clinical Hospital. The base has two garrisons: in Gyumri (the headquarters) and in Yerevan. About 4,000-5,000 soldiers serve there, although due to the large arsenal of small arms, if necessary, their number can be relatively quickly enlarged even to 10,000. 102nd The Military Base can be considered a motor rifle brigade with rocket artillery and air defense means. Numerous Russian troops are stationed in the base, including a motorized infantry battalion, reconnaissance, engineering and

sapper, radio-technical, logistic, armored, as well as anti-tank, anti-aircraft and self-propelled artillery and missile artillery squadrons.

Soldiers have at their disposal approximately: 40 Soviet T-72 tanks, 120 BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, 15 MT-LB armored personnel carriers, 36 BTR-70/80 armored personnel carriers, BRDM-2 armored personnel carriers, 18 BM-21 Grad rocket launchers, 18 self-propelled 2S1 Gvozdika howitzers, 6 9K35 Strela-10 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, 24 2S12 Sani heavy mortars, 2 Iskander-E and 2 Smercz missile artillery systems.

The unit also includes 3 military training grounds:

- Nubarashen (25-30 km from Yerevan): small arms, tank fire;
- Kamhud (15-17 km from Gyumri): small arms;
- Alagyaz (10-15 km from Artik): artillery exercises.

The airspace above the base is secured by the 988th Anti-Aircraft Rocket Regiment in Gyumri. An important component of this military unit is the 3624th Airbase, built in 1994, stationed at the Erebuni Airport near

<sup>5</sup> This commitment does not apply to the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Yerevan. The aircraft fleet consists of 18 MiG-29 fighters, 14 Mi-24P and MI-8MT helicopters, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles, including the Navodchik-2.

The presence of Russian border guards, who are subordinate to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, in Armenia is also worth mentioning. According to the 1992 agreement, Russian Border Service are stationed on Armenia-Turkey and Armenia-Iran border. The basis of these forces are four divisions stationed in Gyumri, Artashar, Armavir and Meghri. They consist of approx. 4,500 professional soldiers, although over 80% of them are recruited from local residents.

The 102nd Military Base was used in the "Caucasus-2020" maneuvers when the Alagayz proving ground was used – joint exercises of Armenian and Russian units in the number of 1,500 soldiers and 300 units of military technology took place. The proving ground hosted exercises of reconnaissance units, artillery, air

forces (helicopters, fighters, UAVs) and armored forces.

The latest published protocols and agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host state:

Signature date: 4/7/2020.

Protocol on amendments to the agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation in the field of supply of natural gas, petroleum products and unprocessed diamonds to the Republic of Armenia from December 2, 2013.<sup>6</sup>

Signature date: 12/27/2018.

Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on

<sup>6</sup> Протокол о внесении изменений в Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Армения о сотрудничестве в сфере поставок природного газа, нефтепродуктов и необработанных природных алмазов в Республику Армения от 2 декабря 2013 года.

cooperation in the field of military courier and postal services.<sup>7</sup>

Signature date: 11/30/2016.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of

Armenia on a joint grouping of the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Протокол между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Армения о внесении изменений в Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Армения о сотрудничестве в области военной фельдъегерско-почтовой связи.

<sup>8</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Армения об Объединенной группировке войск (сил) Вооруженных Сил Республики Армения и Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации.

# THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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(Belarusian: Рэспубліка Беларусь)



The Volga-type Hantsavichy Radar Station, 474th Independent Radio-Technical Unit in Baranovichy  
(Радиолокационная станция Волга, Ганцевичи)

The station is located in the village of Hantsavichy (Belarusian: Ганцавічы), 48 km from Baranovichy. Its construction began in 1982 in order to ultimately counteract the Pershing II medium-range missiles, which were then located in the western part of Germany. The construction, interrupted in 1991 by the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., was reopened in 1993 due to Russians (demolition planned and implemented in 1995) losing the Soviet radar station in Skrunda in western Latvia. The Volga station has operated since 2002. The area of the military facility is over 200 hectares. Approximately 1,000 Russian military and local civilian personnel work there. In 2016, the station was retrofitted and modernized.

The station has an early warning radar, the range of which covers the territory of Europe, the entrance to the Sea of Azov, as well as parts of the Black Sea off the coast of Ukraine and Russia. The radar is part of the Russian

missile attack warning system, which is a part of the space forces system of the Russian Federation (Russian: Космические войска России). Volga employees oversee the territories patrolled by NATO submarines in the waters of the Norwegian Sea and the northern waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The station is capable of detecting ballistic missiles and space objects. On April 15, 2020, a routine test of intercepting missiles by the Volga took place.

The transmitting and receiving antennas of the Volga are located 3 km from each other. They are based on an analogous construction and work simultaneously. Both the transmitter and receiver are made up of thousands of spiral modules which rotate in all directions. The maximum detection range for objects is 4,800 km. The transmitter measures 20 x 30 meters and the receiver measures 36 x 36 meters. Both devices are surrounded by a frame with ferrite elements that properly absorb and transmit radio waves. The tasks of the Volga radiolocation station include:



- detecting ballistic missiles in flight, their identification, determination of the place of their launch, route and target;
- detecting and controlling space objects, recognizing them, calculating the time of falling and landing.

The Russians are leasing the station area from Belarusians on the basis of an agreement between the government of the Republic of Belarus and the government of the Russian Federation on completion, use and maintenance of the Baranavichy missile attack warning system node located in the territory of the Republic of Belarus on January 6, 1995, initially signed for 25 years. The agreement on the deployment of military facilities entered into force on May 7, 1996, and is therefore valid until May 7, 2021. The Belarusian budget does not record any income from the lease of the base to the Russians, although the value of the lease is estimated at USD 7-9 million per year.

The Russian military base in Hantsevichy is covered by the "PWO" (Russian: Противовоздушная оборона) joint air defense system within the Union State established by Russia and Belarus. The Volga is also part of the air defense system of the

Commonwealth of Independent States and it participates in the exchange of information on the current airspace situation of the CIS member states. It is also part of the collective defense system of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, of which both Russia and Belarus are members.

### The "Vileyka" VLF transmitter, 43rd Communications Center of the Russian Navy

(43-й узел связи Военно-морского флота Российской Федерации „Вилейка“, радиостанция „Антей“)

The radio station is located 10 km from the center of the Minsk Oblast (biał. Мінская вобласць). It has operated since 1964 and covers an area of 650 hectares. The staff consists of nearly 350 Russian officers, and Belarusians are employed as civilians. It is leased under the January 1995 agreement between the government of the Republic of Belarus and the government of the Russian Federation on the use and maintenance of the "Vileyka" radio station located on the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

The radio station re-transmits properly secured and coded signals between the “WMF” central communication node and the Russian submarines within the base’s operating range. The radio station consists of 15 masts, each 270 meters high, and 3 circular antenna masts 305 meters high. The masts support the umbrella-type antenna canvas, which consists of stretched cables, the total weight of which is 900 tons. The average of an antenna mast is 2.20 m. Under each of the masts there is a built-up complex of pavilions in which devices necessary to operate the radio are installed. In addition, most of the radio stations are located in a fortified space underground. “Vileyka” is an autonomous, independent unit of the Russian army.

### The Russian Combat Aircraft Base in Babruysk

(Военно-воздушная база российской авиации в Бобруйске)

In recent years, there came up an information on a planned establishing of a third Russian military base in Belarus, this time an airbase. The plan to create an air garrison of

the Russian armed forces was announced by the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Sergey Shoigu (Russian: Сергей Кужугетович Шойгу). In 2015, at the request of V. Putin, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (Russian: Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации) began working on the negotiation process with the Belarusian government. The organizational structure and composition of the future air garrison staff were presented. In 2013, the Russians placed four Su-27SM planes at the Belarusian airport in Baranavichy, which they retired in 2015. A military airfield in the village of Babruysk (Belarusian: Бабруйск) in the central part of Belarus was chosen as the site of the Russian air base. The creation of an air base would strengthen the security of the Union State and bring the two countries together. Su-30 fighters, four Mi-8 transport and combat helicopters, Iskander missiles and four S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems squadrons would be stationed at the base. At the end of 2015, after winning the elections, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka denied the Russians' plans to create a third military base in Belarus. Later,

the information was denied by the Russians themselves.

In 2015, on the International Exhibition of Weapons, Military Equipment and Ammunition (Russian: Международная выставка вооружений, военной техники и боеприпасов Russia Arms Expo) in Nizhny Tagil (Russian: Нижний Тагил) Russians have signed an agreement with Belarus on the delivery of 32 Russian BTR-82A armored personnel carriers to Belarus in 2016. The obligation was fulfilled. In 2016, Belarusians also received four S-300 anti-aircraft missile divisions and four Yakovlev Yak-130 training jets. In 2017, a bilateral agreement was signed to equip Belarusians with Su-30 SM multifunctional fighters. 4 of the 12 promised machines of this type were delivered to Belarus in 2019. In May 2020, the Russians handed over five modernized T-72B3 tanks to their Belarusian partners. In August 2020, on the "ARMY-2020" International Military and Technical Forum, representatives of Belarus and Russia signed an agreement for the delivery to Belarus of two battalions of BTR-82A armored personnel carriers manufactured by the Arzamas Machine

Factory (Russian: Арзамасский машиностроительный завод) and four Mi-35M helicopters produced at the Michail Mil Moscow Helicopter Factory (Russian: Московский вертолётный завод имени М. Л. Миля). The rearmament of the Belarusian army, and thus the defense forces of the Union State, is progressing.

In 2016, an agreement was signed between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the joint protection of the external border of the federal state in the airspace and the creation of the Unified Regional Air Defense System of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. The document strengthened the military cooperation of both countries and among the group of CIS countries. Under the agreement, Belarusian and Russian troops undergo joint exercises and training on military proving grounds (e.g. joint military maneuvers on the territory of the Russian Federation "Caucasus-2020"), exchange information and coordinate actions projected for specific situations. More Russian military equipment was transported to Belarus. Moreover, the document authorizes pilots of both countries to cross the

common border without special permits or resolutions. All of this to streamline actions and cooperate in the event of intervention.

One of the areas of cooperation in the field of defense is also activities within the joint command system of the Regional Military Grouping. In 2019, Belarus and Russia conducted a series of joint military exercises codenamed "Alliance Shield-2019". The functionality of the civil administration and command structures were tested. As part of the military maneuvers of the Union State, exercises were carried out using the Polonez and Iskander-M missile systems, Su-27 fighters, Su-57, Tu-160 jet strategic bombers, Platform-M combat robots and Kurganets-25 combat vehicles, among others. Over 12,000 Russian and Belarusian soldiers participated in the "Alliance Shield-2019".

The maintenance of the Union of Russia and Belarus and close military cooperation are a key issue for the future of the defense policy of both the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation. The shutdown of Russian military facilities on the territory of Belarus would mean a radical change in the defense strategy and political

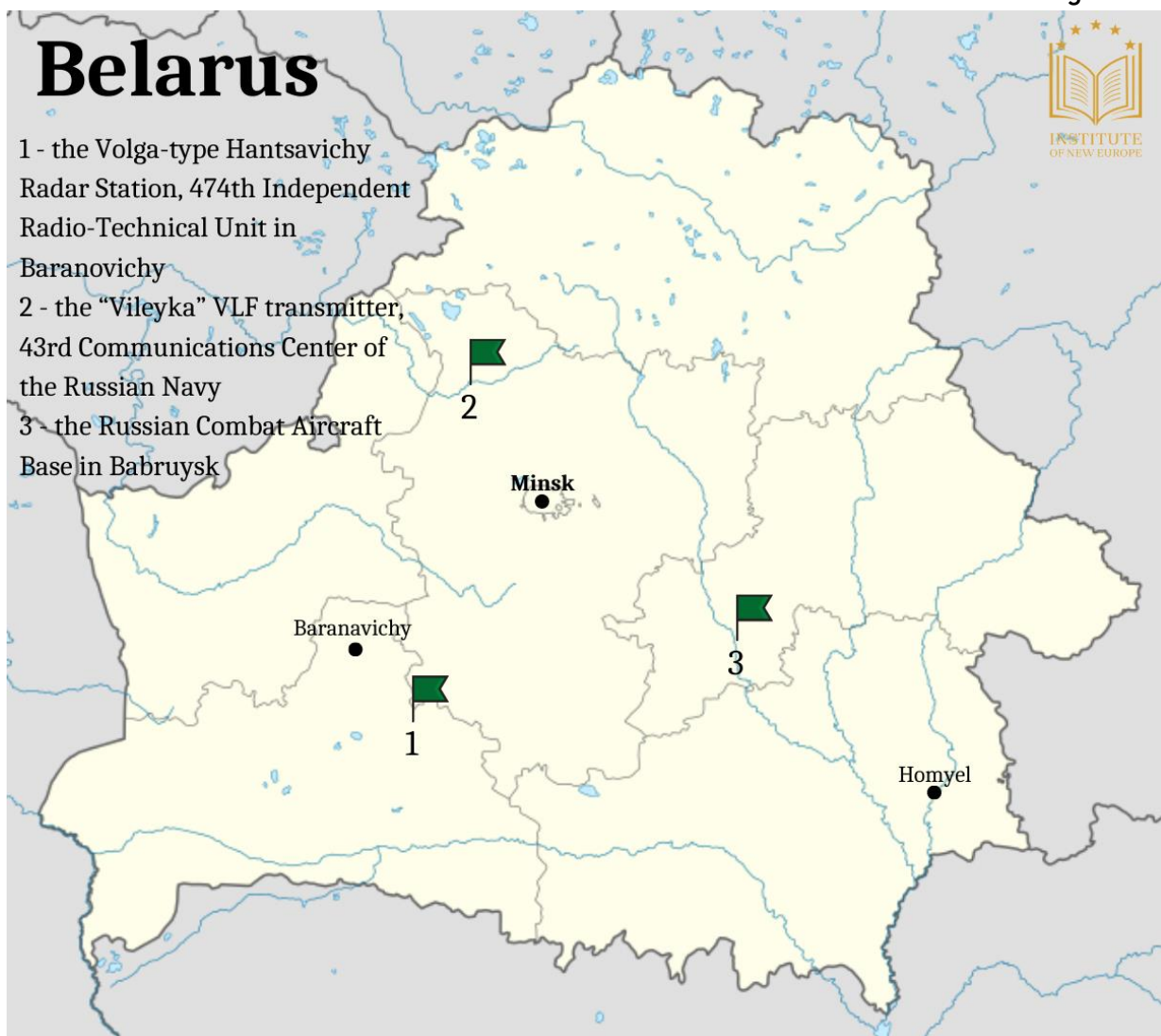
course of Belarus. Thus, the provisions of the agreements and treaties signed so far not only bilaterally between Russia and Belarus, but also within the CIS and the CSTO, should also be amended. This would change regional policy, and for the Russian Federation the loss of military bases would mean a weakening of control over Belarus.

