

The following thesis is a case study of the U.S. Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan. It addresses the significance of the base in the context of mutual U.S.-Kyrgyz relations after 2001. It aims to analyze the bilateral negotiations between the U.S. and the Kyrgyz on establishing the air base, its functioning, and eventually its closure in 2014. Among the research questions, it seeks to explain the respective positions of both parties, the motives behind their actions, and factors that influenced this negotiation process. The analysis shows that the extensive U.S. efforts to get and maintain access to the facility were driven by the necessity to secure transportation corridors to and from Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, was primarily interested in financial benefits stemming from having an American base on its territory. The U.S. let local elites enrich themselves in connection with the air base revenues. Kyrgyzstan's internal instability also had a major impact on its stance towards foreign policy matters and the issue of the Manas air base in particular. The U.S. was a stronger player in this asymmetric relationship, but Washington often got into situations where it was being pulled by Kyrgyzstan's domestic developments, which effectively determined mutual relations. The analysis concludes that Bishkek lacked a coherent long-term foreign policy strategy and Kyrgyz behavior, marked by frequent turnarounds and uncertainty, cast doubt on the country's reputation as a credible and trustworthy partner for the United States.