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Uzbekistan Exits Collective Security Treaty Organization

By The Moscow Times

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Uzbek soldiers marching during an official event.

The Uzbek Foreign Ministry on Friday said the country has decided to leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a pact resembling NATO that includes seven former Soviet states.

A note stating the decision and explaining the country's reasons for exiting the group was sent to the CSTO Secretariat on June 20, according to the Uzbek Foreign Ministry's Zhakhon news agency.

The report did not specify the reasons for Uzbekistan's exit from the organization, which in addition to Uzbekistan consists of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The security pact was formed in 1994 and operates a 3,500-soldier force structured in a

similar way to NATO.

Uzbekistan's exit from the pact is connected to its desire to allow an American military base on its territory, something that would require clearance from the other members, theorizes Maxim Kaznachayev of the Kazakhstan Institute of Political Solutions, Interfax reported.

At a meeting of the member states' leaders last month, President Vladimir Putin said the influence of the organization will grow and signaled that Russia would head efforts to create new policies for the group.

Uzbekistan left the organization once before, in 1999, but re-entered in 2006.

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