Currently, the territory of Belarus constitutes a natural border between Russia and the NATO troops stationed in Poland. Military bases in Belarus are the frontal ones when it comes to Russia's strategic military points in the west. The President of Russia Vladimir Putin regularly emphasizes the need for further cooperation with Belarus and proposes deepening it. Belarus is favorable, but after numerous anti-government (not anti-Russian) protests in 2020, the situation may change. The crisis of Lukashenka's pro-Russian authority coincided with the expiry date of the agreements on the lease of military bases in Hantsevichy and in Vileyka. The decision on the possible non-renewal of the lease agreement was to be made by June 6, 2020. The lack of clear opposition from any of the interested parties means that, de facto,

nothing will change with regard to the Russian military facilities in Belarus.

The situation in which Belarus somehow remains under Russia's protection seems to be beneficial for the Republic. Belarus does not have enough strength and potential, and the society is not mentally ready for a sudden turn to the West. Another question is whether Belarusians would be accepted if they expressed such a desire. Russia, the United States and the European Union are in constant

contact. President Putin openly and clearly emphasizes that he will not allow Western countries to interfere in the situation in Belarus. There is a clear sphere of political, economic and military influence, which both Russians and Americans, together with Europeans, respect. The Russian Federation has enough modern bases on its own territory to react immediately in Belarus if necessary. The maintenance of old Soviet military facilities in the former republics has the character of maintaining the



potential, while proving that the Russians will not give up their shares and influence in the region. Hence, it can be assumed that the lease contract of the Volga and Vileyka will be extended, which will correspond to the future interests of both members of the Union State.

The latest published protocols on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host state:

Signature date: 6/26/2019.

Protocol on amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on the implementation of the Program of military and technical cooperation of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus until 2020 from December 25, 2013.<sup>9</sup>

Signature date: 12/17/2018.

Protocol on amendments to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on military cooperation from December 19, 1997.<sup>10</sup>

Signature date: 11/2/2016.

Protocol on amendments and additions to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the joint protection of the external border of the Union State in the air space and the establishment of the Unified Regional Air Defense System of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus from February 3, 2009.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Протокол о внесении изменений в Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Беларусь о реализации Программы военно-технического сотрудничества между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Беларусь до 2020 года от 25 декабря 2013 г.

<sup>10</sup> Протокол о внесении изменений в Договор между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Беларусь о военном сотрудничестве от 19 декабря 1997 года.

<sup>11</sup> Протокол о внесении изменений и дополнения в Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Беларусь о совместной охране внешней границы Союзного государства в воздушном пространстве и создании Единой региональной системы противовоздушной обороны Российской Федерации и Республики Беларусь от 3 февраля 2009 г.

# THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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(Kazakh: Қазақстан Республикасы)



## Sary Shagan anti-ballistic missile testing range (Сары-Шаган)

Test site for the development and testing of armaments, anti-missile weapons and anti-aircraft weapons also known as: 10th State Test Site of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation – military unit 03080 (Russian: 10-й Государственный испытательный полигон Министерства обороны РФ – войсковая часть 03080) is located northwest of Lake Balkhash in the desert highland of Betpakdala in the Karaganda Oblast and in the Jambyl Oblast. Its construction began in 1956, and the main criteria for choosing this location were flat and thinly inhabited terrain. Russia has leased the Sary Shagan Test Site since 1996 to develop and test its missiles. The rockets are fired from the Kapustin Yar proving ground in the Astrakhan Oblast, Russia. It happens that some of the rockets are fired directly from the Sary Szagan training ground.

In addition to testing anti-missile defense systems, research is being carried out on the proving ground to develop domestic ballistic missiles used by the Strategic Missile Forces and the Navy. To this end, the missile trajectory on the Kapustin Yar – Sary Szagan route is especially verified. This makes it possible to test the most modern weapons to improve the anti-missile defense systems of the Russian Federation.<sup>12</sup> At the end of the route (the Sary Szagan proving ground), there is a measurement system that analyzes all missiles.

The proving ground is located near the city of Priozersk (inhabited by 13,000 citizens), near the train station called Sary Shagan where one of the Russian military units is stationed. Over the years, the urban population and local environmentalists have repeatedly raised the problem of environmental pollution with toxic waste. They have pointed to the remains of missiles shot down during tests, spilled fuel that penetrates into the soil and water, and the constantly polluted air.

<sup>12</sup> Телеканал Звезда, Aerospace forces have performed a test-launch of the new defensive missile, [youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=140&v=NBGvD5kanW0&feature=emb\\_title&ab\\_channel=Телеканал\\_Звезд](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=140&v=NBGvD5kanW0&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=Телеканал_Звезд).



The annual rent for the use of the proving ground by the Russian Federation, which covers the area of 60,500 km<sup>2</sup>, is over USD 16 million (until 1/1/2016 it was almost USD 19 million per year according to the protocol signed on November 22, 2005). So far, approx. 400 anti-missile launches, approx. 5,500 anti-aircraft guided missile launches and more than 900 ballistic missile tests.

### Balkhash Radar Station (Балхаш РЛС)

The Balkhash station, i.e. the 49th Independent Radio-Technical Unit for space reconnaissance (also known as Sary Shagan radar node and Balkhash-9) is a Dnieper-type early warning radar. It is located near the city of Gulshad, on the west coast of Lake Balchash, near the Sary Shagan proving ground. The station was established in 1964 and the first tests were carried out in 1968. One of the key moments was the detection of a missile fired without permission by the Chinese on May 15, 1976. At that time, in the U.S.S.R., the radar was needed to control Pakistan, China, India and Iran as well as a submarine rocket launcher in the Bay of Bengal. There were six

radars in Kazakhstan, but only one has been operational (since 2012) and is managed by the Russian forces.

The military base operates on the basis of an agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions for the transfer and further use of the Kazakh Balkhash node in the Russian missile attack warning system, signed on December 2, 2014. Under this agreement, the infrastructure and territory on which the node is located are owned by Kazakhstan, but the rights have been transferred to the Russian side. At the same time, Russia is financing the costs of operating, maintaining and developing the station infrastructure. It also trains the command and engineering staff of Kazakhstan for joint work and combat service, and provides information on potential air and missile threats.

The Kazakh side provides the support of its military personnel by maintaining the air defense of the Balkhash node. In addition, a constant exchange of information is maintained on the ground and air situation and on electronic, chemical, biological and climate hazards. Till today it has been

a key element of the Russian missile warning system. The node's technical capabilities allow it to track up to 1,300 objects in the atmosphere and perceive threats at a distance of up to 3,000 km.

It should be emphasized that at the end of June 2020, the Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin supported the proposal to terminate the agreement with Kazakhstan on the use of the Balkhash radar in the Russian missile warning system. The politician pointed to the need terminating the agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions for the transfer and further use of the Kazakh Balkhash node in the Russian missile warning system, which was signed in Moscow on December 2, 2014. This is due to the launch of a new Voronezh-type radar in Orsk (near the border with Kazakhstan). In addition, the construction of a new Voronezh early warning radar in the Crimea was announced, which will significantly surpass the Dnieper station in terms of combat capabilities. Therefore, the Balchash-9 station is no longer in combat readiness.

The Russian Federation no longer needs the Balkhash radar as its functions overlap with those of the new generation radar. Due to the fact that the new systems are located in Russia, their use is cheaper and safer, and the shutdown of the station means turning the Balkhash-9 region into an abandoned base as Kazakhstan has no intention of using the radar.

### The Baikonur Cosmodrome; space flight center (Космодром Байконур)

It was originally a testing ground for the Soviet ICBM program. Official work began on June 2, 1955 but the first attempt took place on August 21, 1957, when the R-7 ballistic missile was launched, reaching a distance of 6,000 kilometers on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Six weeks later, on October 4, 1957, a modified R-7 put the first artificial Earth satellite, Sputnik-1, into orbit. On April 12, 1961, the first human, Yuri Gagarin, was launched in the Vostok 3KA spaceship from Baikonur. Although no missiles were deployed at the spaceport after 1983, it continued to operate as a military research facility. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited the facility,

but is still under the control of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos) and the Russian Aerospace Force.

The spaceport, then also called NIIP-5, is located in a semi-arid zone near the city of Töretam in Kazakhstan. Importantly, the real city of Baikonur was about 250-300 kilometers northeast of Töretam and could be found on Soviet maps from that period. This lack of logic in the name was intentionally prepared by the Russian government to hide the actual location of the launch complex. Although the real site was known, the launch complex was still called Baikonur, and that name was eventually adopted.<sup>13</sup>

Several missile systems for manned space, military and commercial space launching are still operating in Baikonur, including the Proton, Soyuz, Zenit, Striel and Dnieper rocket programs. All Russian rockets used in manned space missions and flights of the International Space Station (ISS) are launched from

Baikonur. The center consists of 9 (according to other data: 5) launch complexes with 15 rocket launchers (13), 4 missile testing grounds, 11 (34) assembly facilities, one nitrogen and oxygen plant and numerous command and control centers, as well as logistic groups. In addition, the NIIP-5 test site includes four ground control stations used to track space launches and to maintain communication with orbiting ships, among others. Communication makes it possible to establish contact with other sea and air vessels of the Russian Federation.

Russia has the exclusive lease of Baikonur since 1994, paying USD 115-million rent every year. Russia also transfers approximately USD 38.5 million annually to a nearby city. The Baikonur license is considered a federal entity in the Russian Federation, with the same status as Moscow and Saint Petersburg. In 2005, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on renting the facility until 2050. The operation of the spaceport costs the Russian budget a total of

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<sup>13</sup> The United States of America, looking for a Soviet test site for a ballistic missile, used its most sophisticated weapon of the time - the U-2 spy plane. Unattainable by Soviet U-2 fighters, they flew along the main railroads of the Soviet Union, trying to locate new missile test sites. In the summer of 1957, just weeks after the first test flight of the Soviet ICBM, mission-2 bore fruit - photos of the Töretam R-7 launcher. Despite this, for decades the Soviet government did not confirm the exact location of the training ground.

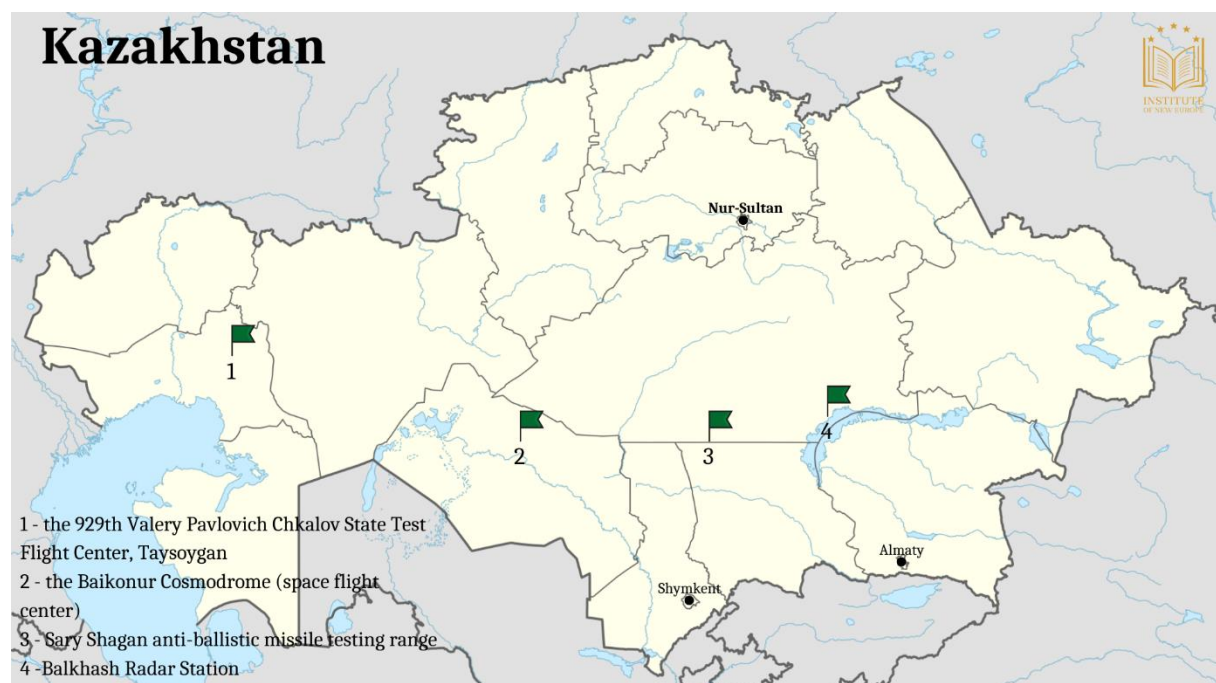
about USD 145 million. Although it is now mainly a space center, many missile development and testing facilities remain intact and can be reactivated.

