



The Bases of Empire

**The Global Struggle
Against US Military Posts**

edited by **Catherine Lutz**

The Bases of Empire

TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE

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Edited by
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FOREWORD

Cynthia Enloe

Get out your world map – the one that includes all the smallest island countries – and a pad of neon-colored post-it notes. Now you're ready to chart an empire. It used to be, back in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that the world map would already have the imperial colors painted in, the most famous being pink for the colonies that comprised the far-reaching British Empire. If you were sitting in a classroom in, say, 1920 – in Mombasa, Colombo, Kingston, or Rangoon – you would look up at your teacher's map and see a world carpeted in pink. Nowadays, however, it is harder to see the expanses of an empire. You have to do more of the investigating yourself – with the help, thankfully, of Catherine Lutz and her sharp-eyed contributors.

Today the world map is an array of colors. Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa remain colonies of the United States, the Falklands remain a colony of Britain, France still claims dominion over Guadeloupe and Martinique. Still, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, and Myanmar, each now legally sovereign, have shed their imperial pink and taken on cartographic colors of their own. But that is only half the story. The chapters you are about to read help tell the rest of it – how imperial designers in the early twenty-first century carry out their plans while so many sovereign flags now fly.

The workings of would-be empire building have become less blatant. As these chapters make wonderfully clear, one of those mechanisms is the establishment of overseas military bases, created with the apparent agreement of officials acting in the name of the current sovereign local state. These bases appear as tiny dots, or not at all, on contemporary maps. But their impact is huge and the map and the broader sociopolitical mapping provided in this book shows us not only where they are, but how they operate.

One of the revelations that these authors offer us is how dynamic this military-base creating process is. Most American military strategists would explain that the U.S. government opens and closes its bases according to its own strategic assessments – what region is deemed crucial to U.S. national security at the moment, what are the ranges of refueling of the U.S. planes and ships, what terrains provide useful training habitats, which allies want to cement their cooperation with the United States by hosting a U.S. base. However, it turns out that those alterations of strategic calculus are not the only reasons for the historical changes. As the writers here show us, it is often the mobilization of local citizens critical of the U.S. bases that causes a given base to close down or to be off-limits for a particular military mission – whether in the Philippines, in Puerto Rico, in Panama, in Okinawa, or in Turkey.

Not all popular movements which bring pressure to bear on their own local officials to close a U.S. base have been successful, just as not all twentieth-century anti-colonial popular movements were successful in the short run. But one of the positive results of these local critics' efforts is that they highlight that there is a U.S. base *there*. Moreover, the cumulative effect of these movements has been to make the empire-building project more difficult overall.

The maps we put together of this basing policy have rarely circulated among the U.S. public, which has little awareness about U.S. military activities beyond the bare bones of the latest war.

Why is that?

It is always useful to dig into a lack of curiosity. A great deal of the unequal and often harmful dynamics of international politics depend on ordinary citizens becoming and staying *uncurious*. What assumptions and attitudes prevalent among ordinary Americans allow the high-level decisions and daily operations of U.S. military-basing politics to persist with virtually no U.S. citizen concern? First of the culprits may be the widespread belief among Americans that any U.S. military base is of material value to the people living within its vicinity. After all, people in most U.S. towns that host a military base exert pressure on their

Congressional representatives in order to keep those bases, on the assumption that whatever social or environmental damage the base may cause is outweighed by the good it is doing for the local economy. Of course, it is not clear whether townspeople in Arizona, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Maine would rally around a base if that base were staffed and controlled by the Japanese or the French military.

A second assumption dampening American citizen curiosity about U.S. military global-basing politics may be that any U.S. base created overseas is at the invitation of that country's own officials. There is virtually no news coverage – no journalists' or editors' curiosity – about the pressures or lures at work when the U.S. government seeks to persuade officials of Romania, Aruba, or Ecuador that providing U.S. military-basing access would be good for their countries. Thus this popular assumption derives from faith, not evidence.

A third common belief nurturing Americans' current incuriosity could be that their military is the most advanced, perhaps even the most "civilized," military in the world, and thus, whatever ripple effects it sends out from one of its overseas bases can only prove beneficial to the fortunate host society. Propping up this belief are the usually unexamined presumptions that U.S. male soldiers are models of responsible masculinity, that the U.S. military as an institution is a model of public disease prevention and of environmental accountability. Persisting in these presumptions requires not listening to the stories of ordinary women and men who have lived around – lived with – U.S. military bases in Okinawa, Diego Garcia, the Philippines, and Spain.

In fact, employing a gender analysis – even an explicitly feminist curiosity – when reading these chapters will enhance the experience. Watch for the assumptions about local women, as well as the actual experiences of local women living with U.S. military bases nearby. Keep an eye out for the assumptions about U.S. male soldiers' leisure time, on-leave entertainments, morale, marriage prospects, and sexuality. And slow down as you read about the mobilization of popular movements which challenge officials' claims that U.S. military bases are in everyone's best

interest. Most of these movements are gendered. Women have been held up by movements as symbols of the bases' negative social impacts. But women have also provided crucial leadership and support for many of those movements, sometimes as activists within the anti-bases movement, other times splitting off to create their own autonomous women's anti-bases movements after they experience the sexism inside even an anti-militarist campaign.

A fourth comforting popular belief in the United States might be that insuring that country's national security in an age of an allegedly diffuse "global terror" trumps any other "lesser" concerns. Holding this belief implies a deep-seated militarism. It suggests not only that the believer embraces militarized notions of enemy, of threat, and of security, but that coping with that trinity must be unquestioningly prioritized over all other forms of danger and insecurity.

Together, these four popular beliefs in the United States and the incuriosity about U.S. military bases the quartet feeds pose a daunting challenge for those, including the thoughtful contributors to this book, who want more of us to take a critical look at the causes and consequences of U.S. military global-basing politics. Yet that challenge does not need to be taken on by U.S. citizens acting alone. In fact, it cannot be. It is the women and men living with each overseas military base who will be the best sources of information for anyone who wants to become curious about U.S. bases and move on from there to action.

