

US Military Bases on Guam in Theoretical and Global Context

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I am honored to have been invited to give the Presidential Lecture here at the University of Guam, and especially grateful to Robert Underwood and a good number of the people I see here in this room for having helped me to understand Guam's situation over the course of the last several years. Guam is a most remarkable place, with a history of suffering, resilience, and cultural distinctiveness like no other in the Pacific or the world, for that matter. I count myself very lucky to have begun to understand just a bit about it.

I first came to Guam in 1977 – if you can believe that's true of someone *this* fresh from high school. That first visit involved a very brief stay over on my way to Ifalik atoll in the FSM for ethnographic fieldwork that was part of my graduate training as an anthropologist. I must tell you now of my mis-education then, when I could come to this nation of islands without having first learned – through many years of education in US schools — the hard facts about the colonial status of the area to which I was coming. My anthropological training back then focused, as most such programs did, on the beauty of indigenous ideas and rituals, of kinship systems and healing practices. However helpful attention to such things was toward the goal of a humane and anti-racist understanding of the world, the cultural worlds that anthropology had tried to document were treated as if they occurred in a vacuum, outside of the influence of powerful economic and political forces and outside of history.

My mis-education led me to be surprised when my initial permission to travel to Ifalik was granted not by Chamorros and Carolinians, but by US bureaucrats, then operating as Trust Territory officials.

I only then came to realize what this all actually meant – that Ifalik, like Guam, has had an deeply colonial history, and that the lives the people there have led were in some ways of their own creative making and in other ways they were the result of choices by people in other remote locations, most recently in Tokyo and Washington, DC.

Such is no less true in 2009 than it was in 1950 or 1977, as I do not have to tell you here. It is the reason you wait to hear exactly how many tens of thousands of new people and how many new vehicles will be visited on the island, about how many over flights and aircraft carrier visits, and toxic trickles or spills. It is why you wait, not for rent payments for the land, but for the dollar amount of payments for some percentage of the

externalized costs of the military operations that the people of Guam will bear. That is your colonial history and colonial situation – and I say this with all respect to those who take their US citizenship seriously and want to make claims to full citizenship on the foundation of the limited citizenship they now have. And I say that with respect to the military members of the audience who are simply doing their duty to the US civilian leadership who have sent them here to establish and run the bases. And I say it with the knowledge that many of Guam’s citizens have been acting in the great good faith that they should be able to make their own choices about whether Guam becomes even more of a battleship or not. But social science will call it nothing more than colonial when a people have not historically chosen their most powerful leaders and have been told to background their own national identity in favor of that of the power which has ultimate rule. The US presence in Guam is properly called imperial, because the US is an empire in the strict sense of the term as used by historians and other social analysts of political forms.

Social science has another concept relevant to Guam’s situation, and that is militarization. Here is its definition, and it helps describe the process by which 14 year olds are in uniform and carrying proxy rifles in JROTC units around the island, why a fifth to a quarter of high school graduates enter the military, and why the identity of the island has over time shifted from a land of farmers to a land of war survivors to a land of loyal Americans to a land that is, proudly, “the Tip of the Spear,” that is, a land that is a weapon. This historical change – the process of militarization – has been visible to some, but more often, hidden in plain sight.

Outline of talk

I want to talk tonight about the US military basing system around the world and on the US mainland. I will discuss the vast scale, impact and rationale for the bases. It may seem strange for me to come here to tell you what it means to live next to military facilities, but I think there is value in my doing this for two reasons:

- (1) To study them with the tools of anthropology and the perspective of social science allows us to question the common sense about them and to see invisible processes.
- (2) Like most social phenomena, bases are often hidden in plain sight. They are normalized. Your bases have been partially denormalized by the massive growth projected for them, but much remains invisible, accepted, again, in a word, normalized.
- (3) Like social phenomena in which power is involved, their effects can be systematically hidden by advertising, fear, and public relations work.

Military base communities are in many ways as distinctive sociologically and anthropologically as the military bases they sit next to, because they respond in almost every way to the presence of those bases. They are not simply independent neighbors, as again I do not need to tell you, but over time become conjoined, although one always much more powerful than the other.

The US military basing system

Officially, over 190,000 troops and 115,000 civilian employees are massed in 909 military facilities in 46 countries and territories. There, the US military owns or rents 795,000 acres of land, and 26,000 buildings and structures valued at \$146 billion. 4564 bases are located in the domestic United States. These official numbers are quite misleading as to the scale of US overseas military basing, however. That is because they exclude the massive buildup of new bases and troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as secret or unacknowledged facilities in Israel, Kuwait, the Philippines and many other places. \$2 billion in military construction money has been expended in only three years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Just one facility in Iraq, Balad Air Base, houses 30,000 troops and 10,000 contractors, and extends across 16 square miles with an additional 12 square mile “security perimeter.”

