
US Imperialism Newsletters
#1 July 3, 2007
#2 Sept. 20, 2007
#3 April 7, 2008
#4 Nov. 30, 2008
#5 September 13, 2011
#6 October 16, 2011
#7 January 16, 2012
#8 June 3, 2012
My blog: It's the War Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/
Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/
See: Imperialism, Militarism, Pentagon, Pentagon: Suicides, Pentagon: Whistleblowing, and more.

The fissures of imperial overreach and excess are widening and the Empire is being exposed for the ridiculous bully it really is. Cindy Sheehan

A wide-ranging source of information is the Defense News Early Bird Brief: 

Contents of #7
Dick: Ark. Democrat-Gazette Columnist Dana Kelly
Book: Bacevich, et al. Short American Century
Bacevich: American Century Ended
Hedges: Suing Barack Obama
Chomsky on Warrior Caste
Parenti book, The Face of Imperialism
Nuclear Weapons Locations
Philippines and US Minotaur
Film, Amigo by Sayles
Cut US Military Spending
Cold War Continuing
From Iraq to Australia
Engelhardt, The United States of Fear
Articles Forwarded by Historians Against War

Contents of #8
Myth of US Innocence, Classified Reading List
Dick, LTE on Supporting the Troops
Film
History of US Anti-Imperialism
Orton: US Aggression
Engelhardt, *The United States of Fear*
Golinger, *The Empire’s Web*
Chomsky, From Vietnam War to Present
Cindy Sheehan
Rachel Maddow, Presidential Power
Bacevich, Special Operations
Schwartz, *War Without End*

Contents #9
PNAC Continues
Middle East Maneuvers
US Militarism Abroad
New Book: *Taming American Power*
TomDispatch, Vine: Empire of Bases, Lily Pad Strategy
Central America, Nonviolence vs. the Empire
Intervention Law and Libya
Zibechi, Urban Poor
Empire and Medical Care
New Weapon for Large Cargo and Constant Surveillance

US Militarism at Home
Arkansas
The Poor and Military Recruiting
Scales: Army Good, Too Many Wars Bad
Moyers, Look Back to 1980s

Here is the link to all of OMNI’s newsletters

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  Laying the foundation for peace, justice, and ecology in knowledge.

BOOKS FOR LATER ATTENTION
Countless books have been written prophesying the end with titles like: *Suicide of a Superpower; The Empire Has No Clothes; Taming American Power; Nemesis: the Last Days of the American Republic; Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire;* and *Selling out A Superpower.*

Neocons Slither Back

Neocon puppet master” Dan Senor is now driving the foreign policy agenda of Romney and Ryan, writes Maureen Dowd in the New York Times. A moral, muscular foreign policy; a disdain for weakness and diplomacy; a duty to invade and bomb Israel's neighbors; a divine right to pre-emption - it's all ominously familiar. You can draw a direct line from the hyperpower manifesto of the Project for the New American Century, which the neocons used to prod an uninformed president into invading
Iraq - a wildly misguided attempt to intimidate Arabs through the shock of overwhelming force, Dowd writes.

**U.S. and Allies to Hold Gulf Military Exercise**

Reuter

Excerpt: "Warships from around the world were assembling in the Gulf on Sunday for what the U.S. military described as the most widely attended international naval exercise ever held in the Middle East."


September 13, 2012

**Tomgram: Engelhardt, Washington Invested in War**

[Note for TomDispatch Readers: Just a small reminder of our special offer: in return for a contribution of $75 or more, you receive a personalized, signed copy of the just-published paperback of State Department whistleblower Peter Van Buren’s Catch-22 of a book, We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People. Signed books by Noam Chomsky as well as by Nick Turse and me are also available at our donation page. And remember: your donations help keep the articles flowing at TomDispatch! Tom]

**Monopolizing War? What America Knows How to Do Best**

By Tom Engelhardt

It’s pop-quiz time when it comes to the American way of war: three questions, torn from the latest news, just for you. Here’s the first of them, and good luck!

Two weeks ago, 200 U.S. Marines began armed operations in…?:

a) Afghanistan
b) Pakistan
c) Iran
d) Somalia
e) Yemen
f) Central Africa
g) Northern Mali
h) The Philippines
i) Guatemala

If you opted for any answer, “a” through “h,” you took a reasonable shot at it. After all, there’s an ongoing American war in Afghanistan and somewhere in the southern part of that country, 200 armed U.S. Marines could well have been involved in an operation. In Pakistan, an undeclared, CIA-run air war has long been underway, and in the past there have been armed border crossings by U.S. special operations forces as well as U.S. piloted cross-border air strikes, but no Marines.