**The 929th Valery Pavlovich Chkalov State Test Flight Center, Taysoygan**  
**(929-й Государственный лётно-испытательный центр Министерства обороны Российской Федерации имени В. П. Чкалова)**

The 929th State Test Flight Center is the main aviation research institution of the Russian Federation Air Force. Military aviation equipment and aviation weapons are tested, including airplanes and their equipment and armaments, ground

service, air facilities and unmanned aerial vehicles. Particular ships undergo special checks here. The 929th Center uses airports, training grounds, specialized laboratories and runs climatic and mechanical research, among others. Every year, over 220 independent tests are performed, at least 1,600 flights and over 70 research projects are carried out.

The institution conducts national and international military experiments. The command centers are located in Russia, including in Akhtubinsk, from where activities at the Groshevo, Shcholkov, Znamensk, Volsko, Klyuchi and Feodosia air proving grounds are supervised. In Kazakhstan, the institution proving training grounds in the west, in the city of Atyrau and the



villages of Terekta and Turgay<sup>14</sup> (earlier tests, including nuclear ones, took place in Azghyr, Asan, Batyrbek, Konyrterek, Suyunduk and Ushtagan, among others).

The use of military proving grounds in Kazakhstan is regulated by the agreement reached on January 20, 1995 and amended on April 16, 2015. Under the agreement, the Republic of Kazakhstan shall provide the Russian Federation on lease terms with movable and immovable property and battlefields (proving grounds) located in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the airspace to be used by the 929th State Test Flight Center.

The latest published contracts and agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 10/16/2020.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on military cooperation.<sup>15</sup>

Signature date: 6/20/2019.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the implementation of the Soyuz-2 rocket launcher from the Baikonur cosmodrome in order to launch the spaceship northwards into polar orbits.<sup>16</sup>

Signature date: 3/4/2019.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on gas supplies to the Baikonur complex.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Казахстан о порядке использования 929 Государственного летно-испытательного центра (объекты и боевые поля, размещенные на территории Республики Казахстан) Министерства обороны Российской Федерации (с изменениями на 16 апреля 2015 года). Перечень военных объектов 929 Государственного летно-испытательного центра Министерства обороны Российской Федерации, дислоцирующихся на территории Республики Казахстан.

<sup>15</sup> Договор между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Казахстан о военном сотрудничестве.

<sup>16</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Казахстан о сотрудничестве по осуществлению пусков с космодрома «Байконур» ракет-носителей типа «Союз-2» для запусков космических аппаратов в северном направлении на приполярные орбиты.

<sup>17</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Казахстан о газоснабжении комплекса «Байконур».

# THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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(Kyrgyz: Кыргыз Республикасы)



## Kant Airbase, the Russian 5th Air and 999th Air Defense Forces Army Base

(999-я авиабаза «Кант» 14-й армии военно-воздушных сил и противовоздушной обороны Российской Федерации)

A military airport located 20 km from Bishkek, in the valley of the Chu River (Kyrgyz: Чүй – Чюй). The airport has been a Russian military base since 2003. It was leased on the basis of an agreement signed by the leaders of both countries, initially for 15 years; then the agreement was extended. Before establishing the base, the area and buildings of the airport served as a pilot and aviation personnel school for years. Nearly 300 Russian soldiers and local civilian personnel are stationed at the base. The main runway is 2,700 x 60 m, while the side runway is 2,700 x 50 m long and wide. Currently, it serves mainly as a taxiway for machines and a parking lot for airplanes. Kant base is adapted to handle machines such as: the Soviet An-22 transport plane, the Ilyushin Il-76 four-engine Soviet transport jet plane, the An-12 Soviet transport plane, the Soviet Yak-42 communication plane, the Tu-154 passenger plane and all types of

helicopters. Until 2020, the Orlan-10 unmanned aerial vehicles (Russian: Орлан-10) produced by the Russian Special Technology Center (Russian: Специальный технологический центр), multipurpose tactical bombers Su-34, multipurpose tactical bombers Su-34 and the Russian Su-25 and Su25-SM attack aircraft.

In 2009 and 2012, as a part of bilateral agreements, cooperation between states in the field of defense was deepened and expanded, and the number of the Russian contingent in Kant's territory increased. A special role is played by the uniforms serving in the Lipetsk Aviation Center (Russian: Липецкий авиацентр) belonging to the Russian Air and Space Forces (Russian: Воздушно-космические силы Российской Федера). The Russians can use sports facilities, a gym, an Orthodox church and multifamily residential buildings. Since 2019, there is talk of expanding the base area by 60 hectares. The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Russian: Министерство обороны Российской Федерации) in 2020 announced that Kant would be equipped with new modern attack aircrafts. The military base is a part of

the organized air defense system and the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force.

The Russians stationed in Kant engage in social and local events. They conduct workshops on first aid, safety (e.g. in case of fire), traffic regulations. The soldiers honorably donate blood and carry out humanitarian actions. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Russians provided food and necessary hygiene products to a local hospital and financed the purchase of books and textbooks for schools, thus building a positive image in the eyes of the people of Kyrgyzstan and strengthening the position of the Russian language and influence in this country.

**The 954th Anti-Submarine Weapons Test Base of the Russian Navy, "Lake"**  
**(954-я испытательная база противолодочного вооружения Военно-Морского Флота России „Озеро“)**

The base is located in the immediate vicinity of the city of Karakol (Kyrgyz: Каракол), on the Przhhevalsky Bay (Russian: Залив Пржевальского) [eastern coast of the largest Kyrgyz lake, Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyz: Ысык-Көл)]. It

is located in a mountainous area, 1609 m above sea level. The base was established as early as 1943, although the official starting date is August 24, 1955 when the U.S.S.R. flag was raised over the base. Currently, the military base operates on the basis of bilateral agreements of the Kyrgyz Republic with the Russian Federation. The Russians stationed at the base use the water of the nearby lake for exercises with the use of sea mines, self-propelled underwater warheads, depth bombs and underwater vehicles. The equipment necessary for deep diving as well as the systems of the Russian VA-111 Shkval torpedo (Russian: BA-111 Шквал) are also tested. All equipment is tested in accordance with the principles of safety and the preservation of the ecological system of the reservoir. To this end, gas is replaced by an electric drive. A sewage treatment plant was built at the "Lake" base to reduce the pollution remaining in the water after military exercises. Due to the considerable depth of the reservoir (the depth of the lake reaches 702 m which makes it the 7th deepest lake in the world), the lake does not freeze in winter and exercises can be conducted in it all year round. The military base, in addition to the deep-



sea work equipment, also has a fleet of specialized surface ships. They include Soviet Project 206 torpedo boats (Russian: Торпедные катера проекта 206) equipped with two torpedo tubes.

In accordance with the provisions of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in the military area, signed on July 5, 1993,<sup>18</sup> both parties undertook to cooperate in the field of arms exports to third countries as well as in the exchange of information on the situation in the airspace and the material and technical state of military infrastructure facilities. In addition, mutual supplies of weapons, military equipment and other equipment intended for the Armed Forces are free of duties, taxes and other charges. The agreement also specifies social guarantees for soldiers and their families.

About 20 km from the location of the "Lake" base, in the village of Pristan'-Przheval'sk (Russian: Пристань-Пржевальск) a diesel engine and torpedo weapon factory is located. The weapon is then tested by the Russians stationed at the base. The

employees of the military base also conduct research on the shape of the lake bottom, provide support for the Kyrgyz rescue services carrying out actions in the waters of the lake and closely cooperate with the soldiers from the "Kant" base who fly over the lake.

In early October 2020, an anti-government revolution broke out in Kyrgyzstan, leading to the announcement of the need to hold premature parliamentary and presidential elections. The new leaders of the country will have to face a growing sense of frustration and nationalism in the country, which in turn may be an obstacle in the continuation of close cooperation with Russia.

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<sup>18</sup> Договор между Российской Федерацией и Киргизской Республикой о сотрудничестве в военной области от 5 июля 1993 года.

## 338th Naval Communications Facility "Marevo" / "Prometheus" station

(338-й узел связи Военно-морского флота Российской Федерации „Марево”; станция „Прометей”)

The base is located in the village of Pervomaj (Kyrgyz: Первомай), near the Ashmara River (Kyrgyz: Ашмара), at the Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan border. Its construction began in 1974, while it was launched as a base under an agreement signed by representatives of Russia and Kyrgyzstan in 1993. The value of Prometheus is estimated at USD 4.5 million. Russians do not pay the Kyrgyz government lease payments, but in return they provide

the Kyrgyz people with weapons, conduct military training and renovate the necessary equipment. The list of "services" is revised every year on the basis of specific agreements. The employees of the facility are responsible for ensuring the maintenance of communication between the General Staff of the Navy of the Russian Federation and naval and underwater units of the fleet located in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. There are also Russian electronic intelligence units at the facility.

The station consists of numerous barracks, switching stations, a power plant, halls, technical rooms, a radio transmitting and



receiving center, and a mast-mounted signal processing device. Almost the entire complex spreads underground, armed with locks and armored door systems. The ferroconcrete structures of the four-storey building are able to withstand possible external pressures. The whole is equipped with a modern air conditioning and sewage system. The mast itself consists of three umbrella antennas, each 600 meters long. The antenna canvases are hung on aluminum lattice masts. At its highest point, the mast is 312 meters high. The structure is equipped with a special system to remove ice from the mast. The overall construction of the mast consists of about 900 km of three-millimeter copper wire. The 1,000-kilowatt radio station is adapted to receive and transmit waves over very long distances

"Prometheus" is not only a Russian military base. The radio station is also responsible for controlling the time uniformity system. This allows the facilities of the Russian Navy to communicate at the same time when they are located in different geographic and time zones. To unify and precisely determine the time, and thanks to it also the geographical

coordinates, the Sandal system apparatus (Russian: Аппаратура Системы единого времени страны высокой точности "Сандал"), produced by the Russian company "Navigator" (Russian: ОАО "Навигатор") since 1970, is used.

### 17th Radio-Seismic Laboratory of the seismographic service of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation

(17-я радиосейсмическая лаборатория Сейсмической службы Министерства обороны Российской Федерации)

The laboratory is located in the Tian Shan mountain range in the town of Mailuu-Suu. Its employees control nuclear weapons testing, using, among others, the Chinese proving ground located in the dry Lop Nor Lake. Research is also being carried out on tectonic plate movements and seismic hazards. Under the 2005 agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russians provide the information they have obtained and compiled to the employees of the Institute of Seismology of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Kyrgyzstan.

The first autonomous seismic station (1 - я автономная сейсмическая станция) was also established as part of the radio-seismic laboratory; it is located in the Tian Shan mountain range (Kyrgyz: Ала-Тоо) in the town of Ichke-Suu (Kyrgyz: Ичке-Суу).

The information about the construction of another military base in Kyrgyzstan in recent years has never been proven in the form of an official agreement or contract. In accordance with the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the status and operating conditions of the United Russian Military Base on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic from September 20, 2020,<sup>19</sup> since January 29, 2017 the Russian military base, the fleet communication point, the research and development center for torpedo weapons and the seismic station, all located in Kyrgyzstan, have been formally combined into one specialized comprehensive military facility. The

contract is preliminarily valid until 2032. The base is one of the centers ensuring the security of the CSTO member states. Particular attention is also paid to the terrorist threat present in the region.

The latest published agreements and protocols on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host state:

Signature date: 3/28/2019.

Protocol between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on amendments and additions to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the status and conditions of stay of a United Russian Military Base on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic of 20 September 2012.<sup>20</sup>

Signature date: 6/20/2017.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the development of military-technical cooperation.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Киргизской Республикой о статусе и условиях пребывания объединенной российской военной базы на территории Киргизской Республики.

<sup>20</sup> Протокол между Российской Федерацией и Кыргызской Республикой о внесении изменений и дополнений в Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Кыргызской Республикой о статусе и условиях пребывания объединенной российской военной базы на территории Кыргызской Республики от 20 сентября 2012 года.

<sup>21</sup> Договор между Российской Федерацией и Киргизской Республикой о развитии военно-технического сотрудничества.

Signature date: 11/28/2012.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation regarding the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Киргизской Республики о сотрудничестве в области использования атомной энергии в мирных целях.

# THE PRIDNESTROVIAN MOLDAVIAN REPUBLIC

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(Moldovan: Република Молдовеняскэ Нистрянэ)



## The Operational Group of Russian Forces in Transnistria, OGRF

(Оперативная группа российских войск в Приднестровье)

In the territory of Moldova, which is currently controlled by Transnistrian troops, there are units that once constituted the 14th Army of the U.S.S.R. Currently, the remaining Russian group of about 1,500 soldiers controls large stockpiles of Soviet weapons. The core of the Russian contingent in Transnistria — the so-called Operational Group of Russian Forces in Transnistria — is formed on the basis of the former 14th Army. The number of OGRW contract soldiers is probably at least 1,200-1,500 (2 or 3 battalions). They are equipped mainly with armored reconnaissance vehicles BRDM and armored personnel carriers BTR.