INTRODUCTION

BASES, EMPIRE, AND GLOBAL RESPONSE

Catherine Lutz

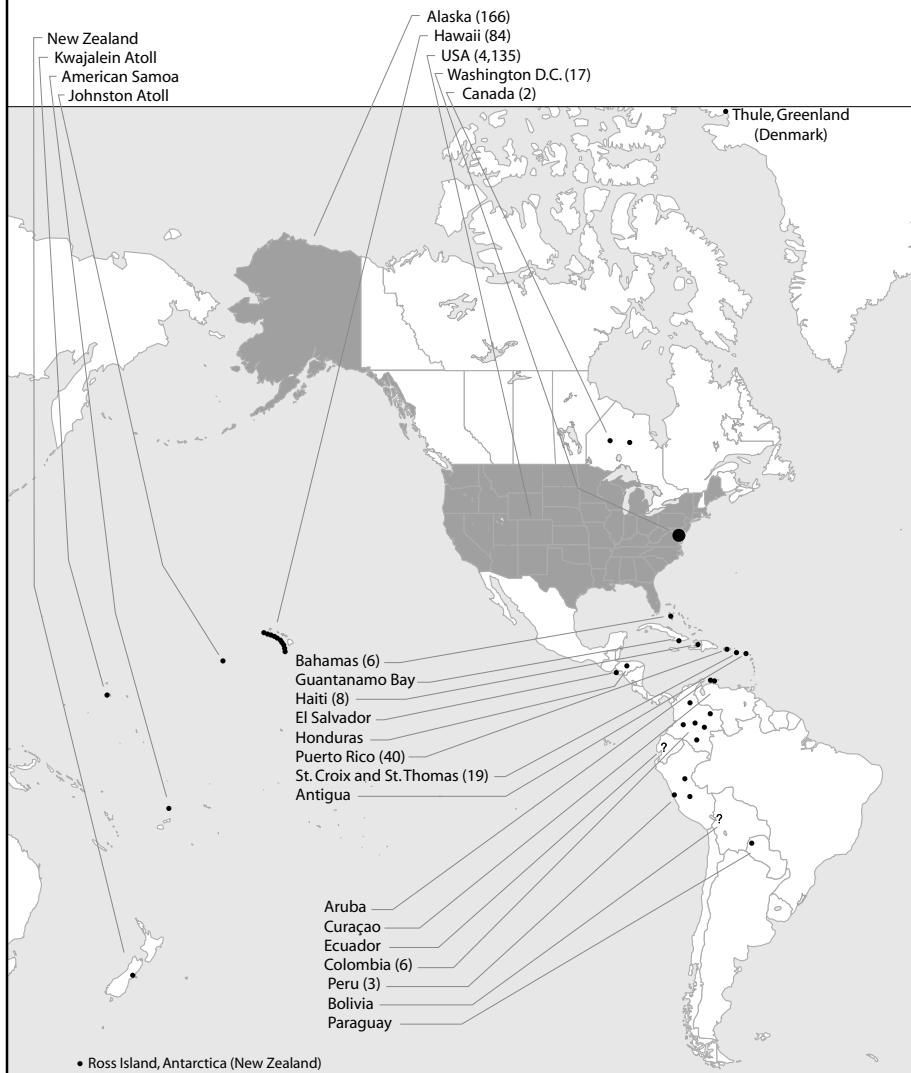
Much about our current world is unparalleled: holes in the ozone layer, the commercial patenting of life forms, degrading poverty on a massive scale, and, more hopefully, the rise of concepts of global citizenship and universal human rights. Less visible but just as unprecedented is the global omnipresence and unparalleled lethality of the U.S. military, and the ambition with which it is being deployed around the world. These bases bristle with an inventory of weapons whose worth is measured in the trillions and whose killing power could wipe out all life on earth several times over. Their presence is meant to signal, and sometimes demonstrate, that the United States is able and willing to attempt to control events in other regions militarily.

Officially, over 190,000 troops and 115,000 civilian employees are massed in 909 military facilities in 46 countries and territories.¹ There, the U.S. military owns or rents 795,000 acres of land, and 26,000 buildings and structures valued at \$146 billion. These official numbers are entirely misleading as to the scale of U.S. overseas military basing, however, excluding as they do the massive building and troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last many years, as well as secret or unacknowledged facilities in Israel, Kuwait, the Philippines and many other places. In only three of the years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, \$2 billion in military construction money was expended. Just one facility in Iraq, Balad Air Base, houses 30,000 troops and 10,000 contractors, and extends across 16 square miles with an additional 12-square-mile “security perimeter.”