When it comes to Iran, Washington’s regional preparations for war are staggering. The continual build-up of U.S. naval power in the Persian Gulf, of land forces on bases around that country, of air power (and anti-missile defenses) in the region should leave any observer breathless. There are U.S. special operations forces near the Iranian border and CIA drones regularly over that country. In conjunction with the Israelis, Washington has launched a cyberwar against Iran’s nuclear program and computer systems. It has also established fierce oil and banking sanctions, and there seem to have been at least some U.S. cross-border operations into Iran going back to at least 2007. In addition, a recent front-page New York Times story on Obama administration attempts to mollify Israel over its Iran policy
included this ominous line: “The administration is also considering... covert activities that have been previously considered and rejected.” So 200 armed Marines in action in Iran -- not yet, but don’t get down on yourself, it was a good guess. In Somalia, according to Wired magazine's Danger Room blog, there have been far more U.S. drone flights and strikes against the Islamic extremist al-Shabaab movement and al-Qaeda elements than anyone previously knew. In addition, the U.S. has at least partially funded, supported, equipped, advised, and promoted proxy wars there, involving Ethiopian troops back in 2007 and more recently Ugandan and Burundi troops (as well as an invading Kenyan army). In addition, CIA operatives and possibly other irregulars and hired guns are well established in Mogadishu, the capital. In Yemen, as in Somalia, the combination has been proxy war and strikes by drones (as well as piloted planes), with some U.S. special forces advisors on the ground, and civilian casualties (and anger at the U.S.) rising in the southern part of the country -- but also, as in Somalia, no Marines. Central Africa? Now, there’s a thought. After all, at least 100 Green Berets were sent in there this year as part of a campaign against Joseph Kony’s Ugandan-based Lord’s Resistance Army. As for Northern Mali, taken over by Islamic extremists (including an al-Qaeda-affiliated group), it certainly presents a target for future U.S. intervention -- and we still don’t know what those three U.S. Army commandos who skidded off a bridge to their deaths in their Toyota Land Rover with three “Moroccan prostitutes” were doing in a country with which the U.S. military had officially cut its ties after a democratically elected government was overthrown. But 200 Marines operating in war-torn areas of Africa? Not yet. When it comes to the Philippines, again no Marines, even though U.S. special forces and drones have been aiding the government in a low-level conflict with Islamic militants in Mindanao. As it happens, the correct, if surprising, answer is “i.” And if you chose it, congratulations!
Click here to read more of this dispatch.  

Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy

Author: Stephen M. Walt, Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs; Faculty Chair, International Security Program

Ordering Information for this publication

Belfer Center Programs or Projects: International Security

OVERVIEW

In this elegant and provocative new book, Kennedy School professor and renowned scholar Stephen M. Walt analyzes the different strategies that states employ to counter U.S. power or to harness it for their own ends. These responses threaten America’s ability to achieve its foreign policy goals and may
eventually undermine its dominant position. To prevent this, Walt argues, the United States must adopt a foreign policy that other states welcome, rather than one that reinforces their fear of American power.

Stephen M. Walt is the academic dean and Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Co-Editor of the Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. He is the author of The Origins of Alliances, which received the 1988 Edgar S. Furniss National Security Book Award, and Revolution and War. Walt lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.


"The greatest value of 'Taming American Power,' Stephen M. Walt's brilliant contribution to the American foreign policy debate, is that it places its readers in the minds of the leaders and citizens of other states, including the country's rivals. This is something that really ought to be among the most obvious duties of all foreign policy analysts."

—ANATOL LIEVEN, New York Times Sunday Book Review

“This is a path-breaking book for both the informed public and policy makers, for whom it should be required reading and who would do well to follow its recommendations.”

—SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor, Harvard University, and author of The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order

“Taming American Power is a brilliant book. It confirms Stephen Walt’s status as one of the most lucid and original thinkers on world politics today.”

—MOSES NAÍM, Editor and Publisher, Foreign Policy, former Venezuelan Minister of Trade and Industry and World Bank Executive Director

“Stephen Walt’s timing is perfect and his analysis is brilliant. Americans want to know: What went wrong in the Middle East? Why is the United States hated around the world? What happened to the unipolar moment and benevolent hegemony? Walt has the answers. Taming American Power shows why U.S. foreign policy generates resentment and how America’s allies and rivals exploit and thwart it. This important book is a must-read for anyone who believes that America needs a new foreign policy.”

—JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago, and author of The Tragedy of Great Power Politics

For more information about this publication please contact the Belfer Center Communications Office at 617-495-9858.

For Academic Citation:

Tomgram: David Vine, U.S. Empire of Bases Grows

Posted by David Vine at 5:32pm, July 15, 2012.
Follow TomDispatch on Twitter @TomDispatch.

It was January 15, 2004, and TomDispatch had only been in existence for a year when Chalmers Johnson, author of the prophetic book Blowback (published in 2000 and a bestseller after the 9/11 attacks), did a piece for this site entitled “America’s Empire of Bases.” He wrote then: “Due to government secrecy, our citizens are often ignorant of the fact that our garrisons encircle the planet. This vast network of American bases on every continent except Antarctica actually constitutes a new form of empire -- an empire of bases with its own geography not likely to be taught in any high school geography class. Without grasping the dimensions of this globe-girdling Baseworld, one can't begin to understand the size and nature of our imperial aspirations or the degree to which a new kind of militarism is undermining our constitutional order.”

It was a benchmark essay for TomDispatch and a theme -- the unprecedented way Washington was garrisoning the planet -- that Johnson would return to repeatedly and that others of us would take up. This mattered because, despite the crucial role that Washington's empire of bases played in the American way of war and its dreams of global dominance, bases were then, and remain today, a phenomenon largely ignored in the mainstream media.

