



Slow Expansion of Russian Forces in Kyrgyzstan

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian military presence in Kyrgyzstan has undergone changes in recent years, including an expansion of the Kant Airbase outside the capital Bishkek. The accompanying excerpted articles report on a couple of additional changes to the Russian forces based in Kyrgyzstan and provide a look at the greater emphasis Russian officials are putting on the region.

The article from *Kloop*, a Russian-language independent news website from Kyrgyzstan, reports on one of the recent changes to Russian forces in Kyrgyzstan and it stems from recent meetings of Russian and Kyrgyzstani officials in Moscow. It mentions how the Ministers of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and Russia “signed the Protocol on cooperation in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in Kyrgyzstan.” The article also notes how the agreement includes a condition that “copies of the photos and videos taken during flights will be provided to the Kyrgyzstani side, except for those flights where the territory and objects of the Russian military base will be filmed.” The article ends by mentioning how “the use of Russian unmanned aerial vehicles in Kyrgyzstan was agreed upon in 2019” and that “the detachment consists of two Forpost drones (medium-range) and four Orlan-10 (short-range).”

The article from *Kabar*, the national news agency of Kyrgyzstan, reports on the meeting between Kyrgyzstan’s President, Sadyr Japarov, and Russian officials. It notes that the two sides signed agreements to continue military-defense cooperation and that this includes “the transfer in the near future of S-300 missile systems and strike unmanned aerial vehicles” to Kyrgyzstan. While the article did not mention a timeline for the transfer of either system, the protocol on the use of reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles indicates that it could happen within the next few years. It is also worth remembering that the Russian government deployed S-300s to the Russian 201st Military Base in Tajikistan in 2019. In the past, both Russian and Kyrgyzstani officials have stated that there could be an additional Russian military facility in Kyrgyzstan (see: “Russia’s Increasing Military Presence in Kyrgyzstan,” *OE Watch*, August 2020). While neither side has ruled this out, the recent changes demonstrate how the Russian government continues to increase the presence of its armed forces in Kyrgyzstan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“In particular, for the transfer in the near future of S-300 missile systems and strike unmanned aerial vehicles, which will be an important contribution of Russian to ensure security of both the Kyrgyz Republic and the external borders of the Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO.”



Russian Forpost.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%D0%A4%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82_02.jpg, Attribution: CC BY YA 3.0



Continued: Slow Expansion of Russian Forces in Kyrgyzstan

Source: Kamila Baimuratova, “Правительство одобрило протокол о полетах российских дронов-беспилотников на территории Кыргызстана (The government approved the protocol on the flights of Russian unmanned aerial vehicles on the territory of Kyrgyzstan),” *Kloop* (Russian-language independent news website from Kyrgyzstan), 1 March 2021. <https://kloop.kg/blog/2021/03/01/pravitelstvo-odobrilo-protokol-o-poletah-rossijskih-dronov-bespilotnikov-na-territorii-kyrgyzstana/>

During the visit of President Sadyr Japarov to Russia on February 25 in Moscow, the Minister of Defense of Kyrgyzstan, Major General Taalaibek Omuraliev, met with the Minister of Defense of Russia, General of the Army Sergei Shoigu.

After the meeting, the heads of the defense ministries signed the Protocol on cooperation in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in Kyrgyzstan...The document came into effect immediately after it was signed for a period of five years. It will automatically be renewed unless both sides agree to terminate it...

The protocol notes that Russians can use drones in the presence of a representative of the Kyrgyz side. This will be carried out according to a monthly schedule, strictly agreed in advance by both sides.

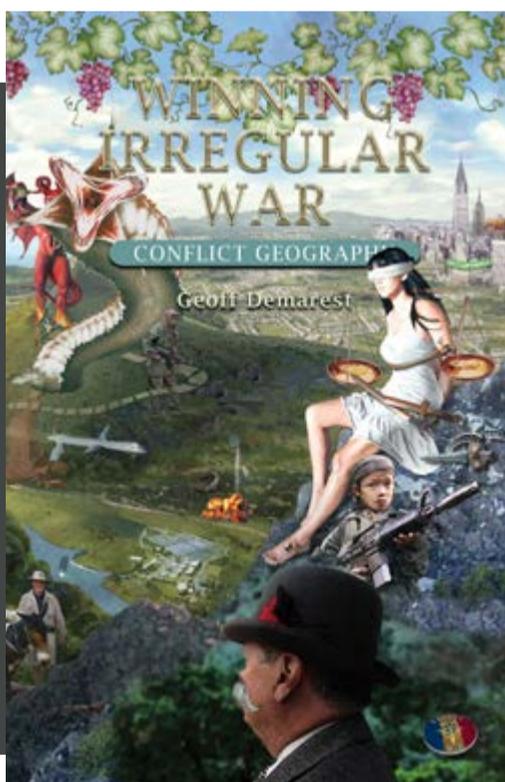
Copies of the photos and videos taken during flights will be provided to the Kyrgyz side, except for those flights where the territory and objects of the Russian military base will be filmed...

The use of Russian unmanned aerial vehicles in Kyrgyzstan was agreed upon in 2019. Then, Kyrgyz officials amended the agreement on the Russian military base...the detachment consists of two Forpost drones (medium-range) and four Orlan-10 (short-range).

Source: “Пресс-секретарь президента об итогах первого зарубежного визита С.Жапарова в Россию (The Press Secretary of the President on the results of the first foreign visit of S. Japarov to Russia),” *Kabar* (the national news agency of Kyrgyzstan), 26 February 2021. <http://kabar.kg/news/press-sekretar-prezidenta-ob-itogakh-pervogo-zarubezhnogo-vizita-s.zhaparova-v-rossiiu/>

The Press Secretary of the President of Kyrgyzstan, Galina Baiterek, commented on the results of the first foreign visit of President Sadyr Japarov to the Russian Federation...“This is a continuation of the partnership within the framework of ensuring the security of Kyrgyzstan and the external borders of the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organizaton)...”

...Agreements on the continuation of military-defense cooperation were important. In particular, for the transfer in the near future of S-300 missile systems and strike unmanned aerial vehicles, which will be an important contribution of Russian to ensure security of both the Kyrgyz Republic and the external borders of the Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO...



Geoff Demarest's *Winning Irregular War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest uses a distinct, reconciled, more effective strategic grammar that draws on the disciplines of law and geography over political science. As Geoff Demarest puts it: "I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious."

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