U.S. Military Bases

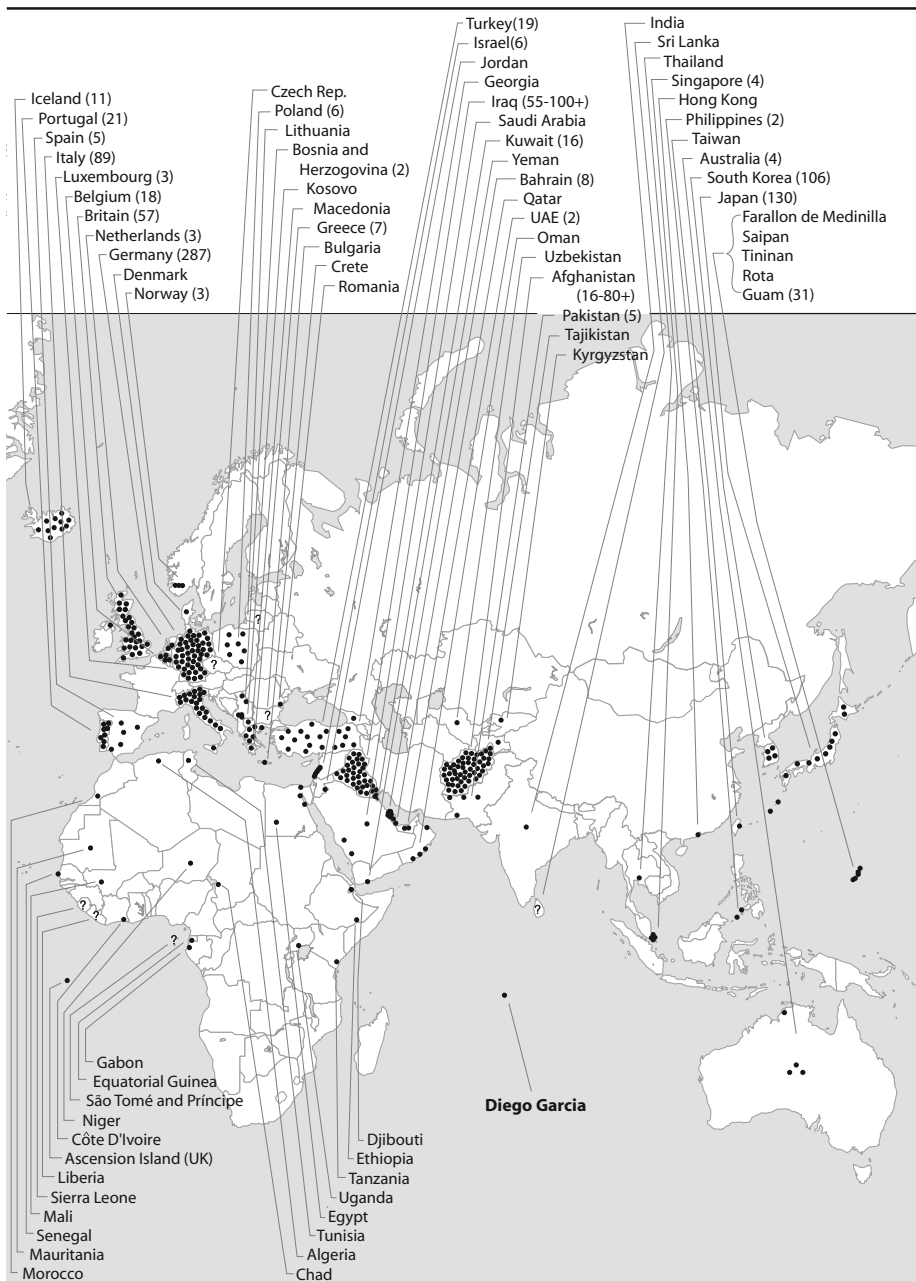
Because of the base network's size, complexity, and secrecy, base numbers cited are the most accurate available; locations are not always precise. "?" indicates a base under development or negotiation or where a base is suspected but cannot be confirmed.

Sources: Department of Defense, "Base Structure Report, Fiscal Year 2007 Baseline (A Summary of DoD's Real Property Inventory)," 2007; Transnational Institute, "Military Bases Google Earth File," available at http://www.tni.org/detail_page.phtml?act_id=17252; Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Chalmers Johnson, *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007); GlobalSecurity.org <<http://www.GlobalSecurity.org>>; news reports.



Map of global U.S. military bases.

Source: Chris Best and David Vine, *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)



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Deployed from those battle zones in Afghanistan and Iraq to the quiet corners of Curaçao, Korea, and Britain, the U.S. military domain consists of sprawling army bases, small listening posts, missile and artillery testing ranges, and berthed aircraft carriers.² While the bases are literally barracks and weapons depots and staging areas for war-making and ship repair facilities and golf courses and basketball courts, they are also political claims, spoils of war, arms sales showrooms, toxic industrial sites, laboratories for cultural (mis)communication, and collections of customers for local bars, shops, and prostitution.

The environmental, political, and economic impact of these bases is enormous and, despite Pentagon claims that the bases simply provide security to the regions they are in, most of the world's people feel anything but reassured by this global reach. Some communities pay the highest price: their farm land taken for bases, their children neurologically damaged by military jet fuel in their water supplies, their neighbors imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared by the autocratic regimes that survive on U.S. military and political support given as a form of tacit rent for the bases. Global opposition to U.S. basing has been widespread and growing rapidly, however, and it is the aim of this book to describe both the worldwide network of U.S. military bases and the vigorous campaigns to hold the United States accountable for that damage and to reorient their countries' security policies in other, more human, and truly secure directions.

Military bases are "installations routinely used by military forces" (Blaker 1990:4). They represent a confluence of labor (soldiers, paramilitary workers, and civilians), land, and capital in the form of static facilities, supplies, and equipment. Their number should also include the eleven U.S. aircraft carriers, often used to signal the possibility of U.S. bombing as they are brought to "trouble spots" around the world and which were the primary base of U.S. air power during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The U.S. Navy refers to each carrier as "four and a half acres of sovereign U.S. territory." These moveable bases and their land-based counterparts are just the most visible part of the larger picture of U.S. military presence overseas. This picture

of military access includes (1) U.S. military training of foreign forces, often in conjunction with the provision of U.S. weaponry, (2) joint exercises meant to enhance U.S. soldiers' exposure to a variety of operating environments, from jungle to desert to urban terrain and interoperability across national militaries, and (3) legal arrangements made to gain overflight rights and other forms of ad hoc use of others' territory as well as to preposition military equipment there.

U.S. forces train 100,000 soldiers annually in 180 countries, the presumption being that beefed-up local militaries will help pursue U.S. interests in local conflicts and save the United States money, casualties, and bad publicity when human rights abuses occur.³ Moreover, working with other militaries is important, strategists say, because "these low-tech militaries may well be U.S. partners or adversaries in future contingencies, [necessitating] becoming familiar with their capabilities and operating style and learning to operate with them" (Cliff and Shapiro 2003:102). The blowback effects are especially well known since September 11 (Johnson 2000). Less well known is that these training programs strengthen the power of military forces in relation to other sectors within those countries, sometimes with fragile democracies, and they may include explicit training in assassination and torture techniques. Fully 38 percent of those countries with U.S. basing were cited in 2002 for their poor human rights record (Lumpe 2002:16).

The U.S. military presence also involves jungle, urban, desert, maritime, and polar training exercises across wide swathes of landscape. These exercises have sometimes been provocative to other nations, and in some cases become the pretext for substantial and permanent positioning of troops; in recent years, for example, the United States has run approximately 20 exercises annually on Philippine soil. This has meant a near continuous presence of U.S. troops in a country whose people ejected U.S. bases in 1992 and continue to vigorously object to their reinsertion, and whose constitution forbids the basing of foreign troops (Docena 2007; see Simbulan, this volume). In addition, these exercises ramp up even more than usual the number and social and environmental

impact of daily jet landings and sailors on liberty around U.S. bases (Lindsay-Poland 2003).