In 2004, the Pentagon was, for instance, already building the first of its 505 bases, the biggest among them meant to be “enduring,” in Iraq -- American ziggurats, I called them at the time. Some of these were large enough to qualify as full-scale American towns, with PXs, fire departments, bus routes, the usual range of fast-food joints, internet cafes, and the like -- and yet it was the rare American reporter who saw a story of any sort in them, even when visiting one of them. The same was true in Afghanistan, where the U.S. was building (and is still upgrading) 400 or more bases. No one even bothered to try to count them up until Nick Turse did so in February 2010 for this site. (Ann Jones took TomDispatch readers onto one of them in August of that same year.)

In his books and at TomDispatch, Johnson put significant effort into trying to come up with a number for the bases the Pentagon garrisoned outside the United States. In January 2011, Turse returned to that task and found that number to be well over 1,100. Again, it’s not a figure you normally see reported in the mainstream. In March 2010, John Feffer reminded TD readers of just how far the Pentagon would go to hang onto a single major base, among so many, on the Japanese island of Okinawa.

One of the last essays Chalmers Johnson published at this site before his death in 2010 was entitled
“Dismantling the Empire” and it was concerned with just how the U.S. could downsize its global mission and end its empire of bases. David Vine, anthropologist and author of *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia*, has been touring American bases for the past three years. In a major survey of the changing shape of our Baseworld, he suggests that unfortunately it isn’t shrinking at all, and that “dismantling” isn’t yet on the American horizon. This means that -- until the mainstream finally stumbles upon the import of this story -- TomDispatch has little choice but to stay on the bases beat for the foreseeable future. (To catch Timothy MacBain's latest Tomcast audio interview in which Vine discusses his experiences with the Pentagon’s empire of bases, click [here](#) or download it to your iPod [here](#).) Tom

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**The Lily-Pad Strategy**

**How the Pentagon Is Quietly Transforming Its Overseas Base Empire and Creating a Dangerous New Way of War**

By [David Vine](#)

The first thing I saw last month when I walked into the belly of the dark grey C-17 Air Force cargo plane was a void -- something missing. A missing left arm, to be exact, severed at the shoulder, temporarily patched and held together. Thick, pale flesh, flecked with bright red at the edges. It looked like meat sliced open. The face and what remained of the rest of the man were obscured by blankets, an American flag quilt, and a jumble of tubes and tape, wires, drip bags, and medical monitors.

That man and two other critically wounded soldiers -- one with two stumps where legs had been, the other missing a leg below the thigh -- were intubated, unconscious, and lying on stretchers hooked to the walls of the plane that had just landed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. A tattoo on the soldier’s remaining arm read, “DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR.”

I asked a member of the Air Force medical team about the casualties they see like these. Many, as with this flight, were coming from Afghanistan, he told me. “A lot from the Horn of Africa,” he added. “You don’t really hear about that in the media.”

“Where in Africa?” I asked. He said he didn’t know exactly, but generally from the Horn, often with critical injuries. “A lot out of Djibouti,” he added, referring to [Camp Lemonnier](#), the main U.S. military base in Africa, but from “elsewhere” in the region, too.

Since the “Black Hawk Down” deaths in Somalia almost 20 years ago, we’ve heard little, if anything, about American military casualties in Africa (other than a strange report last week about three special
operations commandos killed, along with three women identified by U.S. military sources as “Moroccan prostitutes,” in a mysterious car accident in Mali. The growing number of patients arriving at Ramstein from Africa pulls back a curtain on a significant transformation in twenty-first-century U.S. military strategy.

These casualties are likely to be the vanguard of growing numbers of wounded troops coming from places far removed from Afghanistan or Iraq. They reflect the increased use of relatively small bases like Camp Lemonnier, which military planners see as a model for future U.S. bases “scattered,” as one academic explains, “across regions in which the United States has previously not maintained a military presence.”

Disappearing are the days when Ramstein was the signature U.S. base, an American-town-sized behemoth filled with thousands or tens of thousands of Americans, PXs, Pizza Huts, and other amenities of home. But don’t for a second think that the Pentagon is packing up, downsizing its global mission, and heading home. In fact, based on developments in recent years, the opposite may be true. While the collection of Cold War-era giant bases around the world is shrinking, the global infrastructure of bases overseas has exploded in size and scope.

Unknown to most Americans, Washington’s garrisoning of the planet is on the rise, thanks to a new generation of bases the military calls “lily pads” (as in a frog jumping across a pond toward its prey). These are small, secretive, inaccessible facilities with limited numbers of troops, spartan amenities, and prepositioned weaponry and supplies.

Around the world, from Djibouti to the jungles of Honduras, the deserts of Mauritania to Australia’s tiny Cocos Islands, the Pentagon has been pursuing as many lily pads as it can, in as many countries as it can, as fast as it can. Although statistics are hard to assemble, given the often-secretive nature of such bases, the Pentagon has probably built upwards of 50 lily pads and other small bases since around 2000, while exploring the construction of dozens more.

As Mark Gillem, author of America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire, explains, “avoidance” of local populations, publicity, and potential opposition is the new aim. “To project its power,” he says, the United States wants “secluded and self-contained outposts strategically located” around the world. According to some of the strategy’s strongest proponents at the American Enterprise Institute, the goal should be “to create a worldwide network of frontier forts,” with the U.S. military “the ‘global cavalry’ of the twenty-first century.”

