

# New Kyrgyz Government to Re-Examine U.S. Military Base Deal

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BISHKEK — Kyrgyzstan’s interim government will take a close look at the agreement under which the Central Asian country hosts a U.S. transit center serving Afghanistan, a first deputy prime minister said on Monday.

“We are a civilized country and we will fulfill our international obligations, but we will investigate whether several agreements were concluded against the interests of the people or for bribes,” Almazbek Atambayev said at a news conference.

The military base on the territory of Bishkek’s Manas airport was built in 2001 as a part of U.S.-led international military operations in nearby Afghanistan. In early 2009, the Kyrgyz government announced that all U.S. troops would have to leave the country, but later agreed a deal with the Pentagon on improved terms under which the facility was turned into a transit center.

“We are interested in common action for stability and security in the world, but it seems the United States plans to withdraw troops from Afghanistan next year. We will approach the transit center issue in a civilized way and resolve it with the U.S. leadership,” Atambayev said.

The Kyrgyz opposition took power in the former Soviet country last week after anti-government protests in several cities turned violent, particularly in the capital, Bishkek.

Moscow has been broadly supportive of the new government, and Atambayev was in the Russian capital for talks over the weekend. He said on his return that the interim government expected to receive Russian aid of more than \$150 million.

Ousted President Kurmanbek Bakiyev struck a deal in February 2009 to write off Kyrgyzstan’s \$180 million debt to Moscow, and the promise of a \$2 billion discounted loan and \$150 million in financial aid, shortly before the closure of the U.S. base was announced.

Both Kyrgyzstan and Russia said at the time that the financial aid and the base closure were unrelated.

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