Finally, U.S. military and civilian personnel work every day to shape local legal codes to facilitate U.S. access. They have lobbied, for example, to change the Philippine and Japanese constitutions to allow, respectively, foreign troop basing and a more-than-defensive military. “Military diplomacy” with local civil and military elites is conducted not only to influence such legislation but also to shape opinion in what are delicately called “host” countries. U.S. military and civilian officials are joined in their efforts by intelligence agents passing as businessmen or diplomats; in 2005, the U.S. ambassador to the Philippines impolitically mentioned that the United States has 70 agents operating in Mindanao alone.

Much of the United States’ unparalleled weaponry, nuclear and otherwise, is stored at places like Camp Darby in Italy, Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, and the Naval Magazine on Guam, as well as in nuclear submarines and on the navy’s other floating bases.⁴ The weapons, personnel, and fossil fuels involved in this U.S. military presence cost billions of dollars, most coming from U.S. taxpayers but an increasing number of billions from the citizens of the countries involved. Elaborate bilateral negotiations exchange weapons, cash, and trade privileges for overflight and land-use rights. Less explicitly, but no less importantly, rice import levels or immigration rights to the United States or overlooking human rights abuses have been the currency of exchange (Cooley 2008).

Bases are the literal and symbolic anchors, and the most visible centerpieces, of the U.S. military presence overseas. To understand where those bases are and how they are being used is essential for understanding the United States’ relationship with the rest of the world, the role of coercion in it, and its political economic complexion. The United States’ empire of bases – its massive global impact and the global response to it – are the subject of the chapters in this book. Unlike the pundits and the strategic thinkers who corner the market on discussions of the U.S. military, these authors concentrate on the people around those bases and

the impact of living in their shadow. The authors describe as well the social movements which have tried to call the world's attention to the costs those bases impose on them without their consent. In this introduction, I ask why the bases were established in the first place, how they are currently configured around the world and how that configuration is changing, what myths have developed about the functions U.S. overseas bases serve, and, finally, introduce the global movement to push back or expel the bases altogether.

What are Bases for?

Foreign military bases have been established throughout the history of expanding states and warfare. They have proliferated, though, only where a state has imperial ambitions, that is, where it aspires to be an empire, either through direct control of territory or through indirect control over the political economy, laws, and foreign policy of other places. Whether or not it recognizes itself as such, a country can be called an *empire* when its policies aim to assert and maintain dominance over other regions. Those policies succeed when wealth is extracted from peripheral areas and redistributed to the imperial center. An empire of bases, then, is associated with a growing gap between the wealth and welfare of the powerful center and the regions affiliated with it. Alongside and supporting these goals has often been elevated self-regard in the imperial power, or a sense of racial, cultural, or social superiority.

The descriptors *empire* and *imperialism* have been applied to the Romans, Incas, Mongols, Persians, Portuguese, Spanish, Ottomans, Dutch, British, the Soviet Union, and the United States, among others. Despite the striking differences between each of these cases, each used military bases to maintain some forms of rule over regions far from their center. The bases also eroded the sovereignty of allied states on which they were established by treaty; the Roman Empire was accomplished not only by conquest, but also

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by taking her weaker [but still sovereign] neighbors under her wing and protecting them against her and their stronger neighbors ... The most that Rome asked of them in terms of territory was the cessation, here and there, of a patch of ground for the plantation of a Roman fortress. (Magdoff et al. 2002)

What have military bases accomplished for these empires through history? Bases are usually presented, above all, as having rational, strategic purposes; the empire claims that they provide forward defense for the homeland, supply other nations with security, and facilitate the capture and control of trade and resources. They have been used to protect non-economic actors and their agendas as well – missionaries, political operatives, and aid workers among them. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, for example, seized profitable ports along the route to India and used demonstration bombardment, fortification, and naval patrols to institute a semi-monopoly in the spice trade. They militarily coerced safe-passage payments and duties from local traders via key fortified ports. More recently as well, bases have been used to control the political and economic life of the host nation: U.S. bases in Korea, for example, have been key parts of the continuing control that the U.S. military commander exercises over Korean forces in wartime, and Korean foreign policy more generally, extracting important political and military support, for example, for its wars in Vietnam and Iraq. Politically, bases serve to signal and encourage other governments' endorsement of U.S. military and other foreign policy. Moreover, bases have not simply been planned in keeping with strategic and political goals, but are the result of bureaucratic and political economic carry-on imperatives, that is, corporations and the military itself as an organization have profited from bases' continued existence, regardless of their strategic value.

Alongside their military and political economic purposes, bases have symbolic and psychological dimensions. They can be seen as expressions of a nation's will to status and power. Strategic elites have built bases as a visible sign of the nation's standing, much as they have constructed monuments, cities, and battleships. So,

too, contemporary U.S. politicians and public have treated the number of their bases as indicators of the nation's hyperstatus and hyperpower. More darkly, overseas military bases can also be seen as symptoms of irrational or untethered fears, even paranoia, as they are built with the goal of taming a world perceived to be out of control. Empires frequently misperceive the world as rife with threats, and themselves as objects of violent hostility from others. Militaries' interest in organizational survival has also contributed to the amplification of this fear and imperial basing structures as the solution as they "sell themselves" to their populace by exaggerating threats, underestimating the costs of basing and war itself, as well as understating the obstacles facing preemption and belligerence (Van Evera 2001).

As the world economy and its technological substructures have changed, so have the roles of foreign bases. By 1500, new sailing technologies allowed much longer-distance voyages, even circumnavigational ones, and so empires could aspire to long networks of coastal naval bases to facilitate the control of sea lanes and trade. They were established at distances that would allow provisioning the ship, taking on fresh fruit that would protect sailors from scurvy, and so on. By the twenty-first century, technological advances have at least theoretically eliminated many of the reasons for foreign bases, including the in-transit refueling of jets and aircraft carriers, the nuclear powering of submarines and battleships, and other advances in sea- and airlift of military personnel and equipment.