Such lily-pad bases have become a critical part of an evolving Washington military strategy aimed at maintaining U.S. global dominance by doing far more with less in an increasingly competitive, ever more multi-polar world. Central as it’s becoming to the long-term U.S. stance, this global-basing reset policy has, remarkably enough, received almost no public attention, nor significant Congressional
oversight. Meanwhile, as the arrival of the first casualties from Africa shows, the U.S. military is getting involved in new areas of the world and new conflicts, with potentially disastrous consequences.

**Transforming the Base Empire**

You might think that the U.S. military is in the process of shrinking, rather than expanding, its little noticed but enormous collection of bases abroad. After all, it was forced to close the full panoply of 505 bases, mega to micro, that it built in Iraq, and it's now beginning the process of drawing down forces in Afghanistan. In Europe, the Pentagon is continuing to close its massive bases in Germany and will soon remove two combat brigades from that country. Global troop numbers are set to shrink by around 100,000.

Yet Washington still easily maintains the largest collection of foreign bases in world history: more than 1,000 military installations outside the 50 states and Washington, DC. They include everything from decades-old bases in Germany and Japan to brand-new drone bases in Ethiopia and the Seychelles islands in the Indian Ocean and even resorts for military vacationers in Italy and South Korea.

In Afghanistan, the U.S.-led international force still occupies more than 450 bases. In total, the U.S. military has some form of troop presence in approximately 150 foreign countries, not to mention 11 aircraft carrier task forces -- essentially floating bases -- and a significant, and growing, military presence in space. The United States currently spends an estimated $250 billion annually maintaining bases and troops overseas.

Some bases, like Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, date to the late nineteenth century. Most were built or occupied during or just after World War II on every continent, including Antarctica. Although the U.S. military vacated around 60% of its foreign bases following the Soviet Union’s collapse, the Cold War base infrastructure remained relatively intact, with 60,000 American troops remaining in Germany alone, despite the absence of a superpower adversary.

However, in the early months of 2001, even before the attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration launched a major global realignment of bases and troops that’s continuing today with Obama’s “Asia pivot.” Bush’s original plan was to close more than one-third of the nation’s overseas bases and shift troops east and south, closer to predicted conflict zones in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Pentagon began to focus on creating smaller and more flexible “forward operating bases” and even smaller “cooperative security locations” or “lily pads.” Major troop concentrations were to be restricted to a reduced number of “main operating bases” (MOBs) -- like Ramstein, Guam in the Pacific, and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean -- which were to be expanded.

Despite the rhetoric of consolidation and closure that went with this plan, in the post-9/11 era the Pentagon has actually been expanding its base infrastructure dramatically, including dozens of major
bases in every Persian Gulf country save Iran, and in several Central Asian countries critical to the war in Afghanistan.

**Hitting the Base Reset Button**

Obama’s recently announced “Asia pivot” signals that East Asia will be at the center of the explosion of lily-pad bases and related developments. Already in Australia, U.S. marines are settling into a shared base in Darwin. Elsewhere, the Pentagon is pursuing plans for a drone and surveillance base in Australia’s Cocos Islands and deployments to Brisbane and Perth. In Thailand, the Pentagon has negotiated rights for new Navy port visits and a “disaster-relief hub” at U-Tapao.

In the Philippines, whose government evicted the U.S. from the massive Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base in the early 1990s, as many as 600 special forces troops have quietly been operating in the country’s south since January 2002. Last month, the two governments reached an agreement on the future U.S. use of Clark and Subic, as well as other repair and supply hubs from the Vietnam War era. In a sign of changing times, U.S. officials even signed a 2011 defense agreement with former enemy Vietnam and have begun negotiations over the Navy’s increased use of Vietnamese ports.

Elsewhere in Asia, the Pentagon has rebuilt a runway on tiny Tinian island near Guam, and it’s considering future bases in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, while pushing stronger military ties with India. Every year in the region, the military conducts around 170 military exercises and 250 port visits. On South Korea’s Jeju island, the Korean military is building a base that will be part of the U.S. missile defense system and to which U.S. forces will have regular access.

“We just can’t be in one place to do what we’ve got to do,” Pacific Command commander Admiral Samuel Locklear III has said. For military planners, “what we’ve got to do” is clearly defined as isolating and (in the terminology of the Cold War) “containing” the new power in the region, China. This evidently means “peppering” new bases throughout the region, adding to the more than 200 U.S. bases that have encircled China for decades in Japan, South Korea, Guam, and Hawaii.

And Asia is just the beginning. In Africa, the Pentagon has quietly created “about a dozen air bases” for drones and surveillance since 2007. In addition to Camp Lemonnier, we know that the military has created or will soon create installations in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, and Uganda. The Pentagon has also investigated building bases in Algeria, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria, among other places.

Next year, a brigade-sized force of 3,000 troops, and “likely more,” will arrive for exercises and training missions across the continent. In the nearby Persian Gulf, the Navy is developing an “afloat forward-staging base,” or “mothership,” to serve as a sea-borne “lily pad” for helicopters and patrol
craft, and has been involved in a **massive build-up** of forces in the region.

