

U.S. Military Vacates Kyrgyz Airbase

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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All military flights previously transiting through a U.S. air facility in Kyrgyzstan have been transferred to a new base in Romania, a representative of the Manas Transit Center in the Central Asian country said Friday.

The commander of the facility, U.S. Colonel John Millard, said Thursday that the final mission from Manas had been completed ahead of a July 11 deadline to vacate all U.S. personnel from the center.

The Manas center, located on the territory of the Kyrgyz capital's civilian airport, opened three months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks to support U.S.-led coalition forces in the invasion of Afghanistan.

Since then, more than 5 million soldiers have transited through the center, which also hosts U.S. tanker aircraft that have flown over 33,000 missions in support of combat operations in Afghanistan.

In 2011, Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev announced that his country would not renew an agreement to extend the lease of the facility, in a move widely interpreted as bowing to Russian pressure to suspend U.S. military activities in the former Soviet country.

The new U.S. facility, at the Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase on Romania's Black Sea coast, is less than 400 kilometers from Russia's Black Sea Fleet headquarters at Sevastopol in Crimea.

The U.S. Department of Defense Newspaper, Stars & Stripes, reported last week that over 6,000 American troops have passed through the Romanian base since it saw its first transit flight last month.

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