



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 17, 2022

Online Tool Shows America's World-girdling Network of Military Bases

A new [online tool](#) showing the United States' network of hundreds of military bases in dozens of countries makes it clear that U.S. foreign policy has strayed far from the Founders' noninterventionist vision.

The visual database, created by WorldBeyondWar.org with assistance from David Vine, author of *The United States of War*, displays a globe on which every U.S. base in a foreign country is visible. Users can turn the globe to locate a base, then click on it to see a satellite view of the base and relevant information including the base's size and number of personnel. Links to news articles about the base are also provided. In addition, users can filter the results by country, government type, opening date, personnel, and total land in acres.



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"The United States of America, unlike any other nation, maintains this massive network of foreign military installations around the world," WorldBeyondWar explains.

"How was this created and how is it continued? Some of these physical installations are on land occupied as spoils of war." That well describes the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, which the U.S. government forced its post-Spanish-American War client government in Havana to accept and which it continues to maintain despite opposition from the communist regime that has ruled Cuba since 1959.

As to the remaining bases, writes WorldBeyondWar, "Most are maintained through collaborations with governments, many of them brutal and oppressive governments benefiting from the bases' presence. In many cases, human beings were displaced to make room for these military installations, often depriving people of farmland, adding huge amounts of pollution to local water systems and the air, and existing as an unwelcome presence."

The U.S. bases on the Japanese island of Okinawa are a prime example. Established after World War II, the bases — including one named, ironically, after Major General Smedley Butler, author of *War Is a Racket* — continue to inspire [protests](#) from the island's residents to this day, and not without reason. Between military accidents (such as a 1969 nerve-gas leak), crimes (such as the 1995 rape of a schoolgirl by three U.S. military personnel), and [pollution of the local water supply](#) — not to mention Washington's lack of cooperation in investigating and rectifying such matters — the uniformed Americans are hardly a welcome presence in Okinawa. Yet there they remain, costing U.S. taxpayers



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dollars and goodwill and the local government revenue that it could derive from the land where the bases are located.

The Founding Fathers urged their fellow Americans to pursue “peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none” (Thomas Jefferson) and to “cultivate peace and harmony with all” (George Washington).

Even a cursory glance at the WorldBeyondWar globe demonstrates that their successors have failed to heed their advice. No government that sought peace and steered clear of “entangling alliances” would maintain 900 military bases in places as far from its own borders as Peru, Botswana, and Australia are from the United States. In fact, the only continent on which Uncle Sam does not have a military presence is Antarctica; perhaps the emperor penguins are jealously guarding their own empire.

A more detailed review of the database will reveal all kinds of surprising facts. Did you know, for example, that, since 1956, the United States has had a 5.4-square-mile military base on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic Ocean? Did you even know there *is* an Ascension Island?

“U.S. bases in foreign lands often raise geopolitical tensions, support undemocratic regimes, and serve as a recruiting tool for militant groups opposed to the U.S. presence and the governments its presence bolsters,” [observed](#) WorldBeyondWar executive director David Swanson. “In other cases, foreign bases have made it easier for the United States to launch and execute disastrous wars, including those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya.”

Swanson’s organization hopes to expand their database to include other countries’ foreign military bases and additional information “covering more aspects of the severe problems caused by these military outposts.” Their desire is “to help journalists, activists, researchers and individual readers understand the immense problem of excessive preparation for war, which inevitably leads to international bullying, meddling, threats, escalation and mass atrocity.”

Their online tool is a major step in that direction.



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