In Latin America, following the military's eviction from Panama in 1999 and Ecuador in 2009, the Pentagon has **created** or **upgraded** new bases in Aruba and Curaçao, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, and Peru. Elsewhere, the Pentagon has **funded** the creation of military and police bases capable of hosting U.S. forces in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, and even **Ecuador**. In 2008, the Navy reactivated its Fourth Fleet, inactive since 1950, to patrol the region. The military may want a base in **Brazil** and unsuccessfullly tried to create bases, ostensibly for humanitarian and emergency relief, in **Paraguay** and **Argentina**.

Finally, in Europe, after arriving in the **Balkans** during 1990’s interventions, U.S. bases have moved eastward into some of the former Eastern Bloc states of the Soviet empire. The Pentagon is now developing installations capable of supporting rotating, brigade-sized **deployments** in Romania and Bulgaria, and a missile defense base and aviation facilities in **Poland**. Previously, the Bush administration maintained two CIA **black sites** (secret prisons) in Lithuania and **another** in Poland. Citizens of the Czech Republic **rejected** a planned radar base for the Pentagon’s still unproven missile defense system, and now Romania will host ground-based missiles.

**A New American Way of War**

A lily pad on one of the Gulf of Guinea islands of **São Tomé and Príncipe**, off the oil-rich west coast of Africa, helps explain what’s going on. A U.S. official has described the base as “**another Diego Garcia**,” referring to the **Indian Ocean base** that’s helped **ensure** decades of U.S. domination over Middle Eastern energy supplies. Without the freedom to create new large bases in Africa, the Pentagon is using São Tomé and a growing collection of other lily pads on the continent in an attempt to control another crucial oil-rich region.

Far beyond West Africa, the nineteenth century **“Great Game”** competition for Central Asia has returned with a passion -- and this time gone global. It’s spreading to resource-rich lands in Africa, Asia, and South America, as the United States, China, Russia, and members of the European Union find themselves locked in an increasingly intense competition for economic and geopolitical supremacy.

While Beijing, in particular, has **pursued** this competition in a largely economic fashion, dotting the globe with strategic investments, Washington has focused relentlessly on military might as its global trump card, dotting the planet with new bases and other forms of military power. “Forget full-scale invasions and large-footprint occupations on the Eurasian mainland,” Nick Turse **has written** of this new twenty-first century military strategy. “Instead, think: special operations forces... proxy armies... the militarization of spying and intelligence... drone aircraft... cyber-attacks, and joint Pentagon operations with increasingly militarized ‘civilian’ government agencies.”
Add to this unparalleled long-range air and naval power; arms sales besting any nation on Earth; humanitarian and disaster relief missions that clearly serve military intelligence, patrol, and “hearts and minds” functions; the rotational deployment of regular U.S. forces globally; port visits and an expanding array of joint military exercises and training missions that give the U.S. military de facto “presence” worldwide and help turn foreign militaries into proxy forces.

And lots and lots of lily-pad bases.

Military planners see a future of endless small-scale interventions in which a large, geographically dispersed collection of bases will always be primed for instant operational access. With bases in as many places as possible, military planners want to be able to turn to another conveniently close country if the United States is ever prevented from using a base, as it was by Turkey prior to the invasion of Iraq. In other words, Pentagon officials dream of nearly limitless flexibility, the ability to react with remarkable rapidity to developments anywhere on Earth, and thus, something approaching total military control over the planet.

Beyond their military utility, the lily pads and other forms of power projection are also political and economic tools used to build and maintain alliances and provide privileged U.S. access to overseas markets, resources, and investment opportunities. Washington is planning to use lily-pad bases and other military projects to bind countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America as closely as possible to the U.S. military -- and so to continued U.S. political-economic hegemony. In short, American officials are hoping military might will entrench their influence and keep as many countries as possible within an American orbit at a time when some are asserting their independence ever more forcefully or gravitating toward China and other rising powers.

Those Dangerous Lily Pads

While relying on smaller bases may sound smarter and more cost effective than maintaining huge bases that have often caused anger in places like Okinawa and South Korea, lily pads threaten U.S. and global security in several ways:

First, the “lily pad” language can be misleading, since by design or otherwise, such installations are capable of quickly growing into bloated behemoths.

Second, despite the rhetoric about spreading democracy that still lingers in Washington, building more lily pads actually guarantees collaboration with an increasing number of despotic, corrupt, and murderous regimes.

Third, there is a well-documented pattern of damage that military facilities of various sizes inflict on local communities. Although lily pads seem to promise insulation from local opposition, over time even small bases have often led to anger and protest movements.
Finally, a proliferation of lily pads means the creeping militarization of large swaths of the globe. Like real lily pads -- which are actually aquatic weeds -- bases have a way of growing and reproducing uncontrollably. Indeed, bases tend to beget bases, creating “base races” with other nations, heightening military tensions, and discouraging diplomatic solutions to conflicts. After all, how would the United States respond if China, Russia, or Iran were to build even a single lily-pad base of its own in Mexico or the Caribbean?

For China and Russia in particular, ever more U.S. bases near their borders threaten to set off new cold wars. Most troublingly, the creation of new bases to protect against an alleged future Chinese military threat may prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy: such bases in Asia are likely to create the threat they are supposedly designed to protect against, making a catastrophic war with China more, not less, likely.

