

Russia and Kyrgyzstan: A New Air Defense Alliance

written by Ezba Walayat | October 16, 2023



On October 11, 2023, Kyrgyzstan's parliament ratified an agreement with Russia to create a joint air defense system, which is valid for five years and can be renewed. Just one day before the Russian President Vladimir Putin visit to the Central Asian country, the deal was made but later it was announced that Putin's visit has been delayed. Russia is a significant political and economic powerhouse in Central Asia, and is a key partner for Kyrgyzstan. The two nations work together on a variety of issues, and share close economic and security relationship. As a result of the new air defense alliance, the Kyrgyz parliament said, "Lawmakers examined and adopted the bill on the ratification of the agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation for the creation of a Joint Regional Air Defence System." The deal allocates a five-hectare land at the Russian military post in Kyrgyzstan called Kant for the new joint initiative. The agreement will allow Russia to deploy its air defense systems in Kyrgyzstan and to train Kyrgyz personnel on how to use them. The two countries will also share intelligence on air threats. The Kyrgyz government has said that alliance will protect the country from air threats and has the potential to deter external aggression.



Russia and Central Asian countries share a common interest in the region's stability and security. The creation of a joint air defense system between Russia and Kyrgyzstan is part of a broader trend of Russia's growing importance in Central Asia. Russia has similar agreements with other Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Tajikistan which shows the security collaboration among the countries of Central Asia. The latest development is a unified regional air defense system, a component of the larger air defense system of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), through which Central Asian countries are cooperating to improve their air defense capabilities. Russia will be coordinating combined military operations with the forces of other regional air defense systems of CIS member states as well as within the recent unified regional air defense system of Russia and Kyrgyzstan. It remains to be seen how the joint air defense alliance will impact the security situation in region. But, in the years to come, Russia's influence in Central Asia is likely to grow and remain strong.

Iraq-Turkey Oil Pipeline Resumes After Six-Month Shutdown

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The Iraq-Turkey Pipeline resumed operations on October 2, 2023, after being shut down for six months due to a payment dispute between Ankara and Baghdad. Following an arbitration decision by International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) ordering Ankara to pay Baghdad penalties for unauthorized exports between 2014 and 2018, Turkey has suspended flows on the pipeline, Iraq's northern oil export route. Later, Ankara began performing maintenance on the pipeline that supplies 0.5% of the world's petroleum. The two nations decided to continue their legal dispute over arbitration rulings while delaying restarting flows until a maintenance assessment of the pipeline was finished. Since late June, discussions over how and when to resume pipeline have been going on between Turkey and Iraq.

The oil pipeline connecting Iraq and Turkey is crucial for both countries as well as for the world oil market. The line serves as a crucial link for the Kurdistan region's crude exports, which are essential to the region's economy, and it is also a major supplier of sour oil to refineries serving the Mediterranean market. Much of the output in the Kurdish region has been halted as a result of the export ban and shutdown. The pipeline ensures that the global economy has access to a consistent and reasonable supply of oil. Oil from Iraq is transported through pipeline to the Mediterranean coast, where it is loaded onto tankers and sent to refineries all over the world. The pipeline also contributes to the control of oil prices by assisting in limiting the rise in oil prices by giving the world market an additional source of oil supply.



The pipeline transports crude oil from Kirkuk and the Kurdish Blend Test to the port of Ceyhan. It carries around 450,000 barrels of oil per day from northern Iraq to the Mediterranean coast, and is a key export route for Iraqi oil. It is also an important source of revenue for Turkey. Alpaslan Bayraktar, the Minister of Energy for Turkey, announced the reactivation of the pipeline at the ADIPEC summit in Abu Dhabi. He also said in an interview, "We informed the other side that the route is ready for operations as of 4 October, 2023, that there are no obstacles to oil shipments or to storing oil in Ceyhan and sending it to global markets." The pipeline's resumption of operations is a positive development for Iraq and Turkey, as it will help to boost oil exports and generate much-needed revenue for both countries.