

Russia Concerned at U.S. Plans for Bases in Afghanistan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A senior Russian diplomat has voiced concerns over U.S. plans to retain nine military bases in Afghanistan after their planned withdrawal from the country.

Russia's presidential envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said in an interview Wednesday that the bases would "exert a serious influence on the whole vast Asian region and become a powerful foothold for any large-scale military operation."

Kabulov said Russia has many questions about the purpose of the bases.

The U.S. earlier said they would be used to train top brass of Afghanistan's Defense Ministry and General Staff, which is estimated to count up to 400 people.

"Aren't [400 people] too few for nine military bases?" Kabulov said. "Besides, what is the purpose of hiding the infrastructure of the Camp Shorabak training camp underground,

which is moreover equipped with a three-kilometer runway?"

Kabulov said that while he accepted that Afghanistan was free to sign military agreements with any state, he hoped that Kabul's authorization of foreign military bases would not result in security threats to third states, including Russia.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, which is currently estimated to comprise 100,000 servicemen, is to be largely pulled out of the country by the end of 2014.

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