Encouragingly, however, overseas bases have recently begun to generate critical scrutiny across the political spectrum from Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul to Democratic Senator Jon Tester and New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. With everyone looking for ways to trim the deficit, closing overseas bases offers easy savings. Indeed, increasingly influential types are recognizing that the country simply can’t afford more than 1,000 bases abroad.

Great Britain, like empires before it, had to close most of its remaining foreign bases in the midst of an economic crisis in the 1960s and 1970s. The United States is undoubtedly headed in that direction sooner or later. The only question is whether the country will give up its bases and downsize its global mission by choice, or if it will follow Britain’s path as a fading power forced to give up its bases from a position of weakness.

Of course, the consequences of not choosing another path extend beyond economics. If the proliferation of lily pads, special operations forces, and drone wars continues, the United States is likely to be drawn into new conflicts and new wars, generating unknown forms of blowback, and untold death and destruction. In that case, we’d better prepare for a lot more incoming flights -- from the Horn of Africa to Honduras -- carrying not just amputees but caskets.

David Vine is assistant professor of anthropology at American University, in Washington, DC. He is the author of Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia (Princeton University Press, 2009). He has written for the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, and Mother Jones, among other places. He is currently completing a book about the more than 1,000 U.S. military bases located outside the United States. To listen to Timothy MacBain’s latest Tomcast audio interview in which Vine discusses his experiences with the Pentagon’s empire of bases, click here, or download it to your iPod here.

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*Central Americans vs. U.S. empire — the nonviolent legacy*

July 10, 2012 by George Lakey. Ecuador is in the news these days for its embassy in London giving sanctuary to Julian Assange, the Wikileaks founder, who is in danger of extradition from Britain and prosecution in the United States. Ecuador, in fact, has a long history of defying the U.S. empire. Few people remember that the country ... Read the rest of this article:  »

The Intervention Dilemma

Joseph S. Nye, Op-Ed: NationofChange, June 9, 2012. In fact, R2P is more about struggles over political legitimacy and soft power than it is about hard international law. Some Western lawyers argue that it entails the responsibility to combat genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes under the various conventions of international humanitarian law. But Russia, China, and others are reluctant to provide a legal or political basis for actions such as what occurred in Libya. READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/intervention-dilemma-1339249906

06.24.11 -

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The Militarization of the World's Urban Peripheries

By Raúl Zibechi

Urban peripheries in Third World countries have become war zones where states attempt to maintain order based on the establishment of a sort of "sanitary cordon" to keep the poor isolated from "normal" society.

Pentagon strategists are lending great importance to urban planning theory and architecture, since the peripheries are "one of the most challenging terrains for future wars and other imperialist projects." A study by the United Nations estimates that one billion people live in
peripheral neighborhoods outside Third World cities and that the poor in the largest cities in the world number some two billion, that is, a third of all human beings. These statistics will double within the next 15 or 20 years, and "all future growth of the world's population will occur in cities, 95% of it in cities of the Global South and the majority in slums."

What can come of the isolation and militarization of the places where a third of the world's population live?

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"Much of the book is devoted to meticulous delineation of the myriad ways that globalized capitalism creates the social conditions that make us sick and puts a straightjacket on the health system’s ability to respond."

**New high-tech airships taking shape**
By W.J. Hennigan  Los Angeles Times  mercurynews.com
September 7, 2012 1:43 AM GMTUpdated: 09/06/2012

LOS ANGELES -- Not since the waning days of World War II have the mammoth wooden blimp hangars at the former military base in Tustin, Calif., seen as much airship manufacturing work as they do today.

Inside the 17-story structures that rise above southern Orange County, Worldwide Aeros Corp. is building a blimp-like airship designed for the military to carry tons of cargo to remote areas around the world.

"Nobody has ever tried to do what we're doing here," Chief Executive Igor Pasternak said of the 265-foot skeleton being transformed into the cargo airship. "This will revolutionize airship technology."
In recent years, the affordability of airships as well as developments in high-definition cameras, high-powered sensors and other unmanned technologies have turned these oddball aircraft from curiosities of a bygone era to must-have items for today's military. And airships increasingly are being used for civilian purposes.

The federal government is buying blimps, zeppelins and spy balloons, and many of these new-generation hybrid "lighter than air" aircraft are taking shape across California.

"So much is going on with airships in California now," Pasternak said. "It wasn't this way 10 years ago."

Pasternak's Montebello, firm makes airships used for surveillance, advertising and transport. Lockheed Martin Corp. designs and builds airships for commercial use at its secretive Skunk Works facility in Palmdale, Calif.

Northrop Grumman Corp. does design work for airships around the Southland but is building them in Florida. [D: Military-Industrial Complex feeding here too of course.]

Although these steerable aircraft are sometimes known casually as blimps, there are differences. A blimp is shaped by the gas inside of it, whereas a zeppelin has a rigid skeleton inside. The helium-filled sky balloons, or aerostats, used over Afghanistan are neither blimps nor zeppelins. But they all fall under the term "airship."

The importance of these next-generation airships became obvious to the Pentagon as increased use of drones highlighted the need for stationary aircraft that could provide constant surveillance, not just overhead flights for a few hours. That's where these unmanned blimps came into play, with their ability to linger over an area for days at a time.