The number of OGRW is estimated to be the equivalent of an independent motor rifle brigade (3 battalions). These data are based, among others, on the fact that “over 150 wheeled vehicles” take part in the OGRW exercises (the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation

quoted this number in the announcement on the OGRW exercises in May and November 2020). However, this brigade has — for now — a “light” character, with no artillery or armored forces. Stored weapons (long-term maintenance in depots), such as the BMP-2 or T-64BW, or the resources of the completely dependent and infiltrated Transnistrian “army” offer a potential for a significant strengthening of the OGRW — it seems that, if necessary, Russians could quickly form 2-3 battalion tactical groups.

The Ukrainian side estimated in June that a Russian combat group of about 3,500 soldiers was stationed in Transnistria.

The tasks of the OGRW are firstly to protect huge military warehouses (tens of thousands of tons of weapons and ammunition; the Kremlin estimates that over 40,000 tons of ammunition remained in the region after the Soviets), mainly in Cobasna and Tiraspol, and then to deploy a contingent. The freedom of OGRW's operational activities, e.g. of an offensive (preventive) nature, is guaranteed by the provision on acting in the interest and on the order of the

General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The air support component consists of the group's helicopters — 2 Mi-24P, 2 Mi-24K and 2 Mi-8MT. An attempt to strengthen the component in 2013 was unsuccessful as Kiev refused to allow helicopters to fly over the Ukrainian territory.

### A peacekeeping battalion in Transnistria

(Миротворческий батальон в Приднестровье)

Since the beginning of the 1990s, under the agreement on ending the fights of pro-Russian separatists with Chisinau, “peace forces” composed of Russian soldiers have been stationed in Transnistria. Their task is also to protect large stockpiles of Soviet weapons. Russian soldiers are officially stationed in Transnistria as peacekeepers, hence the blue helmets. Currently, two motorized battalions, a security battalion, a helicopter unit and an air missile defense regiment are stationed there; in total, it is approx. 1,500 people. It is unofficially said that in recent months, after the outbreak of the conflict with Ukraine, Russia has

transferred additional 1,000 soldiers to Transnistria.

The battalion of the “peacekeepers” consists of over 400 soldiers and manages 15 checkpoints on the basis of a trilateral agreement (Moldova-Transnistria-Russia). Since Transnistria lies between hostile countries — Moldova and Ukraine — the rotation takes place within the forces stationed in the republic (the OGRW battalion becomes the battalion of the “peacekeepers” and vice versa).

### Cossack and volunteer units

(Казачьи и добровольческие отряды)

Russian forces in Transnistria may also increase their numbers outside the official group structures. Russian soldiers, Cossacks, members of some militias, volunteers, etc. could come to Transnistria (and probably did come, although it is difficult to estimate the scale of the strengthening). The second source of strengthening the OGWR are the locals who served in the armed formations of the republic.

The conflict in the Donbas caused that the separatist republic of Transnistria is no longer seen only as



a potential hotspot in Europe, but also as a Russian stronghold behind Ukrainian lines. The potential of the armed forces of the separatist republic is estimated at approximately 7,000 soldiers of various formations (including 4,500 in the regular army –

the Republican Guard) provided with Russian (Soviet) equipment. The Information Resistance group estimated the army forces on August 4, 2020 at approximately 3,200 soldiers, 19 T-64A tanks, 90 armored personnel carriers and 40 rocket launchers.



After full mobilization, together with formations subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, Cossack troops, territorial units and levy en masse, it is estimated that the military (mobilization) potential of Transnistria may reach even 20,000-25,000 soldiers. The armed forces are completely dependent on Russia, not only in the strictly military aspect (equipment, logistics and material supplies), but also in terms of staff – the personnel of the republic's armed forces comes from the human resources of the 14th Army and the Operational Group of Russian Forces.

The latest published agreements and arrangements regarding military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the state of Moldova, as there are no signed documents between Russia and the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic:

Signature date: 2/2/1995.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the organization of cooperation during the inspection of the Russian Federation's military formations temporarily staying on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in connection with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures from 1992.<sup>23</sup>

Signature date: 10/21/1994.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova on the legal status, procedure and deadline for the withdrawal of the Russian Federation's military formations temporarily residing in the territory of the Republic of Moldova.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Молдова об организации взаимодействия при инспектировании воинских формирований Российской Федерации, временно находящихся на территории Республики Молдова, в связи с Договором об обычных вооруженных силах в Европе и Венским документом по мерам укрепления доверия и безопасности 1992 года.

<sup>24</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Молдова о правовом статусе, порядке и сроках вывода воинских формирований Российской Федерации, временно находящихся на территории Республики Молдова.

# THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH OSSETIA

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(Ossetian: Хуссар Ирыстон, Georgian: სამხრეთ ოსეთი)



## The 4th Guards Military Base of the Russian Armed Forces stationed in South Ossetia

(4-я гвардейская военная база Сухопутных войск Вооружённых сил Российской Федерации на территории Республики Южная Осетия)

The base, along with the relevant infrastructure, was established on February 1, 2009 (after the end of the 2008 war, until which peacekeepers composed of Ossetians, Russians and Georgians were stationed in the territory of South Ossetia and the entire operation was monitored by an OSCE mission) by the Russians who were the first to recognize the independence of South Ossetia in order to stabilize the situation in the region. The period of military cooperation between the Russian Federation and South Ossetia was initially set at 49 years, with the possibility of extending it for consecutive 15-year periods. It is located in the capital of South Ossetia – Tskhinvali, but due to the small area of the country, smaller checkpoints and groups of armed troops are spread throughout the territory of South Ossetia, including in Java and

Kanchaveti. The Russians are not obliged to pay lease fees. The unit 66431 is stationed in Tskhinvali. The unit reports to the Southern Military Command of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Russian military posts are located in almost immediate vicinity of the Batumi – Tbilisi – Baku land route which runs between Azerbaijan and Turkey. About 5,000 Russian soldiers are stationed in the base.

On April 7, 2010, the Minister of Defense of South Ossetia, Yuri Tanaev, and the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Anatoliy Serdyukov, signed an agreement on a unified Russian military base in South Ossetia. Under the document, the military facilities in Tskhinvali, the military proving ground in Dzarcemi, and the airbase in Java are included in the unified Russian military base. Both the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of South Ossetia can use the base. On December 16, 2011, for its overall activity, the base was awarded the Order of Saint George (Russian: Императорский Военный орден Святого Великомученика и Победоносца Георгия) by Vladimir

Putin. The military equipment of the 4th Military Base includes, among others, the Soviet 2B11 Sani mortars, 36 Soviet 2S3 Akatsiya self-propelled howitzers, 120 BMP-2 Soviet infantry fighting vehicles and 40 T-72 tanks, also of Soviet design. A motorized infantry battalion, an anti-aircraft division, a reconnaissance battalion and signaling patrols also serve in the unit.

In 2017, one of the officers stationed in Tskhvinvali, who supervised the base in 2009–2013, General Alexey Shchukin was sentenced by the Moscow Arbitration Court to 4 years and 4 months of a penal colony as well as to financial compensation and deprived of a military rank for property crimes, including defraudation of 28.6 billion rubles, and forgery of documents and

invoices. From 2013 to 2016, the commander's office was held by Colonel Mikhail Polchuk, while from 2016 the base has been supervised by Colonel Alexander Kravtsov. Since 2012, a special battalion of the Ossetian peacekeepers, composed of South Ossetian residents, has also operated within the framework of the Russian base. In 2013, modern barracks and 6 multifamily residential buildings were put into operation.

The latest published agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 3/31/2017.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on the procedure for



the entry of selected units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of South Ossetia into the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.<sup>25</sup>

Signature date: 3/31/2017.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of South Ossetia on cooperation in the field of military courier and postal communication.<sup>26</sup>

Signature date: 12/29/2014.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of South Ossetia on providing medical aid to soldiers of the armed forces.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Южная Осетия о порядке вхождения отдельных подразделений Вооруженных Сил Республики Южная Осетия в состав Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации.

<sup>26</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Южная Осетия о сотрудничестве в области военной фельдъегерско-почтовой связи.

<sup>27</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Южная Осетия об оказании медицинской помощи военнослужащим вооруженных сил.

# The Syrian Arab Republic

(Arabic: الجمهورية العربية السورية)



## Hmeimim Airbase (Авиабаза Хмеймим)

Hmeimim Airbase is a Syrian airbase currently used by Russians. It is located close to the Latakia Airport, in the west of the country, at the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The legal status of the base is regulated by the treaty signed by Russia and Syria in August 2015. In late 2017, Russia decided to transform the Hmeimim base into a part of its permanent military contingent stationed in Syria. At that time, the runways and infrastructure were extended. The base is equipped with an air traffic control tower, residential buildings for soldiers, warehouses, a fuel station and a fire brigade, among others. The base is protected against enemy air strikes by the Russian S-400 and Pancyr-S1 missile systems. Russian multirole fighters are stationed there, including Su-35, Su-33 and MiG-29.

Hmeimim is the main base used by Russian troops participating in the war in Syria. On July 21, 2020, an agreement was signed under which Syria provided the Russians — free of charge — with an additional 16 hectares of water and land around the base in

order to expand it and create a health clinic and rehabilitation center for soldiers. The base remains on standby, despite the fact that it is regularly a target of Syrian fighters' terrorist attacks. The attacks are perpetrated with the use of rocket launchers and UAVs equipped with weapons and cameras. The most recent attacks took place in June and July 2020.

The Russians control the airspace over Syria and the Mediterranean Sea. On April 19, 2020, this space was breached by an American reconnaissance aircraft which was almost immediately escorted back by fighter aircrafts from Hmeimim. Russian soldiers are also involved in extinguishing the forest fires caused by a drought in the Latakia area, which broke out at the end of October 2020. To this end, the Soviet Ilyushin Il-76 transport aircrafts are used, which can carry up to 42 tons of water. In addition, they are constantly patrolling the Syria-Turkey border.



## The 720th Logistics Support Point of the Russian Navy in Tartus

(720 Пункт материально-технического обеспечения Военно-морского флота Российской Федерации в Сирии)

Tartus is a port located at the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, approximately 25 km north of the Syria-Lebanon border. It is located in the territory of the 63rd Naval Brigade of the Syrian Arab Republic. Since 1971, the base was used by the U.S.S.R. Navy. Its task was to support the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean Sea, including repairing ships, supplying them with fuel, consumables and food. After the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, the port's military activity was suspended, but it remained under the auspices of the Russians. Cooperation between Syria and Russia has already been renewed.

The port of Tartus is classified as a multifunctional commercial port that can handle any type of commercial cargo: bulk cargo, containers and liquid raw materials from tankers, up to 120,000 tons. Tartus supports both military and

commercial vessels. In 2008 alone, Port Tartus handled 2,776 merchant ships carrying 12.9 million tons of cargo (about 8 merchant ships a day).

Since 2011, when the Syrian civil war broke out, the port of Tartus has been operated by the Russians with increased force. In 2013, the Russians established the Permanent Operating Unit of the Navy of the Russian Federation in the Mediterranean Sea (Russian: Постоянное оперативное соединение Военно-морского флота Российской Федерации в Средиземном море) which ensures the security of the Hmeimim airbase and is also supplied at the Tartus port. Also in Tartus, in 2017, a maritime parade was held on the occasion of Day of the Russian Navy (Russian: День Военно-Морского Флота), traditionally celebrated on the last day of July, in which sailors from the unit created in 2013 took part.

The port consists of three pontoon quays, floating piers (100 m long), office buildings, barracks, warehouses, weapons depots and workshop halls with the necessary infrastructure. Nearly 2,000 Russian soldiers are stationed at the base.

Since 2016, the base has been successively modernized and transformed into a naval base which supports the Russian S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems, as well as the P-800 Oniks ("Onyx") anti-ship cruise missiles. The port of Tartus is of significant importance due to the turbulent situation in the region. It strengthens the Russian position and influence in the Middle East. Furthermore, it enables the Russians to make strategic movements in the Mediterranean Sea, which may be of key importance in the event of an outbreak of a conflict in Africa or a need for a rapid deployment of troops.

President of Syria Bashar al-Assad has repeatedly expressed his satisfaction with the cooperation with Russians and their presence in Syria in public statements. After successful Russia-Syria negotiations and the conclusion of a cooperation agreement in Damascus on January 18, 2017, in December of the same year Vladimir Putin signed the Act on the ratification

of the agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the expansion of the territory of the 720th Logistics Support Point of the Russian Navy in Tartus port area and the return of Russian warships to the territorial sea, inland waters and ports of the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>28</sup>

The agreement between the representatives of both countries was signed for 49 years with the possibility of extension for consecutive 25-year periods. It defines legal conditions of cooperation. Syrians gave Russians free plots of land around the port so that they could efficiently operate the base. The Logistics Support Point personnel, crew members, and movable and immovable property have numerous immunities. The agreement specifies the procedure for the entry and exit of Russian warships to and from the ports of the Syrian Arab Republic, the procedure for the registration and movement of military vehicles, issues related to information protection and the use of weapons.

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<sup>28</sup> О ратификации Соглашения между Российской Федерацией и Сирийской Арабской Республикой о расширении территории пункта материально-технического обеспечения Военно-Морского Флота Российской Федерации в районе порта Тартус и заходах военных кораблей Российской Федерации в территориальное море, внутренние воды и порты Сирийской Арабской Республики.

