



**CODEPINK**



Foreign Policy  
Alliance

# Drawdown:

## A Tool for Planning Military Base Closures Abroad to Improve U.S. and Global Security

Summary Version of [QUINCY BRIEF NO. 16](#), September 2021,

By David Vine, Patterson Deppen, and Leah Bolger<sup>i</sup>

Despite the withdrawal of U.S. military bases and troops from Afghanistan, the United States continues to maintain approximately 750 military bases abroad in 80 foreign countries and colonies (territories). These bases are costly in a number of ways: financially, politically, socially, and environmentally. U.S. bases in foreign lands often raise geopolitical tensions, support undemocratic regimes, and serve as a recruiting tool for militant groups opposed to foreign military occupation and governments bolstered by U.S. installations. In other cases, foreign bases are being used and have made it easier for the United States to launch and execute disastrous wars, including those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya. Across the political spectrum and even within the U.S. military there is growing recognition that many overseas bases should have closed decades ago, but bureaucratic inertia and misguided political interests have kept them open.

Amid an ongoing "Global Posture Review," the Biden administration has a historic opportunity to close hundreds of unnecessary military bases abroad and improve national and international security in the process.

The Pentagon, since Fiscal Year 2018, has failed to publish its previously annual list of U.S. bases abroad. As far as we know, the full "[Draw Down](https://quincyinst.org/report/drawdown-improving-u-s-and-global-security-through-military-base-closures-abroad/)" report presents the fullest public accounting of U.S. bases and military outposts worldwide. The lists and map included in the full version of this report illustrate the many dangers and problems associated with these overseas bases, offering a tool that can help policymakers plan urgently needed base closures. To read the full report, visit:

<https://quincyinst.org/report/drawdown-improving-u-s-and-global-security-through-military-base-closures-abroad/>

## ***Fast Facts on Overseas U.S. Military Bases***

- There are approximately 750 U.S. military base sites abroad in 80 foreign countries and colonies.
- The United States has nearly three times as many bases abroad (750) as U.S. embassies, consulates, and missions worldwide (276).
- While there are approximately half as many installations as at the Cold War's end, U.S. bases have spread to twice as many countries and colonies (from 40 to 80) in the same time, with large concentrations of facilities in the Middle East, East Asia, parts of Europe, and Africa.
- The United States has at least three times as many overseas bases as all other countries combined.
- U.S. bases abroad cost taxpayers an estimated \$55 billion annually.
- Construction of military infrastructure abroad has cost taxpayers at least \$70 billion since 2000, and could total well over \$100 billion.
- Bases abroad have helped the United States launch wars and other combat operations in at least 25 countries since 2001.
- U.S. installations are found in at least 38 non-democratic countries and colonies.

---

<sup>i</sup> David Vine is Professor of Anthropology at American University. Patterson Deppen is a Researcher at World BEYOND War. Leah Bolger is President of World BEYOND War. Citations for the above can be found in the full report available at <https://quincyinst.org/report/drawdown-improving-u-s-and-global-security-through-military-base-closures-abroad/>.