



Russia's Increasing Military Presence in Kyrgyzstan



Kant Air Base.

Source: Mil.ru via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kant_\(air_base\)_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kant_(air_base)_01.jpg), CC BY SA 4.0

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian airbase at Kant, just outside Bishkek, has undergone various changes since its establishment in 2003. The accompanying excerpted article reports on some recent changes regarding the airbase and Russia's overall presence in Kyrgyzstan.

The article from the Kyrgyz independent news website *Kloop* reports that Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov “signed a law ratifying the protocol on the status and conditions of the Russian military base in Kant” on 23 June. The article points out how this comes a few years after the Russian and Kyrgyz governments “carried out a joint topographic survey” that helped determine how much land Russian forces have been using at their military facilities across Kyrgyzstan, not solely at the Kant airbase. The survey revealed that Russian forces “use 924.52 hectares of territory instead of 866.2 hectares” at Kant (pointing out that this is 58.32 hectares more than what was written in the original Agreement). It also notes how “Russia expanded the territory of the communication facility in Chaldovar from 811.2 to 851.2 hectares as well as the test base in Karakol from 55 to

73.3 hectares.” Chaldovar (a communications relay) and Karakol (a torpedo test site on Lake Issyk Kul) are Russian naval facilities, though they fall under a unified command of all Russian forces in Kyrgyzstan.

The article mentions that the Russian government will be paying more for rent because of the increase in use of land and that it “plans to deploy drones on the base” and that the two governments “will sign an interagency document outlining the use of drones.” The Russian government discussed the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles at Kant over a year ago (see: “Russia's Military Presence in Kyrgyzstan,” *OE Watch*, May 2019), but the article reports that the deployment has not yet taken place. Overall, the article provides an update to the ongoing discussion of whether or not the Russian government would ever establish another military facility in Kyrgyzstan. If the recent news on the status of Kant is any indication, regardless of whether the Russian military establishes another facility, it is increasing its presence at existing facilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“According to the survey results, Russians use 924.52 hectares of territory instead of 866.2 hectares – 58.32 hectares more than what was written in the “Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the status and conditions of the Russian military base on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

Source: Aiday Tokoyeva, “Президент подписал закон об условиях пребывания российской военной базы в Канте (The President signed a law on the conditions of stay of the Russian military base in Kant),” *Kloop*, 23 June 2020. <https://kloop.kg/blog/2020/06/23/prezident-podpisal-zakon-ob-usloviyah-prebyvaniya-rossijskoj-voennoj-bazy-v-kante/>

On 23 June Sooronbai Jeenbekov signed a law ratifying the protocol on the status and conditions of the Russian military base in Kant...in 2016 and 2017, during preparations of the protocol the two sides carried out a joint topographic survey.

According to the survey results, Russians use 924.52 hectares of territory instead of 866.2 hectares – 58.32 hectares more than what was written in the “Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the status and conditions of the Russian military base on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

Specifically, Russia expanded the territory of the communication facility in Chaldovar from 811.2 to 851.2 hectares as well as the test base in Karakol from 55 to 73.3 hectares...rent for the areas specified in the agreement is \$4.5 million. After the protocol comes into effect, this amount will increase by \$291,600. It is noted that the amount will be prorated from 2012...

Russian also plans to deploy drones on the base...After the protocol takes effect, Kyrgyzstan and Russia will sign an interagency document outlining the use of drones...