In 2020, Russian troops in cooperation with Syrian troops conducted joint exercises and military maneuvers using the port of Tartus, in order to improve the fight against sabotage troops and learn to quickly disarm UAVs. It should be emphasized that the base in Hmeimim is connected with the port of Tartus which is an important logistics point and provides technical security for the airport.

Apart from the two military bases that are leased and fully used by the Russians, mention should be made of Syrian military airports, which have also been occasionally used by Russian troops since 2015 — these are al-Shayrat Airbase and the Tiyas Military Airbase. Both airports are located in the neighborhood of the city of Homs. The Aviation Group of the Aerospace Forces of the Russian Federation (Russian: *Авиационная группа Воздушно-космических сил Российской Федерации в Сирии*) uses bases as transit points. On April 7, 2017, al-Shayrat Airbase was attacked by the Americans from the Mediterranean Sea. 59 US BGM-109

Tomahawk tactical cruise missiles were fired at the base. Some of the base's equipment and buildings were destroyed. A year later, on April 9, 2018, Israel attacked Tiyas with missiles fired from F-16 fighters. Both bases continue to function as Syrian and Russian airports.

The latest published contracts, protocols and agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 7/21/2020.

Protocol No. 1 to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the deployment of an air group of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic from August 26, 2015 to transfer additional immovable properties and water reservoirs.<sup>29</sup>

Signature date: 7/15/2019.

Agreement between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Government of the Russian Federation on cooperation

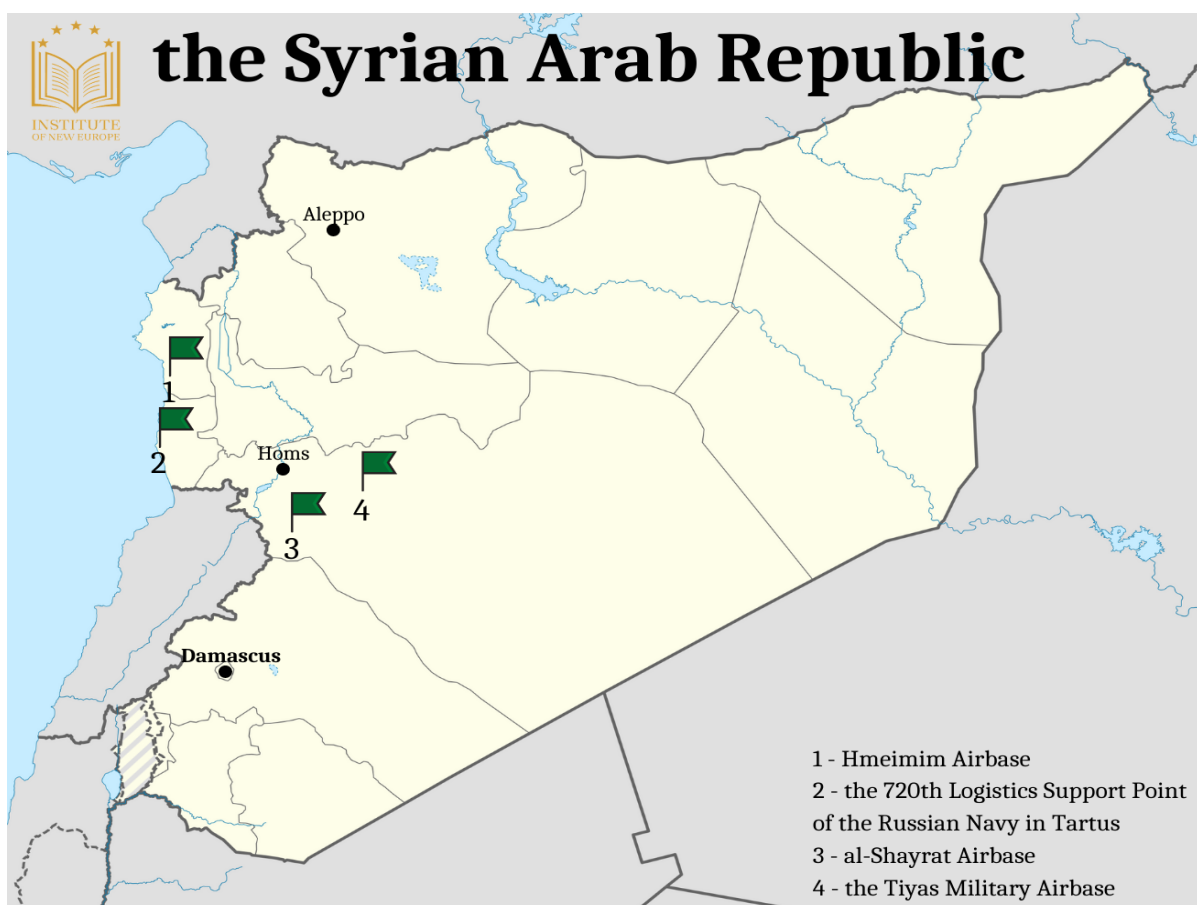
<sup>29</sup> Протокол № 1 к Соглашению между Российской Федерацией и Сирийской Арабской Республикой о размещении авиационной группы Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации на территории Сирийской Арабской Республики от 26 августа 2015 г. о передаче дополнительного недвижимого имущества и акватории.

in the field of military courier and postal communications.<sup>30</sup>

Signature date: 9/20/2018.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on the training of minor citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic in educational

institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, implementing educational programs in the field of general and secondary general education integrated with additional general development programs aimed at preparing minor students for military service or other public services.<sup>31</sup>



<sup>30</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Сирийской Арабской Республики и Правительством Российской Федерации о сотрудничестве в области военной фельдъегерско-почтовой связи.

<sup>31</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Сирийской Арабской Республики об обучении несовершеннолетних граждан Сирийской Арабской Республики в находящихся в ведении Министерства обороны Российской Федерации общеобразовательных организациях, реализующих образовательные программы основного общего и среднего общего образования, интегрированные с дополнительными общеразвивающими программами, имеющими целью подготовку несовершеннолетних обучающихся к военной или иной государственной службе.

# THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

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(Тажік: Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон)



## The Russian 201st Military Base

(201-я Гатчинская ордена Жукова дважды Краснознамённая военная база)

The Russian 201st Military Base was deployed in Tajikistan after the reorganization of the 201st Motor Rifle Division which in the 1990s, together with Russian frontier guards, defended the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border. Negotiations on the further lease of military bases started in 2008. The previous contract, signed in 1993, expired after 20 years, in the first half of 2014. Tajikistan called for shortening the time of another agreement to 10 years and introducing a rent of USD 250 million a year. The result, however, is the opposite — the period of the ratified agreement is 30 years.

As a result, in June 2004, a Russia-Tajikistan agreement was signed in Sochi, under which border protection was entrusted to Tajik soldiers, the 201st Motor Rifle Division was moved to a new base and the Tajik debt was reduced by USD 300 million. The base is located in three cities: Dushanbe, Qurghonteppa (approx.

5,500 soldiers forming three regiments) and Kulob.

It is the largest Russian military base in terms of manpower. It includes a total of 7,500 soldiers, 96 tanks, 300 combat vehicles, 54 artillery units, 8 helicopters and 5 combat aircraft. The original agreement on the presence of Russian troops in Tajikistan ended in 2014, but in 2012 it was extended until 2042.

The 201st Division started operating on October 7, 2004 in Dushanbe. The agreement between Russia and Tajikistan provides for a 49-year lease of land. The Russian base is treated as a guarantee of the country's stability and a factor that will stimulate the economy. Thanks to the launch of the base, Russia strengthened its position in Tajikistan, and President Rahmon did not consent to the United States continuing to deploy its base in the country.

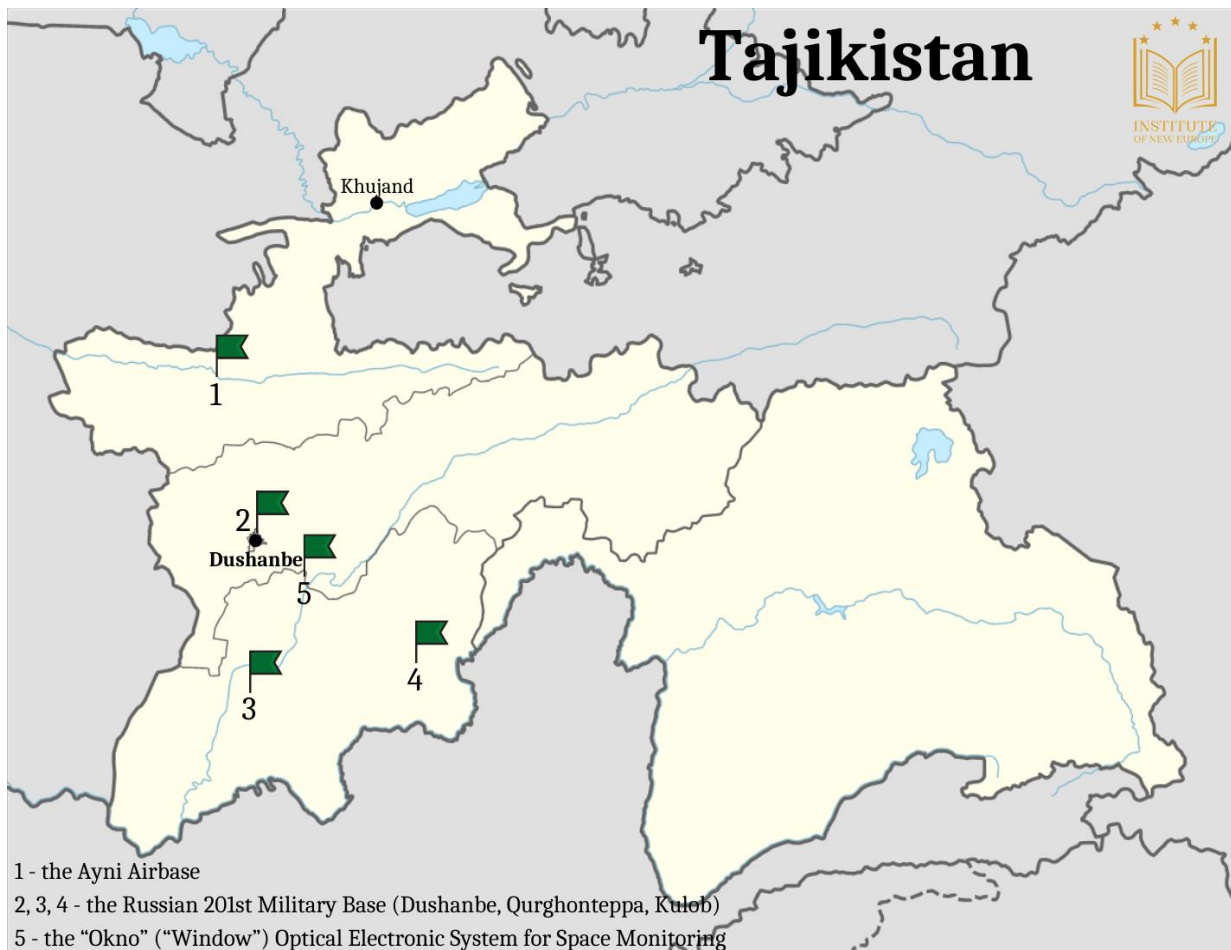
According to the ratified document, the bases will operate until 2042 with the possibility of extending it for another 5 years. The Russians stationed in the bases enjoy diplomatic immunity. In recent years, Tajikistan has benefited from Moscow's military aid, worth over USD 411 million, and has

trained 2,000 officers at Russian universities. Russia has pledged to continue helping to modernize the Tajik armed forces.

Russia plans to strengthen the forces stationed in Tajikistan primarily with equipment useful in asymmetric warfare, such as the Tigr and Rys patrol vehicles. The argument for this is the increased threat from Islamist radicals and terrorists, especially after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan. Today, Russian forces in Tajikistan consist of over 7,000 soldiers and their equipment includes T-72 tanks, BMP-2 combat vehicles and

BTR-70 and BTR-80 transporters supported by artillery and helicopters.

Due to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the threats to Tajikistan from Afghanistan, the Russian military presence is crucial for the Tajik authorities. Russia uses this fact to influence the country's policy, and thus to maintain a favorable political and military situation in these countries.



## The “Okno” (“Window”) Optical Electronic System for Space Monitoring

(Оптико-электронный комплекс „Окно”)

In Tajikistan, Russia has also an optical-electronic complex called “Okno” (English: “Window”), worth USD 242.4 million, which tracks the movements of satellites. It is situated at an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level in the Pamir mountain range, near the town of Norak. The location of the “Okno” was selected taking into account the properties of the atmosphere (optical transparency and stability) and the number of bright night hours (approx. 1500 hours per year). It is a part of the Russian airspace control system. The facility has been operating since 2002. It has been leased by the Russian Federation since 2004. Initially, it was divided into two smaller, neighboring stations. Then it was expanded and improved and has been fully used since 2014. The system can track space objects orbiting the Earth at altitudes of 2,000–40,000 kilometers.

The “Okno” provides information about detected objects, classifies them, is able to distinguish human satellites

from natural meteorites and rocks floating in the aerospace, calculates trajectories. The “Okno” works mainly at night, when objects in space reflect sunlight. The station is modern, not harmful to the environment and fully automated, can operate without human supervision. Despite this, there are several hundred officers and specialist qualified military personnel serving in the contract service in the “Okno”. The station also includes a weather station, communication and data center, command and computing center, optoelectronic tracking station and detection center.