States that invest their people's wealth in overseas bases have paid direct as well as opportunity costs, the consequences of which in the long run have usually been collapse of the empire. In *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Kennedy notes that previous empires which established and tenaciously held onto overseas bases inevitably saw their wealth and power decay and that history

demonstrates that military "security" alone is never enough. It may, over the shorter term, deter or defeat rival states ... [b]ut if, by such victories, the nation over-extends itself geographically and strategically; if, even at

a less imperial level, it chooses to devote a large proportion of its total income to "protection," leaving less for "productive investment," it is likely to find its economic output slowing down, with dire implications for its long-term capacity to maintain both its citizens' consumption demands and its international position (Kennedy 1987:539).⁵

Nonetheless, U.S. defense officials and scholars have continued to argue that bases lead to "enhanced national security and successful foreign policy" because they provide "a credible capacity to move, employ, and sustain military forces abroad" (Blaker 1990:3), and the ability "to impose the will of the United States and its coalition partners on any adversaries."⁶ This belief, along with a number of others to be examined below, helps sustain the web of bases.

A Short History of U.S. Bases

In 1938, the United States had 14 military bases outside its continental borders. Seven years and 35 million World War II deaths later, the United States had an astounding 30,000 installations large and small in approximately 100 countries. While this number was to contract to 2,000 by 1948, the global scale of U.S. military basing would remain primarily the twentieth-century outcome of World War II, and with it, the rise to global hegemony of the United States (Blaker 1990:22).

The United States did not begin, though, with the idea of becoming an empire. Instead, the Founders saw themselves as men who were establishing a form of governance in some opposition to the empires of Europe (Shy 1976). Nonetheless, the early U.S. military became entwined with the frontier project of removing Indians from the land and protecting colonists who settled there. In this sense, every Western fort – and there were 255 of them – was a foreign military base, established on native land during the Indian campaigns and the Mexican–American War (Weigley 1984:267). The overseas U.S. basing structure of the nineteenth century was thin because the vast wealth of land and resources in North America represented a fertile enough field for much economic and military ambition in the United States. Moreover,

the colonial expansion of the European states in the nineteenth and early twentieth century effectively closed off much of the world to the U.S. military.

Like other major powers of the late nineteenth century, including Japan and Germany, the necessity for building a large navy was touted by U.S. strategists and politicians. While the growth of its navy is commonly explained by the United States' position between two vast oceans, there were internal factors at work as well: with their gigantic steel tools, navies represented a much more lucrative site for industrial production and profit than armies and marines. The United States spent much effort ensuring that coaling and provisioning stations were available for its navy, initially via capture of what remained of Spanish naval assets in the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

After consolidation of its continental dominance, there were three periods of global ambition in U.S. history beginning in 1898, 1945, and 2001, and each is associated with the acquisition of significant numbers of new overseas military bases. The Spanish–American War resulted in the acquisition of a number of colonies, many of which have remained under U.S. control in the century since. Nonetheless, by 1920, popular support for international expansion in the United States had been diminished by the Russian Revolution, by growing domestic labor militancy, and by a rising nationalism, culminating in the U.S. Senate's rejection of the League of Nations (Smith 2003). So it was that as late as 1938 the U.S. basing system was far smaller than that of its political and economic peers, including many European nations as well as Japan. U.S. soldiers were stationed in just 14 bases, in Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama, the Virgin Islands, Hawai'i, Midway, Wake, Guam, the Philippines, Shanghai, two in the Aleutians, American Samoa, and Johnston Island (Harkavy 1982), this small number the result in part of a strong anti-statist and anti-militarist strain in U.S. political culture (Sherry 1995). From the perspective of many in the United States through the inter-war period, to build bases would be to risk unwarranted entanglement in others' conflicts.

International bases of this era were primarily those of rival empires, with by far the largest number belonging to the British

Empire. In order of magnitude, the other colonial powers included France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, and, only then, the United States. Conversely, countries with large militaries and with militarism on the rise had relatively few overseas bases; Germany and the Soviet Union had almost none. But it was the attempt to acquire such bases that was an important contributing cause of the war (Harkavy 1989:5).

The bulk of the U.S. basing system was established during World War II, beginning with a deal cut with Great Britain for the long-term lease of base facilities in six British colonies in the Caribbean in 1941 in exchange for some fairly decrepit U.S. destroyers. The same year, the United States assumed control of former Danish bases in Greenland and Iceland (Harkavy 1982:68). The rationale for building bases in the Western Hemisphere was in part to discourage or prevent the Germans from doing so; at the same time, the United States did not, before Pearl Harbor, build or expand bases in the Asia Pacific regions, on the assumption that to do so would provoke the Japanese to war. Then, as now, basing decisions bore the imprint of American racial assumption: the Japanese were “insecure,” it was said, aware as they were of their inferiority, and to build bases in their backyard, but not the Germans’, might inflame them (Blaker 1990:28–29; Dower 1987).

By the end of the war in 1945, the United States had the 30,000 installations spread throughout the world, as already mentioned. The Soviet Union had bases in Eastern Europe, but virtually no others until the 1970s, when they expanded rapidly, especially in Africa and the Indian Ocean area (Harkavy 1982). While Truman was intent on maintaining posts the United States had taken in the war, many were closed by 1949 (Blaker 1990:30). He was ultimately frustrated by pressure from Australia, France, and Britain, as well as from Panama, Denmark, and Iceland, for return of bases in their own territory or colonies, and domestic pressure to demobilize the 12-million-man military (a larger military would have been needed to maintain the vast basing system). The push to retract was also the result of the Soviet Union’s ambitions and the contradictions of an American “nationalist globalism” (Smith

2003:xvi–xvii). On the other hand, military planners also knew they could do more with less given the longer flight ranges of aircraft developed by the late 1940s.

More important than the shrinking number of bases, however, was the codification of U.S. military access rights around the world outlined in a comprehensive set of legal documents. These established security alliances with multiple states within Europe (NATO), the Middle East and South Asia (CENTO), and Southeast Asia (SEATO), and they included bilateral documents with Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. These documents assumed a common security interest between the United States and other countries and were the charter for U.S. basing in each place. Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) were crafted in each country to specify what the military could do; these usually gave U.S. soldiers broad immunity from prosecution for crimes committed and environmental damage created. These agreements and subsequent base operations have usually been shrouded in secrecy (see Simbulan, and Heller and Lammerant, this volume), much less promulgated with public input or democratic processes.