Using balloons, blimps and zeppelins in a war zone is not a new idea. The military used balloons for aerial observation posts during the Civil War, and the Germans used zeppelins to drop bombs on England during World War I. Massive blimps regularly patrolled the Pacific Ocean coastline looking for Japanese submarines and other warships during World War II.

After that, the military began opting for helicopters and sub-hunting aircraft, and the demand for blimps, balloons and other airships began to taper off. But they have played an expanded role in recent years in Mideast conflicts. Currently, there are more than 100 aerostats being used in Afghanistan, up from fewer than 10 in 2004.

Resembling small blimps, these aerostats are tethered to the ground and float thousands of
feet above military bases and important roadways. They are big enough that gunfire below won't take them down. Cameras on aerostats are similar to those on drones and can see for many miles at a fraction of the per-flight-hour cost of a drone. They're also used to monitor the U.S.-Mexico border.

"It's an affordable solution," said Terry L. Mitchell, intelligence futures director at Army headquarters. "You can provide overwatch of the base or troops as they make their way on the ground."

But these less-sophisticated aerostats don't have nearly the size or the capability of the next-generation airships that are being designed and manufactured now.

Public perception of airships has been guarded ever since the giant Hindenburg burst into flames in 1937 in front of news cameras while mooring at Lakehurst, N.J. The explosion of the hydrogen-filled German zeppelin killed 36 people, shocked the public and deflated the chances of lighter-than-air ships becoming a popular mode of travel.

These days, airships are filled with nonflammable helium, but the Hindenburg tragedy remains vivid to many even today.

"It's very easy to dismiss airship technology. There is a record of public failure, and it's sometimes difficult to take seriously in the modern era," said Bill Althoff, author of "Sky Ships: A History of the Airship in the United States Navy."

Still, the new materials and technology used in today's airships have greatly increased the vehicles' capabilities, Althoff said. "The virtue of the platform has endured," he said.

There is belief among those in the airship business that the technology can take on more civilian roles. Airships already have provided surveillance over the Mexican border for security and on disaster-control missions such as the 2010 BP oil spill on the Gulf Coast.

At Lockheed's facility in Palmdale, work is underway on a 290-foot airship, called SkyTug, to be sold to the commercial market by Canada's Aviation Capital Enterprises. The first SkyTug will be similar to a "super-sized helicopter" capable of carrying 20 tons of cargo.

Bob Boyd, Lockheed's program manager for hybrid airships, said the company expects to start the Federal Aviation Administration certification process by the end of the year. A number of companies that need to get cargo to remote areas, such as oil and timber firms,
are interested, he said.

It takes convincing that the airship is the answer to their problems.

"It's hard for people to wrap their heads around," Boyd said. "There are three ways to move cargo: by ship, by truck or by train. Suddenly there's this fourth option."

Lockheed has plans for a larger version, called **SkyFreighter**, that would be capable of carrying **70 tons** of cargo, and an even larger version, called **SkyLiner**, that would measure 800 feet and be capable of lifting **500 tons of cargo**.

Within three years, Boyd said, his company could be manufacturing as many as 30 airships a year.

"People don't recognize it, but Southern California is the epicenter for hybrid airships," he said. "We'll certainly be filling the sky with something unusual in the coming years."

**DOMESTIC MILITARISM**

**ARKANSAS GUARD**

Amy Schlesing. “Guard Trains for Air Assaults” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (8-5-12). Dick’s critique: At Fort Chaffee Arkansas National Guard’s 77th Theater Aviation Brigade, 185th Aviation Regiment air assault unit trained with its Blackhawk helicopters. Their specialty is “insertion into a forward position.” As always in the Military-Mainstream Complex the question of *why* is not asked. Why train for such combat? For offense or defense? But a clue is offered by the information that the units “have deployed to Iraq twice in combat roles.” They train for offense. And this wrong expands as we learn more that the Iraq invasion was emphatically illegal by Constitutional, UN Charter, and Just War tests. The Army continues to train troops for Iraqi-type wars. What might the public’s response be? If we are to stop wars of aggression, we must stop preparing for them. Tell your representatives and the President to convert that money to peace—to conflict resolution, diplomacy, a Department of Peace, to global removal of the causes of poverty, to the countless needs in USA..

**US POOR, PENTAGON, RECRUITING**

Tue Jul 24, 2012 9:05 am (PDT) . Posted by: "Sanford Kelson" Attorney-at-Law  8231 South Canal Road  Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania 16316  Email: sandkel@windstream.net

Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2012 10:53 AM

**We condition the poor and the working class to go to war. We promise them honor, status, glory, and adventure.**

http://www.bostonreview.net/about  <http://bostonreview.net/BR37.4/contents.php>

JULY/AUGUST 2012

**War Is Betrayal: Persistent Myths of Combat by Chris Hedges**

We condition the poor and the working class to go to war. We promise
them honor, status, glory, and adventure. We promise boys they will become men. We hold these promises up against the dead-end jobs of small-town life, the financial dislocations, credit card debt, bad marriages, lack of health insurance, and dread of unemployment. The military is the call of the Sirens, the enticement that has for generations seduced young Americans working in fast food restaurants or behind the counters of Walmarts to fight and die for war profiteers and elites.

