U.S. MILITARY BASES OVERSEAS
THE FACTS

NUMBERS
- 800 military base sites estimated outside the 50 states and Washington, DC.
- 90-95% of the world’s foreign military bases (e.g., Russia, UK, France: 10-20 each; China: 1).1

GEOGRAPHY
- 80 or more countries and territories where US bases are found.
- 194 base sites in Germany; 121 in Japan; 83 in South Korea; 44 in Italy.
- Pentagon figure of 701 base sites omits bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Niger, and many other well-known (e.g., Kuwait, Kosovo) and secretive bases (Israel, Saudi Arabia).
- 15 countries (minimum) in which the US military now has operational ground troops.2

COSTS
- $10,000-$40,000 average more per year to station military personnel on overseas bases vs. domestic.
- $51.5 billion/year (est.) to build and maintain infrastructure abroad.
- $150 billion/year (est.) in total spending on bases and personnel abroad.
- Alternatively, moving half the $51.5 billion spent on bases would mean 450,000 infrastructure jobs, 300,000 elementary school jobs, 3 million Head Start slots, or 2.2 million vets with VA health care.3

WARS
- At least 23 times US bases have been used to launch wars of choice or military interventions in 14 countries in the greater Middle East alone since 1980.
- Al Qaeda recruitment has been correlated with a US base, troop presence in the Middle East.
- Bases have become targets for militants, as in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iraq.4

HARMS
- Military personnel separated from family members during unaccompanied deployments; when family can accompany, spouses and children face disruptions to careers, schooling, relationships.
- 40 or more countries with authoritarian or other less-than-democratic regimes host U.S. bases (e.g., Turkey, Thailand, Niger, and all Gulf states except Iran and Yemen).
- Reckless foreign leaders can be emboldened by a U.S. base presence to take dangerously aggressive stances against, for example, Russia or China, believing the US will back them up.
- Environmental damage caused by the disposal, dumping, and use of hazardous, toxic materials, facilitated by base agreements that often exempt the US from responsibility for damage, while the US asserts its own environmental laws do not apply.
- Crimes and accidents—including rape, murder, and other crimes and military accidents—anger local communities, incite protest as in Okinawa, and damage the international reputation of the US.
- Exploitative prostitution and sex trafficking linked to bases in places such as South Korea.
- 20 local, mostly indigenous, peoples displaced by base construction or expansion abroad since 1898.5

CLOSURES
- Approximately 800 overseas bases closed in Europe, Asia by both Bush presidents and Bill Clinton.
- Local movements worldwide are demanding base closures or a reduced US military presence.
- 19% estimated domestic base excess capacity available to returning troops, families.

Questions about facts, citations; more information: OBRACC2018@gmail.com; www.overseasbases.net
**Overseas Base Realignment and Closure Coalition**

- **Rapid deployment from domestic bases** means most US forces can deploy virtually anywhere on earth as fast or nearly as fast as from a base abroad in case of emergency deployment.⁶

**POLITICS**

- **BRAC does not apply** to overseas bases, meaning the Pentagon can close overseas bases without the political challenges of closing domestic bases and the Base Realignment and Closure process.
- **Transpartisan**: Across the political spectrum people are questioning overseas bases. 3 of 4 presidential candidates in 2016 (Trump, Johnson, Stein) called for closing or questioned bases abroad.
- **Local economies** would benefit from returning personnel, families.
- **Congressmembers** have few, if any, constituents living in communities around overseas bases.⁷

**ALTERNATIVES TO OVERSEAS BASES**

- Maintain a streamlined, defensive, powerful military defending U.S. territory.
- Increased commitment to diplomacy, economic and cultural engagement, and international institutions, with the use of military force as a true last resort.
- Multinational operations through multinational organizations if the use of force is necessary. ⁸

**Citations**


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