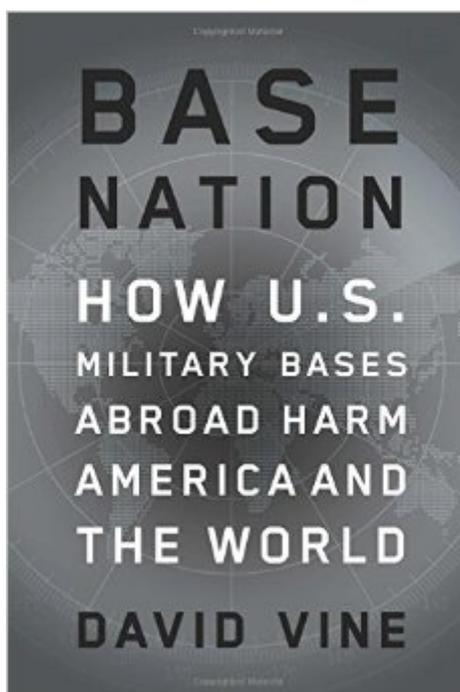


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# Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America And The World (American Empire Project)



## Synopsis

From Italy to the Indian Ocean, from Japan to Honduras, a far-reaching examination of the perils of American military bases overseas. American military bases encircle the globe. More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. still stations its troops at nearly a thousand locations in foreign lands. These bases are usually taken for granted or overlooked entirely, a little-noticed part of the Pentagon's vast operations. But in an eye-opening account, "Base Nation" shows that the worldwide network of bases brings with it a panoply of ills and actually makes the nation less safe in the long run. As David Vine demonstrates, the overseas bases raise geopolitical tensions and provoke widespread antipathy towards the United States. They also undermine American democratic ideals, pushing the U.S. into partnerships with dictators and perpetuating a system of second-class citizenship in territories like Guam. They breed sexual violence, destroy the environment, and damage local economies. And their financial cost is staggering: though the Pentagon underplays the numbers, Vine's accounting proves that the bill approaches \$100 billion per year. For many decades, the need for overseas bases has been a quasi-religious dictum of U.S. foreign policy. But in recent years, a bipartisan coalition has finally started to question this conventional wisdom. With the U.S. withdrawing from Afghanistan and ending thirteen years of war, there is no better time to re-examine the tenets of our military strategy. Base Nation is an essential contribution to that debate."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a five-star academic work, a superb up-to-date compilation of what can be known legally and ethically about US military bases in all forms from the formal to the undeclared and covert, around the world. It's inclusion in the American Empire Project puts the author in the company of such great scholars and iconoclastic observers as Andrew Bacevich, Noam Chomsky, Robert Dreyfuss, Chalmers Johnson, and Howard Zinn. The author provides a compelling combination of history, anthropological-sociological narrative, and political-economic calculation as to the cost of what some estimate to be as many as 1,000 bases around the world. The references are a fine mix of books, articles, online sources, and as a good range of Government Accountability Office (GAO), Congressional Research Service (CRS), and other limited edition publications including PhD theses. I find multiple bottom lines in this book that could but does not go far enough, but is certainly an excellent starting point for getting to a total true cost that I believe is at least five times the author's calculation of \$170 billion a year and that is only in relation to total cost in dollars -- if the cost of environmental pollution, geoengineering, false flag terrorism, and everything else is added up, the overseas bases that enable our "secret teams" and our not so secret occupying forces are the base of a multi-trillion dollar criminal industry that leaves no country untouched.

Because of government and military/industrial secrecy, it is not common knowledge that the American military maintains more than 800 bases outside the USA. Considering there are only 200 or so countries in the world, and a good number of them are enemies of the USA, that is a frightening number. It gets more frightening as David Vine describes them, their effect on the locals, their draining of vast pools of tax dollars, and their often irrational rationale for existing. Basically, the military wants to grab as much territory as it can, and once it has a foothold, it is loath to give anything back, even if it is of no military use. The main tool it uses seems to be scope creep. The military will tell Congress it only wants a small installation, very inexpensive, with few personnel. But once built, it expands and gets added to ad infinitum. Vine says construction spending is out of control. The military maintains 170 golf courses, and offers all kinds of admittedly socialistic benefits that soldiers and their families dote on. This includes pay premiums, housing, healthcare, and shipping personal vehicles around the world free, along with all their belongings. It also maintains dictators and criminals. By placing bases in their countries, they imply a level of stability and longevity the locals might not appreciate, what Vine calls a pattern of U.S. support for violence and repression. • The same people we say we don't like are compromising our military with these deals. US bases actually make the world more dangerous, Vine says. One of the more offensive situations is in Honduras, where the massive Soto-Cano Airbase does not officially exist.

The Honduran constitution forbids foreign troops.

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