The poor embrace the military because every other cul-de-sac in their lives breaks their spirit and their dignity. Pick up Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* or James Jones's *From Here to Eternity*. Read *Henry IV*. Turn to the *Iliad*. The allure of combat is a trap, a ploy, an old, dirty game of deception in which the powerful, who do not go to war, promise a mirage to those who do.

I saw this in my own family. At the age of ten I was given a scholarship to a top New England boarding school. I spent my adolescence in the schizophrenic embrace of the wealthy, on the playing fields and in the dorms and classrooms that condition boys and girls for privilege, and came back to my working-class relations in the depressed former mill towns in Maine. I traveled between two universes: one where everyone got chance after chance after chance, where connections and money and influence almost guaranteed that you would not fail; the other where no one ever got a second try. I learned at an early age that when the poor fall no one picks them up, while the rich stumble and trip their way to the top.

*Those I knew in prep school did not seek out the military and were not sought by it. But in the impoverished enclaves of central Maine, where I had relatives living in trailers, nearly everyone was a veteran.* My grandfather. My uncles. My cousins. My second cousins. They were all in the military. Some of them-including my Uncle Morris, who fought in the infantry in the South Pacific during World War II-were destroyed by the war. Uncle Morris drank himself to death in his trailer. He sold the hunting rifle my grandfather had given to me to buy booze.

He was not alone. After World War II, thousands of families struggled with broken men who, because they could never read the approved lines from the patriotic script, had been discarded. They were not trotted out for red-white-and-blue love fests on the Fourth of July or Veterans Day.

The myth of war held fast, despite the deep bitterness of my grandmother-who acidly denounced what war had done to her only son-and of others like her. The myth held because it was all the soldiers and their families had. Even those who knew it to be a lie-and I think most did—were loath to give up the fleeting moments of recognition, the only times in their lives they were told they were worth something.
"For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Chuck him out, the brute!'" Rudyard Kipling wrote. "But it's 'Saviour of 'is country' when the guns begin to shoot."

Any story of war is a story of elites preying on the weak, the gullible, the marginal, the poor. I do not know of a single member of my graduating prep school class who went into the military. You could not say this about the high school class that graduated the same year in Mechanic Falls, Maine.

... 

Geoff Millard was born in Buffalo, New York and lived in a predominately black neighborhood until he was eleven. His family then moved to Lockport, a nearby white suburb. He wrestled and played football in high school. He listened to punk rock.

"I didn't really do well in classes," he says. "But that didn't seem to matter much to my teachers."

At fifteen he was approached in school by a military recruiter.

"He sat down next to me at a lunch table," Millard says. "He was a Marine. I remember the uniform was crisp. All the medals were shiny. It was what I thought I wanted to be at the time.

"He knew my name," Millard adds. "He knew what classes I was taking. He knew more about me than I did. It was freaky, actually."

Two years later, as a senior, Millard faced graduation after having been rejected from the only college where he had applied.

"I looked at what jobs I could get," he says. "I wasn't really prepared to do any job. I wasn't prepared for college. I wasn't prepared for the workforce. So I started looking at the military. I wanted to go active duty Marine Corps, I thought. You know, they were the best. And that's what I was going to do.

"There were a lot of other reasons behind it, too," he says. "I mean, growing up in this culture you envy that, the soldier."

Too many wars, too few U.S. soldiers


Robert H. Scales, a retired U.S. Army major general and former commandant of the Army
I guess I knew it would eventually come down to this: Blame the Army’s institutions in some way for the horrific and senseless slaughter of 16 innocent Afghan civilians in Kandahar, allegedly by a U.S. infantry non-commissioned officer (NCO). In their search for a villain, the media seems to be focusing now on Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, where the accused soldier was stationed before his fourth deployment to a combat zone.

Before we get too involved in attacking institutions, perhaps it might be right and proper to suggest that the underlying issue here is not about failure of our Army. Perhaps the issue might be that no institutional effort can make up for trying over the past 10 years to fight too many wars with too few soldiers.

[Dick: These are the first 2 pars. of the General's argument. But also in his complete essay (which I was prevented from reproducing) he does not make clear if he is proposing a larger Army necessary to permanent war.]


Based on an acclaimed PBS documentary, The Secret Government (1987), analyzes the threats to constitutional government posed by an illegitimate network of spies, profiteers, mercenaries, ex-generals, and "superpatriots".

School Library Journal

YA-- In this adaptation of the script of a 1987 public television telecast, Moyers develops a carefully articulated argument against the abuses of executive power associated with the Iran-Contra affair and the Watergate break-in. He uses a variety of expert and man-in-the-street interviews to drive home the importance of an open, public discussion of issues and of an adherence to constitutional principles and prescribed rules of conduct by elected officials in a democracy. Throughout this book, Moyers traces the historical development of government covert operations and the erosion of democratic principles associated with covert action. Students deserve access to this well-reasoned polemic against governmental secrecy in a representative democracy. Moyers leaves readers not only with the information that Oliver North and others committed indictable offenses, but also engaged in activities that undermine the fabric of our
government.-- Tom Irwin, Episcopal High School, Bellaire, Tex.

**More Reviews and Recommendations**

**END EMPIRE NEWSLETTER #9**

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