## The Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

(Пограничная служба  
Федеральной службы  
безопасности Российской  
Федерации)

Control of the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border is carried out by the Operational Group of the Border Service of the Russian Federation. In connection with ISAF's withdrawal from Afghanistan, Moscow deployed its troops at the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border at the end of 2014, which was



a return to the situation from before 2005.

### The Ayni Airbase (Авиабаза Айни (Гиссар))

The Russian Federation continues its efforts to increase the air force presence in Tajikistan using the airbases located there. In 2015, the Russian Federation deployed four combat and transport helicopters at the Ayni Airbase, gradually increasing the presence of the air force.

The latest published agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 2/27/2017.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.<sup>32</sup>

Signature date: 9/2/2011.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in border matters.<sup>33</sup>

Signature date: 10/16/2004.

Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on the procedure for the transfer to the protection of the Republic of Tajikistan of the section of the state border of the Republic of Tajikistan with the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, protected by the Russian border services and border troops, and the procedure for the transfer of property to the Federal Security Service.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Таджикистан о сотрудничестве в области использования атомной энергии в мирных целях.

<sup>33</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Таджикистан о сотрудничестве по пограничным вопросам.

<sup>34</sup> Соглашение между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Таджикистан о порядке передачи под охрану Республике Таджикистан участка Государственной границы Республики Таджикистан с Переходным Исламским Государством Афганистан, охраняемого российскими пограничными органами и пограничными войсками, и о порядке передачи имущества, используемого органами федеральной службы безопасности.

## Planned military bases

Due to the maintained influence or intensified cooperation on the military and political level, the bases and troops that the Russian Federation had in the past or intends to create should also be distinguished. It is connected with a return to selected countries or only with a planned military engagement. The attempt to rebuild Russia's potential in Vietnam, the intensification of relations with Serbia and the increased presence in Africa are particularly noteworthy. One cannot forget about using Crimea which is a strategic point for operations in the Black Sea. There is a very popular thesis that the advantage unused by the Russian Federation will create a loophole in the global order, which will be quickly exploited by the U.S., China or France.

# THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

(Vietnamese: Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam)



## Cam Ranh Bay Base (База Камрань)

There was a time that a Russian base was located in the seaport of the city of Cam Ranh, in the Khánh Hòa province. Due to its location in the Cam Ranh Bay (Vietnamese: Vịnh Cam Ranh; the base is also referred to as such) and the special topography that cuts into the land and restricts access to open waters, the place allows protection against both military threats and heavy storms. The bay allows for the maintenance of the navy on standby and constant monitoring of threats in the South China Sea.

Due to its strategic lay of the land, Cam Ranh has been attracting the attention of the military for many years. French, American and Soviet fleets used Cam Ranh Bay as a military base. Officially the U.S.S.R. signed the lease of the port in 1978 for a period of 25 years.

The Soviet Navy expanded the base more than four times by 1987, covering an area of 100 square kilometers. It was then one of the most important bases of the U.S.S.R. abroad. After the dissolution of the Soviet

Union, some ships left the bay, and a Russian naval communication base was maintained at Cam Ranh Bay. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the agreement was upheld and the base was used by the Russian armed forces to monitor Chinese activities. At that time, there were approximately 2,000 Soviet soldiers and military advisers in Vietnam.

In negotiations on extending the lease of the base at Cam Ranh port, Vietnam required Russia to pay an annual rent of USD 200 million. The Russian government did not accept this decision, therefore on May 2, 2002, the Russian flag was lowered for the last time at the Cam Ranh Bay Base. The Vietnamese government is now expanding this base for civilian use, as is the Philippine government for the Clark and Subic Bay airbases that were once used by the U.S. troops.

In October 2010, the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyễn Tấn Dũng announced the reconstruction of the base within three years, so that it could receive foreign ships, including military ones. He indicated that Vietnam's commercial repair facilities would be open to all navies in the world (importantly, the Vietnamese

government hired Russian consultant engineers to work in the ship's workshops). In September 2014, the Ministry of Defense of Vietnam approved the investment project for the construction of Cam Ranh International Port, which is now civilian and used for international ship service. It is one of the key logistics and transportation centers in Vietnam. In addition, the port carries out the repair and renovation of ships from all over the world, and also stores fuel.

It should be emphasized that the United States was about to start negotiations to reopen Cam Ranh as a military facility for the U.S. use. However, in June 2016, the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam denied any intention to restore a permanent military base at Cam Ranh Bay. This port could be crucial for the Americans to control China's activities in the South China Sea. In that case, Vietnam would have to unite with the U.S. against China, which Americans would be fine with.

It should be noted that Cam Ranh Bay is divided into a military and a civilian port. Russia has special access rights to the military port due to the constructing of a large part of the

port and the operating and supporting of the Vietnamese navy. In general, the Russian Federation uses the Cam Ranh as a service and repair base for ships and for refueling Russian military aviation.

Russia-Vietnam defense cooperation clearly strengthens both Vietnam's ability to resist China in the South China Sea and Russia's pursuit of independent relations with ASEAN members such as Vietnam. The Minister of Defense of Vietnam called Russia the main strategic military partner in the field of military and technical cooperation. The meeting of defense ministers of both countries was held on February 3-9, 2020 at Moscow's invitation. The Minister of National Defense of Vietnam, General Ngô Xuân Lịch, confirmed that it is a priority for Vietnam to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia, the basis of which is defense cooperation. He emphasized the unwavering policy of the nation, consisting in strengthening solidarity, friendship and comprehensive cooperation with Russia, which is also the highest priority in the external policy of the Vietnamese party, state and army.



In addition to the interest in using Cam Ranh Bay, Russia is helping Vietnam with the construction of a submarine base, repair of shipyards

and maintenance support for other offshore fixed platforms. As part of strengthening its military potential, Vietnam purchased Kilo-class submarines (Project 877) from Russia, which were deployed to protect Vietnam's interests in the South China Sea. The Vietnamese army has also acquired new SU-30MK2 fighters. In addition to the above, Hanoi has expressed an interest in purchasing the S-400 Triumf long-range air defense missile complex.

The latest published agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 11/12/2013.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on military cooperation.<sup>35</sup>

Signature date: 10/31/2010.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the mutual protection of the rights

<sup>35</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Социалистической Республики Вьетнам о военном сотрудничестве.

to the results of intellectual activities used and obtained through bilateral military and technical cooperation.<sup>36</sup>

Signature date: 10/31/2010.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on cooperation in the construction of a nuclear power plant in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Социалистической Республики Вьетнам о взаимной охране прав на результаты интеллектуальной деятельности, используемые и полученные в ходе двустороннего военно-технического сотрудничества.

<sup>37</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Социалистической Республики Вьетнам о сотрудничестве в сооружении атомной электростанции на территории Социалистической Республики Вьетнам.

UKRAINE

(Ukrainian: Україна)





## The Sevastopol Naval Base (Севастопольская военно-морская база)

The base in Sevastopol is now the main base of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation Navy. It is located on the site of a historic naval base established in 1783. For many years, Sevastopol played the role of the dominant port in the Black Sea. In 1997, Russians signed a 20-year lease agreement with Ukrainians. The document also contained a record on the use of the airport by Russians. The number of equipment that can be stationed in the port has been precisely defined as a maximum of 103 ships, including 14 submarines, 22 military aircraft and up to 132 armored vehicles.

On April 21, 2010, the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, signed the so-called Kharkiv Pact, according to which the presence of Russian troops in Crimea was extended until 2042. The president's decision was described as deepening security relations with Russia. In return for the extension of the lease of the base on the peninsula, Ukraine received a discount on gas supplies from the Russian Gazprom. The Russian Federation rented a base

in Ukraine continuously until the annexation of Crimea in 2014. In 2015, the Prime Minister of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, announced that the base in Sevastopol was fully integrated with the Russian Federation and is no longer treated as a foreign base.

The fleet includes submarines and surface boats, ships, naval missiles, planes and fighters, marines, and ground and coastal troops. The ships are located in Sevastopol and a smaller port seized by the Russians – Feodosia. In 2014, the Black Sea Fleet consisted of 25,000 soldiers. However, at the beginning of 2019, there were from 31,000 to 40,000 soldiers on the peninsula. Additionally, there is the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet and the main communications node are in Sevastopol.

The Russian base in Crimea fulfills primarily geostrategic functions, including control over the territory of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol, according to the website of the Ministry of Defense of Russia, performs the defense functions of the country, protects the economic zone from an illegal crossing, and ensures the safety of shipping. The base in



Crimea is also responsible for the logistics chain between Novorossiysk and the Syrian ports of Tartus and Latakia (in September 2015, ships belonging to the Black Sea Fleet supported the Russian air force involved in the conflict in Syria). Sevastopol is an important port on the Black Sea, and by controlling it, Russians strengthen their already strong position in the region.

### Mukachevo radar station (Радиолокационная станция Мукачево)

A (former) Soviet radar station located in the present-day territory of

Ukraine, near the town of Mukachevo. It was an early warning station against ballistic missile attacks and a part of the extensive Soviet anti-missile system. It was the last radar built in the U.S.S.R.; the work on it began in the late 1970s. The Mukachevo station monitored the space from the north-eastern Atlantic waters to the Mediterranean Sea, where NATO submarines were stationed, as well as land bases, e.g. in France. After the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., the Russians leased the station since 1992 and in 2005 handed it over to the State Space Agency of Ukraine. Russia paid Ukraine from USD 800,000 to 1.5 million a year for the operating of radar stations (the

second one was in Sevastopol). Until 2008, the station transmitted data to Russia (to points in Kolomna and Solnechnogorsk), then Russians stopped using transmissions and the radar itself required modernization and reconstruction. This station can monitor space of almost 5,700 kilometers. Currently, the former Soviet radar is used by Ukrainians to observe space. It is in a very bad condition and requires a major renovation.

The latest published protocols and agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 12/17/2013.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the implementation of state support measures for the resumption of

serial production of the An-124 aircraft with D-18T engines and their modification.<sup>38</sup>

Signature date: 8/20/2012.

Protocol on amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine on the use of the proving ground for the take-off and landing of the NITKA system.<sup>39</sup>

Signature date: 7/12/2012.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation in the prevention of crisis situations, fires and the elimination of their consequences in populated areas where the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation is located on the territory of Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Кабинетом Министров Украины о реализации мер государственной поддержки возобновления серийного производства самолетов семейства Ан-124 с двигателями Д-18Т и их модификациями.

<sup>39</sup> Протокол о внесении изменений в Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Украины об использовании полигона взлетно-посадочных систем «Нитка».

<sup>40</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Кабинетом Министров Украины о взаимодействии по вопросам предупреждения чрезвычайных ситуаций, пожаров и ликвидации их последствий в населенных пунктах, в которых дислоцируются объекты Черноморского флота Российской Федерации на территории Украины.

# THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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(Serbian: Република Србија)



The Western Balkans are an important region from a geopolitical point of view. Situated between the East and the West, they constitute a peculiar element in the competition for influence in Southern Europe by the United States, Russia, and even Turkey and China, which can be observed in Serbia. Serbia and Russia conduct joint activities in the field of culture, trade and security, and the Serbian elite is largely pro-Russian. Russians support Serbs in the international arena, e.g. by not recognizing the independence of Kosovo. On the occasion of numerous mutual diplomatic visits over the years the heads of both states signed a number of bilateral cooperation agreements. Russian activities also include Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is intended to destabilize the region internally.

In 2008, Russian Gazprom took over the Serbian concern NIS, ensuring its dominance in the energy sector and making Serbs dependent on electricity supplies from Russia. Serbs and Russians collaborated on the planned construction of the South Stream but the project was frozen. Since 2011, the Russians have run a Humanitarian Center (Российско-

сербский гуманитарный центр) near Niš in southern Serbia, which, however, takes the form of a military base, e.g. for training. Russian troops, including engineering troops, helicopters and fighters, are stationed there. Russian and Serbian sappers jointly undertook mine clearance after Western air raids in the 1990s. The Center operates within humanitarian and ecological issues. However, it plays a double role and is also used by the Russian security services.

In 2013, an agreement on military cooperation was signed. Serbs buy supplies on the Russian military market for their army. Talks are underway to implement Russian anti-missile systems in Serbia. In 2019, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation announced the establishment of an anti-aircraft base in Serbia in the future (de facto against NATO). In April 2019, the Minister of Innovation and Technological Development of Serbia and the director of the nuclear energy concern at the Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation signed a memorandum on cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. Joint military exercises of the Serbian and Russian armies and

training of military personnel are also held regularly, as part of agreements signed by the Ministries of Internal Affairs of Russia and Serbia. In March 2020, the Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development of Serbia and the Russian state-owned company GLONASS signed a memorandum of cooperation in the implementation of new technologies and innovations. In October 2020, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced the creation of a representative office in the territory of Serbia. In November 2020, the Russians delivered to Serbia the first batch of 30 modernized T-72B1MS tanks developed by the Russian company UralVagonZavod (UWZ).

The latest published contracts and agreements on military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the host country:

Signature date: 6/18/2020.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of

the Republic of Serbia on cooperation in the fight against terrorism.<sup>41</sup>

Signature date: 1/17/2019.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes based on proven and innovative technologies.<sup>42</sup>

Signature date: 11/13/2013.

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on military cooperation.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Сербии о сотрудничестве в борьбе с терроризмом.