In the United States, the National Security Act of 1947, along with a variety of executive orders, instituted what can be called a second, secret government or the “national security state” that created the National Security Agency, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency and allowed for a presidency that took on new, more imperial powers. From this point on, domestic and especially foreign military activities and bases were to be heavily masked from public oversight (Lens 1987). Begun as part of the Manhattan Project, the black budget is a source of defense funds secret even to Congress, and one that became permanent with the creation of the CIA. Under the Reagan administration, it came to be relied on more and more for a variety of military and intelligence projects and by one estimate was \$36 billion in 1989 (Blaker 1990:101; Weiner 1990:4). Many of those unaccountable funds went then and still go now into use overseas, flowing out of U.S. embassies and military bases. There they have helped the United States to work vigorously to undermine and

change local laws that stand in the way of its military plans; it has interfered for years in the domestic affairs of nations in which it has or desires military access, including attempts to influence votes on and change anti-nuclear and anti-war provisions in the constitutions of the Pacific nation of Belau and of Japan.

The number of U.S. bases was to rise again during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, reaching back to 1947 levels by the year 1967 (Blaker 1990:33). The presumption was established that bases captured or created during wartime would be permanently retained. Certain ideas about basing and what it accomplished were to be retained from World War II as well, including the belief that "its extensive overseas basing system was a legitimate and necessary instrument of U.S. power, morally justified and a rightful symbol of the U.S. role in the world" (Blaker 1990:28).

Nonetheless, over the second half of the twentieth century United States bases were either evicted or voluntarily withdrawn from dozens of countries.⁷ Between 1947 and 1990, the United States was asked to leave France, Yugoslavia, Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Vietnam, Indonesia, Peru, Mexico, and Venezuela. Popular and political objection to the bases in Spain, the Philippines, Greece, and Turkey in the 1980s meant that those governments were able to negotiate significantly more compensation from the United States. Portugal threatened to evict the United States from important bases in the Azores unless it ceased its support for independence for its African colonies, a demand with which the United States complied.⁸ In the 1990s and later, the United States was sent packing, most significantly, from the Philippines, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Vieques, and Uzbekistan (see McCaffrey, this volume).

Of its own accord and for a variety of reasons, the United States decided to leave countries from Ghana to Ecuador to Fiji. It did so based on the sense that the priorities of containing the Soviet Union and the possibilities allowed by new military technologies made some of the basing it held obsolete. The Pentagon determined, for example, that U.S. domestic bases could serve the functions of those that had been in Latin America, and European bases the functions of those in North Africa. At the same time, U.S. bases

were newly built after 1947 in remarkable numbers (241) in the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as in Italy, Britain, and Japan (Blaker 1990:45). The defeated Axis powers continued to host the most significant numbers of U.S. bases: at its height, Japan was peppered with 3,800 U.S. installations.

As battles become bases, so bases become battles; the bases in East Asia acquired in the Spanish–American War and in World War II, such as Guam, Thailand, and the Philippines, became the primary sites from which the United States was able to wage war on Vietnam. Without them, the war would not have been fought as intensely as it was. The number of bombing runs over North and South Vietnam required tons of bombs unloaded at the Naval Station in Guam, stored at the Naval Magazine in the southern area of the island, and then shipped up to be loaded onto B-52s at Anderson Air Force Base every day during years of the war. The morale of ground troops based in Vietnam, as fragile as it was to become through the latter part of the 1960s, depended on R&R (rest and recreation) at bases outside the country which would allow them to leave the war zone and yet be shipped back quickly and inexpensively for further fighting (Baker 2004:76). The war also depended on the heroin that the CIA was able to quickly ship in from its secret bases in Laos to the troops back on the battlefield in Vietnam (Johnson 2004:134). In addition to the bases' role in fighting these large and overt wars, they facilitated the movement of military assets to accomplish the over 200 military interventions the United States waged in the Cold War period (Blum 1995).

As technology becomes bases, bases become technology as well. When France withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, the United States had to shift its many logistics and aircraft sites from France to Germany. That plus the Cold War scenarios projected to unfold at the Iron Curtain between the two Germanys fundamentally structured the design of the F-16 then getting under way. The shorter distance that would be required for bombing missions from Germany in comparison with France led designers to trade off range for other more advanced capacities. The closing of the French logistics sites also led the United States

on a search for bases elsewhere that would be more protected from Warsaw Pact attack than Germany (Blaker 1990:46–47).

Technological changes in warfare have also had important effects on the configuration of U.S. bases. Long-range missiles and the development of ships that could make much longer runs without resupply tended to radically alter the need for a line of bases to move forces forward into combat zones. So did the development of the capacity for aerial refueling of military jets. The rise of what Kaldor has called “The Baroque Arsenal,” which is to say, more and more complex and lethal weaponry requiring fewer and fewer of each to be produced, has also reduced the need for masses of spare parts and other supplies. At the same time, each aircraft was exponentially more expensive, and so more strategic effort went into dispersing, hiding, and moving them and other military assets. An arms airlift from the United States to the British in the Middle East in 1941–42, for example, required a long hopscotch of bases, from Florida to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Trinidad, British Guiana, northeast Brazil, Fernando de Noronha, Takoradi (now in Ghana), Lagos, Kano (now in Nigeria), and Khartoum before finally making delivery in Egypt. In the early 1970s, U.S. aircraft could make the same delivery with one stop in the Azores, and today could do so non-stop. While speed of deployment is framed as an important continued reason for forward basing, troops could be deployed anywhere in the world from U.S. bases without having to touch down en route. In fact, U.S. soldiers are being increasingly billeted on U.S. territory for this reason as well as to avoid the political and other costs of foreign deployment.

With the will to gain military control of space, as well as gather intelligence, the United States over time, and especially in the 1990s, established a large number of new military bases to facilitate the strategic use of communications and space technologies. In Columbia and Peru, and in secret and mobile locations elsewhere in Latin America, radar stations, now totaling 17, are primarily used for anti-trafficking operations (Roncken 2004).