<sup>42</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Сербии о сотрудничестве в области использования атомной энергии в мирных целях на основе апробированных и инновационных технологий.

<sup>43</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Республики Сербии о военном сотрудничестве.



The image features a silhouette of a soldier in the foreground, carrying a machine gun on his shoulder. The soldier is positioned on the right side of the frame, facing left. The machine gun has a long barrel and a visible ammunition belt. To the left of the soldier is a large, spiky tree. The background consists of a desert landscape with jagged rock formations and a large, bright sun in the sky, creating a warm, orange glow. The text "PLANNED RUSSIAN MILITARY BASES" is centered at the top, with a horizontal line below it, and "IN AFRICA" is centered below the line.

# PLANNED RUSSIAN MILITARY BASES

IN AFRICA



Russia's military involvement abroad is becoming increasingly visible. In addition to maintaining several dozen bases and troops in the post-Soviet area, the Kremlin's aspirations to expand its influence also in Africa do not fade away. The consequence of these ambitions is the undertaking of many simultaneous operations, which, if conducted properly, will enable obtaining new allies in the Dark Continent. Military bases in Syria as a checkpoint, cooperation within international organizations, the use of private military companies (PMC) and establishing economic relations are crucial factors for Russian foreign policy – and the expansion in Africa is one of its goals.

Russia tries to expand its influence by signing mainly economic agreements, but there are also military agreements. They are concluded primarily with states dominated by an authoritarian system. Africa is nowadays to be a priority for the Kremlin due to the colliding interests of France, the U.S. and China there. That continent is twice as large as Russia, and due to socio-cultural differences in particular regions (not even countries,

as there may be several dozen groups or tribes fighting each other in one country), it will be possible to form many lucrative agreements. This will enable significant control of the continent, and, if cooperation is properly developed in particular cases, an involvement in waters, including the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, among others.

The Kremlin tries to maintain good relations with African governments, combining military and economic interests. According to SIPRI reports, Russians are the main arms supplier in the African continent. Between 2015 and 2019, Africa imported 49% of its military equipment from Russia, which is almost twice as much as from other suppliers – the United States (14%), China (13%) and France (8%). Algeria remains the largest recipient of Russian arms in Africa, followed by Egypt, Sudan and Angola. As the world's second-largest arms exporter, Russia sold most of its weapons to India (25%) and China (16%) in Asia and to Algeria (14%) in North Africa. Importantly, African states accounted for 17% of Russian arms export in the years 2015–2019. It is an

important factor which redounds to solidifying relations between particular states and Russia.

Africa offers various spheres of activity. Due to the fact that the continent is constantly developing, and numerous rulers are looking for opportunities regarding international cooperation, Russia's main goal is to fill this gap or propose better conditions than e.g. the West. Expanded military

capabilities in Africa would establish the next stage in maintaining Russian influence, with a relatively small financial outlay, as a large part of the costs would be borne by the country accepting (maintaining) Russian military structures. In order to fully cooperate with the African leaders, the Russian Federation has even convened a special Russia-Africa summit as a confirmation of the priority



importance of cooperation in this direction.

It is highly probable that in the future the Russian Federation could establish its bases or use the territories of Egypt, Eritrea, Mozambique, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Sudan for its military purposes. Madagascar, Angola, Zimbabwe and Guinea-Bissau are also taken into account for that matter.

### The Arab Republic of Egypt (Arabic: جمهورية مصر العربية)

Currently, Moscow has an agreement with Cairo about the use of Egyptian air bases. They also concluded several other important agreements which contribute to the strengthening of cooperation. Attention should be paid to the \$2 billion contract signed in 2019 for the delivery of 24 Su-35 fighters to Egypt. Another important aspect of this international cooperation is the fact that during Vladimir Putin's visit to Cairo in December 2017, the countries signed an agreement under which Russia would build the first

nuclear reactor in Egypt and supply it with nuclear fuel.<sup>44</sup>

### The (former) Soviet naval base in Sidi Barrani (Советская военно-морская база Сиди-Баррани)

Egypt's airbase in Sidi Barrani is located on the coast, very close to the Libyan border. Russia would return to Sidi Barrani after almost fifty years, as the U.S.S.R. once had its naval base near the city. Until 1972, the Soviet Navy used the base in Egypt to monitor the movements of U.S. naval forces. The Sidi Barrani airport, in case of combat aircraft appearing on it, would allow Russia to control the Suez Canal, which is crucial for global fuel transport.

By maintaining Russian involvement in Egypt, the Kremlin is moving closer to its main goal – which is to strengthen its military capabilities in Africa and in the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt would be an ideal area to continue these activities.

<sup>44</sup> Соглашение между Правительством Российской Федерации и Правительством Арабской Республики Египет о сотрудничестве в сооружении и эксплуатации атомной электростанции на территории Арабской Республики Египет.

In 2018, Russia announced their plans to build a naval logistics center in Assab. At that time, Eritreans indicated that they were interested in purchasing Russian weapons, including helicopters, missile systems and personal weapons. At the end of 2019, Russia signed the first defense cooperation agreement with Eritrea since the international sanctions against the African state, imposed in 2009 by the U.N. Security Council, were lifted. In addition, the Kremlin is to deliver two Ansat helicopters to Eritrea in 2020. Thus, in just two years there has been a significant intensification of military cooperation between Moscow and Asmara.

If Russia implements its plans for a logistics center, it will not be the first time when a foreign country exploits Eritrea's territorial potential. Assab was already used as a base for the United Arab Emirates during the fight with the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Moreover, the role of a neighboring country, i.e. Djibouti, should be emphasized. The largest military powers in the world are present in this country – from the United States, Japan, France, Italy, Spain, to recently China and Saudi

Arabia. Djibouti's proximity to unstable regions makes it an ideal location for military bases. For the United States and its allies, bases in this country allow easy and quick access to Africa and the Middle East. The largest permanent U.S. military base in Africa is located at Camp Lemonnier. Importantly, Djibouti lies in the strategically important Bab el-Mandeb strait which connects to the Suez Canal. 30% of all global shipping passes through this point and it is a key gateway for global oil and commodity trade.

Therefore, Eritrea is not only an important region for building the global potential of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, but also a territory serving to control the situation in East Africa and the Middle East where other powers operate intensively. Due to the involvement of the U.S. and China in Djibouti, Russia must seek an ally in the neighboring countries in order to maintain its sphere of influence.

**The Republic of Mozambique**  
(Portuguese: República de Moçambique)

Moscow and Maputo have already signed many bilateral agreements and representatives of both countries have held several dozen meetings over the past few years. This cooperation is both military and economic in nature.<sup>45</sup> In 2015, Russia and Mozambique — a country that was once one of the Soviet Union's largest regional allies — signed an agreement on technical and military cooperation. In 2018, representatives of the ministries of defense adopted an agreement on a simplified procedure for the entry of Russian warships into the Mozambique ports. A memorandum of cooperation in the area of the navy was also signed. Currently, Mozambique supports Russian foreign policy initiatives at the United Nations and is opening up economically, enabling Russian investments in the country. The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation expects that the adopted agreements will give an extra impetus for the development of military cooperation. It may also be an element of strengthening Russian presence in Mozambique in order not so much to establish a Russian base as to enable

Russian troops to be stationed there — also those from private military companies.

**The Central African Republic  
(the C.A.R.)**  
**(Sango: Ködörösêse tî  
Bêafrîka)**

The Central African Republic is of great geopolitical importance. Due to its location, it is perceived as an expedition point for the entire continent and its territory is full of natural resources, including diamonds. Recently, a Russian training center started operating in the C.A.R., and Moscow and Bangui are ready for the inauguration of a Russian military base.

The Russian military has officially been training soldiers from the Central African Republic since 2018. This has been possible since the two countries signed an international agreement on military cooperation. Currently, there are approximately 200 Russian officers at the training center in Berengo. Establishing a military base or station in that country is believed to be a next step. In 2019, this information

<sup>45</sup> For more, see: <https://mozambik.mid.ru/-/kommentarij-departamenta-informacii-i-pecati-mid-rossii-v-svazi-s-vizitom-v-rossijskuu-federaciu-ministra-inostrannyh-del-i-sotrudnicestva-mozambika-z?inheritRedirect=true>.

was confirmed by Defense Minister Marie-Noëlle Koyara (actually: the Minister of National Defense and Army Reconstruction) and President Faustin-Archange Touadéra.

Recently, Russia has opened its Ministry of Defense representation and handed over 10 BRDM-2s armored vehicles to the Central African Republic. Therefore, the strategic goal of the Russian Federation in the Central African Republic is to establish full central government control over the entire C.A.R. territory (where the civil war has been going on since 2013) and to strengthen the cooperation between the armed forces of both countries. This will lead to the Kremlin maintaining control in the center of the continent and the possible further pursuit of interests in Africa..

### The Federal Republic of Somalia

(Somali: Jamhuuriyadda Federaalka Soomaaliya)

The Russian Federation is to focus its attention on the Berbera port as a location of its base on the coast of Somaliland, a self-proclaimed Islamic republic on the Gulf of Aden, unrecognized by the international

community. This specific region is strategically important for a number of reasons, including the fact that it enables both the protection of one's own interests in the Middle East and the control of the Suez Canal through the Gulf of Aden. It would also be a significant step towards the Russian navy presence in the region. Importantly, there used to be a Soviet military base in the city of Berbera. The runway built at that time by Soviet specialists was 4,140 meters long, the longest in Africa at that time. The U.S.S.R. left Somalia because it supported Ethiopia in the Ethio-Somali war.

It is worth emphasizing that Turkey (in Somalia) and the United Arab Emirates (in Somaliland) have their own military investments. In addition, both China and the United States, with military bases in Djibouti, share the same coastline as a potential Russian port.

### The Republic of the Sudan

(Arabic: جمهورية السودان)

Sudan is of key importance not only for regional but also for global geopolitics as it would enable the Russian Federation to have a military

base-port with an access to the Red Sea. Given the number of trade routes that pass through these waters, the Kremlin would be eager to expand its influence in this direction. Moscow has already signed a military agreement with Khartoum in 2019, allowing Russian warships to enter Sudan ports (a preliminary version of the agreement was signed in 2017). Importantly, in October 2020, Sudan received a training ship from Russia as part of the military cooperation program. In addition, a team of Russian military instructors stayed in Sudan for a month to train the Sudanese crew. Khartoum would also like to buy Su-30 and Su-35 fighters and S-400 missile systems from Russia.

At the same time, many other powers demonstrated an interest in a base in Sudan, including the Gulf states and China. Russian bases in Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan would enable competing with the U.S. and China in the region and significantly increase the importance of the Russian navy from the Mediterranean Sea through the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea to the Indian Ocean.

## CONCLUSION

The idea of developing Russian facilities abroad seems to be accurate in the perspective of a long-term competition. The scenario in which other countries decide to join particular alliances or form bilateral agreements is realistic. Thus, the Russian Federation takes a step forward in order not only to maintain its current authority, but also to extend its capacities by engaging in several continents. The result of these activities will be a good position of the Kremlin in international negotiations and further contracts, on both the military and economic level. Such tactics, provided that Moscow has enough potency and resources, will be crucial for its interests in Europe, Asia and Africa, and thus will be closely watched not only by European Union and NATO states, but also by those actors who decide to cooperate with the Russian Federation in the future.

Foreign military bases fulfill several primal goals: first, they enable permanent influence in the region; second, they facilitate an increased military presence; third, they are an

element of political pressure; fourth, they are part of a deterrence strategy; fifth, they enable closer political and military cooperation and at the same time prevent it from other entities that are afraid of foreign bases or troops; sixth, they give the country the opportunity to strike with armed forces where it is difficult to get to from their own territory; they are also a symbol of international prestige.

It should be noted that the presence of Russian bases may have a stabilizing effect on the areas in which they are located. This is happening e.g. in Tajikistan, due to the threats posed by Afghanistan, and also in Armenia. The Russian Federation, in turn, uses its bases to influence the policies of these countries and create a beneficial political and military situation. In Belarus, in order to maintain military control, the Russian Federation uses the Regional Group of Forces formed by the armed forces of the Western Military District, the Belarusian army and an agreement on joint air defense system. This is caused by the fact that the Belarusian authorities do not want to increase the number of Russian military facilities on their territory. Military bases located in



Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, as well as the military component located in Crimea, are an important tool to influence Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. When it comes to the facilities located in Syria, the goal is also to reduce the terrorist threat radical Islamists pose to Russia. Moreover, it enables Moscow to influence both Syria's domestic policy and the actions of international actors, including Western European countries and the U.S., which are involved in stabilizing the situation in Syria. The logistic support base of the Russian Navy in Tartus is not only an element of the alliance with Syria and enhanced presence in the Middle East, but also a symbol of rebuilding Russia's global military presence.

The same scenario is being implemented in other directions and this should explain the attempts to return to Vietnam, gain a foothold in Latin America – right next to the U.S. – and the increased activity in Africa. Due to the strategic goals of the Russian Federation, priority is given to bases located abroad in three main

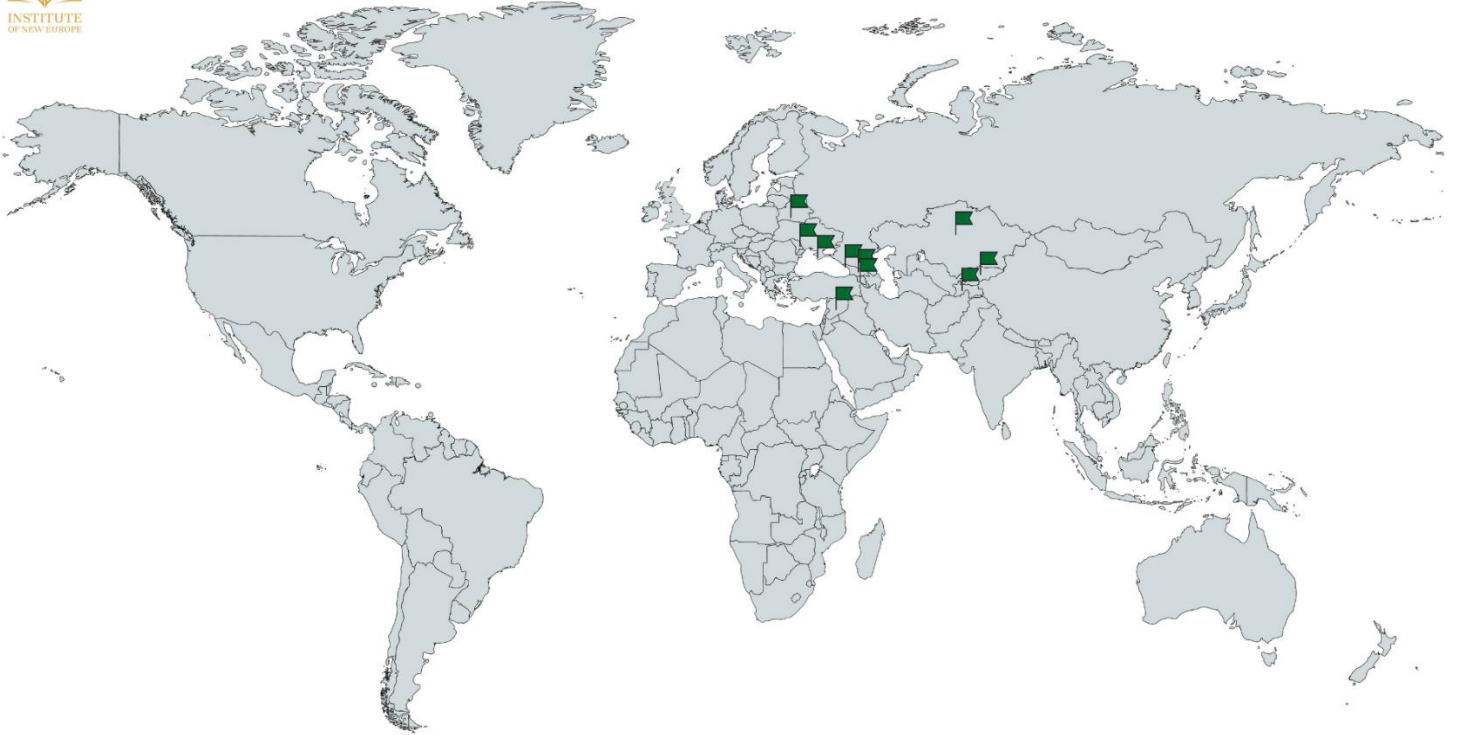
directions: Eastern European (Belarus, Moldova, Crimea), Caucasian (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Armenia) and Asian (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan). Moreover, another goal is to develop the infrastructure potential in Central and East Africa. This will lead to an increased presence in the continent where many states are still looking for their allies, and may therefore allow Russia to gain considerable influence.

The above deliberations lead to a conclusion that the Russian Federation will continue to try to expand its influence and strengthen its position where it is already present. Interestingly, immediately after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin emphasized that the U.S. was pursuing an aggressive foreign policy, which was to be confirmed, among other things, by the country's possession of numerous military bases. The United States of America is in fact terms of the number and geographical coverage of military bases.<sup>46</sup>

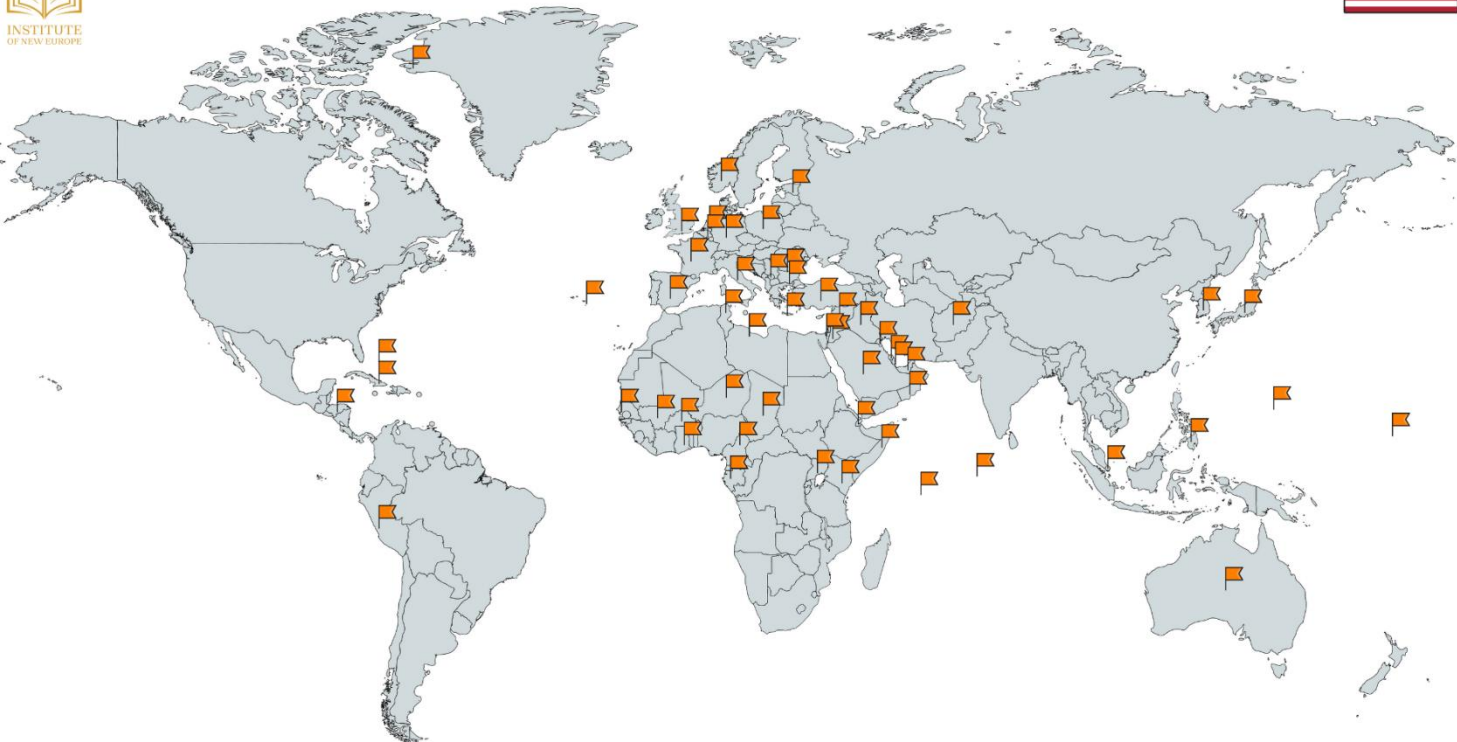
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<sup>46</sup> Workshops and training conducted by the U.S. military (including South America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East) were not taken into account. For more, see: A. Moore, J. Walker, Tracing the U.S. Military's Presence in Africa, *Geopolitics*, 21(3), 2016, ss. 686-716. S. Savell, 5W Infographics, Where we fight.

## Countries with Russian military bases



## Countries with US military bases



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR POLAND:

In the context of the recommendations for Central and Eastern Europe and Poland, it should be noted that since 2008, a comprehensive reform of the armed forces of the Russian Federation has been underway, based on a technical modernization, an intensified program of exercises and the militarization of the society. The result of Russian armaments is the global demonstration of power on land, sea and in the air. In addition, maneuvers are constantly taking place in the immediate vicinity of Poland, new military units are being created in Kaliningrad, and exercises consist of e.g. simulated nuclear attacks. In 2018, about 300,000 soldiers took part in the "Vostok" maneuvers. In 2019, around 4,000 military exercises of various extent and types were planned across Russia, the largest of which are "Center 2019" in the Central Military District and "Union Shield-2019" in the Western District. In 2020, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, much earlier than in previous years, intensified their training activities, and

throughout the first quarter of this year, the number and scale of exercises exceeded the sizes typical for the winter period. At least 500,000 soldiers took part in them in total. In September 2020, we witnessed the Belarusian-Russian military maneuvers "Slavic Brotherhood" near Brest, Belarus, in the immediate vicinity of Poland. The "Caucasus 2020" maneuvers were also carried out, and the main activities took place at the proving grounds of the Southern Military District, including the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Moreover, in recent years, incidents involving Russian aircraft over the Baltic Sea have intensified, including the airspace of Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The totality of these activities raises specific concerns about security of Poland. In connection with the development of the Russian military potential, including the expansion of bases, military maneuvers and increasing the number of troops, Poland should be directly interested in a constant analysis of the current activity and directions of foreign development of the Russian Federation.

Due to the position of Poland, which clearly identifies it as the eastern border of NATO and the EU, it is important to approach the international game in a balanced, forearmed and responsible manner. Nowadays, mainly due to closer cooperation with the U.S., the direction of Polish politics is Atlanticist. However, in long-term strategies we must not forget that the discourse in the political, military and economic environment may change due to the interests of individual actors. Therefore, it is worth developing several paths of cooperation at the same time, which – in the event of a crisis, even if economic – will enable cooperation with a partner from Asia, Africa or the East. It is not a success to constantly maintain a confrontational and bellicose foreign policy directed at one partner who may reverse someday, but various forms of development that may benefit the interests of the Republic of Poland should be sought. It is true that strengthening the military potential of the Russian Federation is a danger when one looks at the international threats to NATO and the current position of Poland. Therefore, the example of Russia should be used to

define priorities in Polish foreign policy, and thus decide where it would be necessary for Warsaw to involve in order to build its own independent and profitable position. It is not a process that lasts a year, a term or a decade, but the example of agreements reached by Moscow on several continents at the same time shows that a long-term strategy, often spanning over a quarter of a century, is a beneficial element of the international struggle for the position of a world power.

## FOR EUROPE:

Recommendations for European countries with regard to the deployment of Russian bases should focus on the development of individual defense capabilities and collective defense provided by both the EU and NATO. In the face of new initiatives, undertaken, among others, in the area of developing Russian potential abroad, the European Union should undertake new initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation between the member states. In this respect, it seems to be a priority to set adequate goals and implement appropriate systems in order to take into account the increase in spending on the community's defense. The EU Member States are characterized by differences of a strategic nature as well as in a matter of the perception of threats. They have different rules for the use of force and dissimilar views on the use of armed forces. An important issue in the discussed matter is also the problem of coherence of initiatives undertaken simultaneously in the European Union and NATO. It should be emphasized that these two organizations face common security challenges. Nevertheless, nowadays, the veritable potential of the

EU members is incommensurate both with the actual development of military resources of other entities in the world and with the ambitions the Union itself has. Changing this state of affairs depends on the political will of the main actors in the international security environment, i.e. on the strategic interests of the European Union Member States, which should be the same and implemented simultaneously.

The next actions of the Russian Federation should be observed attentively, especially if we take into account its involvement in Central Europe (the examples of Serbia and Transnistria), which may lead to further escalation between NATO and the Kremlin. A scenario in which global rivalry in the form of armed conflicts moves to the territory of one of the European countries must not be allowed. This danger must be avoided at all costs.

## FOR THE WORLD:

Building the U.S. capacities in the world relies on the NATO alliance. The Russian Federation strengthens its position by using the CSTO, SCO and BRICS. Moreover, the Middle East and Africa form the permanent theater of operations for both powers. The search for allies in this region shows that gaining an advantage in these territories means not only a military advantage — in the form of deterrence and maintenance of rapid-response forces — but also lucrative bilateral contracts which can benefit in the form of access to resources. Thus, it seems that a balance should be found, which will allow international agreements between Russia and the U.S., so that the entire African continent does not become a territory of struggle between the well-developed military components of both countries. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize the increased activity of private military companies — American, Russian and Chinese — which are trying to pursue the unofficial interests of states in Africa and in the Middle East. Additional tensions in the regions, in the form of official and informal

(difficult to identify) struggles, will only lead to further conflicts. At this point, we should not forget about other actors who pursue their own interests, such as France and Turkey, or terrorist organizations, such as Daesh and al-Qaeda. Therefore, one must be bear in mind already unstable states in Africa, so that they do not share the fate of Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Mali, Chad, Ethiopia or Mozambique. This would lead to further international wars, in which the United States of America and the Russian Federation would be involved, and would be accompanied by military (peacekeeping) missions of the United Nations and the European Union, in which some European countries would surely be involved.

The already existing network of Russian bases (particularly those in Syria and the Crimea) poses a serious challenge to NATO for at least several reasons. It can create a serious obstacle to exercises and naval operations carried out by NATO as well as to possible future stabilizing and peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the increasing Russian potential in the southern strategic direction must be included in NATO's

operational and defense planning. Although in terms of a number and size of facilities and troops abroad Russia's potential cannot be compared to that of the strongest NATO state – the U.S., undoubtedly the increased presence there is an important element in implementing the Russian concept of maintaining a sphere of influence. In the future, Russia will try to locate new facilities of this kind in regions of key importance to American political and security interests in order to obtain additional means of political influence on the U.S.

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