On the other hand, the pouring of money into military R&D (the Pentagon spent over \$85 billion in 2009 and employed

over 90,000 scientists) and corporate profits to be made in the development and deployment of the resulting technologies have been significant factors in the ever larger numbers of technical facilities on foreign soil. These include such things as missile early-warning radar, signals intelligence, space-tracking telescopes and laser sources, satellite control, downwind air sampling monitors, and research facilities for everything from weapons testing to meteorology. Missile defense systems and network-centric warfare increasingly rely on satellite technology with associated requirements for ground facilities. These facilities have increasingly been established in violation of arms-control agreements such as the 1967 Outer Space Treaty meant to limit the militarization of space.

The assumption that the U.S. bases served local interests in a shared ideological and security project dominated into the 1960s: allowing base access showed a commitment to fight communism and gratitude for past U.S. military assistance. But with decolonization and the U.S. war in Vietnam such arguments began to lose their power, and the number of U.S. overseas bases began to decline from an early-1960s peak. Where access was once automatic, many countries now had increased leverage over what the United States had to give in exchange for basing rights, and those rights could be restricted in a variety of important ways, including through environmental and other regulations. The bargaining chips used by the United States were mostly weapons, and increasingly sophisticated weapons, as well as rent payments for the land on which bases were established.⁹ These exchanges also often become linked with trade and other kinds of agreements, such as access to oil and other raw materials and investment opportunities (Harkavy 1982:337). They also, particularly when advanced weaponry is the medium of exchange, have had destabilizing effects on what are considered regional arms balances. From the earlier ideological basis for the bases, global post-war recovery and decreasing inequality between the United States and the countries – mostly in the global North – that housed the majority of U.S. bases helped birth a more pragmatic or economic grounding to basing negotiations, albeit

often thinly veiled by the language of friendship and common ideological bent. The 1980s saw countries whose populations and governments had strongly opposed U.S. military presence, such as Greece, agree to U.S. bases on their soil only because they were in need of the cash, and Burma, a neutral but very poor state, went into negotiations with the United States over basing troops there (Harkavy 1989:4–5).

The Soviet basing network was never as extensive as that of the United States, but included dozens of large sites, including in Algeria, Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, India, Libya, Peru, South Yemen, and Vietnam (Harkavy 1982). Both the Soviets and the United States dealt with the heavy costs of their bases by outsourcing military operations to proxy forces, and making extensive use of advisors, training, and weapons transfers: such measures both controlled costs and avoided the direct confrontations that both sides feared. The escalating costs of bases ultimately convinced the USSR to scale back its own. By 1991, the Soviet Union had, as Chalmers Johnson put it, lost the Cold War first, with at least one reason being its imperial overstretch.

The third period of accelerated imperial ambition began in 2000, with the election of George Bush and the ascendancy to power of a group of men who believed in a more aggressive and unilateral use of military power, some of whom stood to profit handsomely from the increased military budget that would require (Scheer 2008). They wanted “a network of ‘deployment bases’ or ‘forward operating bases’ to increase the reach of current and future forces” and focused on the need for bases in Iraq: “While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein” (Donnelly 2000). This plan for expanded U.S. military presence around the world has been put into action.

Pentagon transformation plans, outlined in detail by Gerson in Chapter 1, design U.S. military bases to operate not defensively vis-à-vis particular threats but as offensive, expeditionary platforms from which military capabilities can be projected quickly, anywhere. Where bases in Korea, for example, were

once meant to defend South Korea from attack from the north, they are now, like bases everywhere, meant to project power in any number of directions and serve as stepping stones to battles far from themselves. The Global Defense Posture Review of 2004 announced these changes, focusing not just on reorienting the footprint of U.S. bases away from Cold War locations, but on the imperial ambitions of remaking legal arrangements that support expanded military activities with other allied countries and prepositioning equipment in those countries to be able to “surge” military force quickly, anywhere.

In these transformations, much attention has been paid to gaining access to overseas areas and to avoiding the politically sensitive appearance of establishing permanent basing, as has been the case with the way in which the US administration and presidential candidates have discussed basing in Iraq (see Engelhardt, this volume). As a recent army strategic document notes, “Military personnel can be transported to, and fall in on, prepositioned equipment significantly more quickly than the equivalent unit could be transported to the theater, and prepositioning equipment overseas is generally less politically difficult than stationing U.S. military personnel” (Cliff and Shapiro 2003:101). New names are being used to suggest that a military base is less significant or permanent or externally controlled than a base is typically assumed to be. Terms like “facility,” “outpost,” or “station” are used to label smaller bases, or bases with a narrower range of functions. The term “base” has been used to refer only to those installations in which the United States exercises full control over the military location rather than the many in which it shares that power with another nation.

The Department of Defense currently distinguishes between three types of military facilities. “Main operating bases” are those with permanent personnel, strong infrastructure, and often including family housing, such as Kadena Air Base in Japan and Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. “Forward operating sites” are “expandable warm facilit[ies] maintained with a limited U.S. military support presence and possibly prepositioned equipment,” such as Incirlik Air Base in Turkey and Soto Cano

Air Base in Honduras (U.S. Defense Department 2004:10). Finally, “cooperative security locations” are sites with few or no permanent U.S. personnel, which are maintained by contractors or the host nation for occasional use by the U.S. military, and often referred to as “lily pads.” These are cropping up around the world, especially throughout Africa, as in Dakar, Senegal, where facilities and use rights have been newly established.

Central to these plans are attempts to divert local attention from the U.S. presence. This strategy, in other words, is in part a response to the effectiveness of past protests of U.S. military presence and activities. Speaking for the state, security writer Robert Kaplan distills these ideas in discussing U.S. presence in the Pacific:

Often the key role in managing a CSL [cooperative security location] is played by a private contractor ... usually a retired American noncom [who] rents his facilities at the base from the host country military, and then charges a fee to the U.S. Air Force pilots transiting the base. Officially he is in business for himself, which the host country likes because it can then claim it is not really working with the American military ... a relationship with the U.S. armed forces [that] is indirect rather than direct eases tensions.¹⁰

What are Common Myths about U.S. Military Stationing Overseas?

Why and how are the bases tolerated and sustained in a world of nation-states where sovereignty and nationalism are still such important phenomena and when abuses of local people and environments so regularly occur? How are they accepted by the U.S. public, whose own Declaration of Independence focused on the British offense of “Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us” and “protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States?” One of the most important explanations is that the bases are naturalized or normalized, meaning that they are thought of as unremarkable, inevitable, and legitimate. Bases are normalized through a commonly circulating

rhetoric that suggests their presence is natural and even gift-like rather than the outcomes of policy choices made in keeping with the aim of pursuing a certain imperial vision of U.S. self-interest. Militarism is an ideology that supports such policies by suggesting that the world is naturally a dangerous place which requires the control brought by armies (Johnson 2004). Bases, then, are presented as simple safety devices against objective risks. Metaphorically, the military is spoken of as “arm” of the state, as having “posture,” “reach,” “stance,” and perhaps most tellingly, a “footprint.” These body images naturalize and suggest unity to what is in fact a very heterogeneous and socially constructed entity. Everyone involved, however – the true believers, the cynical opportunists, the managers and the nationalists – is participating in a complicated system of beliefs about the bases and American power.

By framing situations as requiring U.S. military access (the world is dangerous, terrorism must be dealt with by means of the most powerful military tools available, etc.), U.S. commentators suggest that the current military realignment and new base building in Korea, Guam, and elsewhere are inevitable. By focusing on existing bases as “facts on the ground” that new base planning must adapt to or augment, those commentators suggest there is no alternative, ignoring the many that critics have suggested. In these ways, discussion of alternatives to the projection of U.S. military power around the world is preempted.

What is the cultural language of U.S. basing? Asked why the United States has a vast network of military bases around the world, Pentagon officials argue, first, via utilitarianism and realism, that the bases “project power” and so get things done for the United States, and, second, on humanitarian grounds, that the bases “project care” and provide things for other countries.

The utilitarian arguments come in three common forms:

Bases provide security for the United States by deterring attack from hostile countries and preventing or remedying either unrest or military challenges.

- “American armed forces stationed abroad ... should be considered as the first line of American defenses, providing reconnaissance and security against the prospect of larger crises and conducting stability operations to prevent their outbreak” (Donnelly et al. 2000:15).
- “Potential security challenges in Asia [include collapse of the Indonesian state, creating refugee flows and regional unrest]. Under such circumstances, the U.S. ... could be compelled to intervene to restore order” (Davis and Shapiro 2003:94).

The strategic language used to justify bases in the wake of 9/11 has become increasingly emphatic in portraying foreign military access as key to the projection of power, and portraying the bases as requiring no more rationale than uncertainty and contingency in the world. This naturalizes the bases even further than in the past, when specific strategic goals or localized violent adversaries were used to justify them.

- “The present era requires an Army that can move a powerful military force to distant, perhaps unprepared, theaters quickly” (Davis and Shapiro 2003:4).
- “To contend with uncertainty and to meet the many security challenges we face, the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. forces.”¹¹

Bases serve the national economic interests of the United States, ensuring access to markets and commodities needed to maintain the American standard of living, primarily by maintaining influence over the domestic and foreign policy of the countries in which they are found.

- “The threat may take many postures, not just military. Our access to energy sources remains an imperative, as does open trade, access to the routes of commerce, and unfettered international exchange. Economic and cyber warfare is a

distinct possibility. Human rights violations, natural disaster, epidemics, and the breakdown of national and international order are all plausible contingencies that may require the United States to act across the range of its capabilities. In virtually every case, our base structure will be an essential part of these capabilities” (Overseas Basing Commission 2005:8).

- “The United States’ foreign military presence remains a compelling symbol and bellwether of U.S. attitudes and approaches to foreign and defense policy ... As the military analyst Andrew Bacevich of Boston University has observed, ‘the political purpose [of U.S. troops abroad] is [now] not so much to enhance stability, but to use U.S. forces as an instrument of political change’” (Campbell and Ward 2003:100).

This type of argument says that the bases are the necessary platforms for a constant set of military and other efforts to change the countries and regions in which they are located in the U.S. economic and strategic interest. Because it suggests that U.S. bases work to manipulate events overseas and primarily in the interest of control and access to resources and profit, it has not been articulated publicly by government and military officials as much as has the first, deterrence argument. Nonetheless, it remains a rationale with strong support in elite circles, and in some conservative mainstream discussion.

Bases are symbolic markers of U.S. power and credibility.

- “The presence of American forces in critical regions around the world is the visible expression of the extent of America’s status as a superpower ... Security guarantees that depend solely upon power projected from the continental United States will inevitably become discounted” (Donnelly et al. 2000).
- “The basing posture of the United States, particularly its overseas basing, is the skeleton of national security upon

which flesh and muscle will be molded to enable us to protect our national interests and the interests of our allies, not just today, but for decades to come” (Overseas Basing Commission 2005).

This type of argument says that bases need no other rationale than their presence and visibility. It also suggests, by implication, that more bases are better than fewer since a multitude of locations is just that much more visible.

A second set of arguments for overseas bases sees them as positive expressions of American character, and particularly its humanitarian ethos. Prone to see their nation as a generous one, Americans typically far overestimate the amount of their government’s foreign aid and misunderstand its motives. The military has worked hard to present itself as helping or rescuing others through such things as hurricane or tsunami relief or military operations presented as liberating or democratizing others. Bases participate in this same set of assumptions. In them, U.S. overseas bases are donations to the world in two respects, first, as demanding obligations to assist the countries in which they are located:

Bases are gifts to other nations, both as defense sites and as wealth generators. They represent American altruism and sacrifice.

- “The new U.S. global posture strategy ... reflects the American commitment to a global insurance policy for an emerging security landscape” (Henry 2006:48).
- “Guam’s 160,000 residents stand to benefit economically from the island’s increased military presence. Each additional submarine would bring roughly 150 sailors to Guam and \$9 million in salaries for them and their support personnel” (Erickson and Mikolay 2006:87).
- “The United States bears the brunt of the most arduous security duties ... [Its allies who do not contribute to joint military endeavors] cannot relate either to the hard responsibilities that come with military intervention or to the expense