These military facilities include sprawling Army bases with airfields and McDonalds and schools, and small listening posts. They include artillery testing ranges, and berthed aircraft carriers.[1] While the bases are literally barracks and weapons depots and staging areas for war making and ship repair facilities and golf courses and basketball courts, they are also political claims, spoils of war, arms sales showrooms, toxic industrial sites, laboratories for cultural (mis)communication, and collections of customers for local shops, services, bars, and prostitution.

The environmental, political, and economic impact of these bases is enormous – as you well know. While some people benefit from the coming of a base, at least temporarily, most communities and many within them pay a high price: their farm land taken for bases (the news reports say Tinian is about to have 80 percent of its agricultural land taken), their bodies attacked by cancers and neurological disorders because of military toxic exposures, their neighbors imprisoned, tortured and disappeared by the autocratic regimes that survive on US military and political support given as a form of tacit rent for the bases. Global opposition to U.S. basing has been widespread and growing, however.

Military bases should also include the eleven US aircraft carriers, as the US Navy refers to each as “four and a half acres of sovereign US territory.” These moveable bases and their land-based counterparts are just the most visible part of the larger picture of US military presence overseas. This picture of military access includes:

- (1) US military training of foreign forces, often in conjunction with the provision of US weaponry
- (2) joint exercises meant to enhance US soldiers’ exposure to a variety of operating environments from jungle to desert to urban terrain and interoperability across national militaries, and
- (3) legal arrangements made to gain overflight rights and other forms of ad hoc use of others’ territory as well as to preposition military equipment there. In all of these realms, the US is in a class by itself, no adversary or ally maintaining anything comparable in terms of its scope, depth and global reach.

These three elements come with problems: The training programs strengthen the power of military forces in relation to other sectors within those countries, sometimes with fragile democracies. Fully 38 percent of those countries with US basing were cited in 2002 for their poor human rights record (Lumpe 2002:16). The exercises have sometimes been provocative to other nations, and in some cases have become the pretext for substantial and permanent positioning of troops; in recent years, for example, the US has run approximately 20 exercises annually on Philippine soil. The attempt to gain access has also meant substantial interference in the affairs of other nations: for example, lobbying to change the Philippine and Japanese constitutions to allow, respectively, foreign troop basing, US nuclear weapons, and a more-than-defensive military in the service of US wars, in the case of Japan. US military and civilian officials are joined in their efforts by intelligence agents passing as businessmen or diplomats; in 2005, the US Ambassador to the Philippines created a furor by mentioning that the US has 70 agents operating in Mindanao alone.

Given the sensitivity about sovereignty or and the costs of having the US in their country [aside: imagine what it would take for the Chinese to get a military base in California], elaborate bilateral negotiations result in the exchange of weapons, cash, and trade privileges for overflight and land use rights. Less explicitly, but no less importantly, rice import levels or immigration rights to the US or overlooking human rights abuses have been the currency of exchange.

Bases are the literal and symbolic anchors, and the most visible centerpieces, of the U.S. military presence overseas. To understand where those bases are and how they are being used is essential for understanding the United States' relationship with the rest of the world, the role of coercion in it, and its political economic complexion. I ask why this empire of bases was established in the first place, how the bases are currently configured around the world and how that configuration is changing.

What are bases for?

Foreign military bases have been established throughout the history of expanding states and warfare. They proliferate where a state has imperial ambitions, either through direct control of territory or through indirect control over the political economy, laws, and foreign policy of other places. Whether or not it recognizes itself as such, a country can be called an empire when it projects substantial power with the aim of asserting and maintaining dominance over other regions. Those policies succeed when wealth is extracted from peripheral areas, and redistributed to the imperial center. Empires, then, have historically been associated with a growing gap between the wealth and welfare of the powerful center and the regions it dominates. Alongside and supporting these goals has often been elevated self-regard in the imperial power, or a sense of racial, cultural, or social superiority.

The descriptors empire and imperialism have been applied to the Romans, Incas, Mongols, Persians, Portuguese, Spanish, Ottomans, Dutch, British, Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United States, among others. Despite the striking differences between each of these cases, each used military bases to maintain some forms of rule

over regions far from their center. The bases eroded the sovereignty of allied states on which they were established by treaty; the Roman Empire was accomplished not only by conquest, but also “by taking her weaker [but still sovereign] neighbors under her wing and protecting them against her and their stronger neighbors... The most that Rome asked of them in terms of territory was the cessation, here and there, of a patch of ground for the plantation of a Roman fortress” (Magdoff et al. 2002).

What have military bases accomplished for these empires through history? Bases are usually presented, above all, as having rational, strategic purposes; the empire claims that they provide forward defense for the homeland, supply other nations with security, and facilitate the control of trade routes and resources. They have been used to protect non-economic actors and their agendas as well – missionaries, political operatives, and aid workers among them. Bases have been used to control the political and economic life of the host nation. Politically, bases serve to encourage other governments’ endorsement of the empire’s military and other foreign policy. Corporations and the military itself as an organization have a powerful stake in bases’ continued existence regardless of their strategic value (Johnson 2004).

Alongside their military and economic functions, bases have symbolic and psychological dimensions. They are highly visible expressions of a nation’s will to status and power. Strategic elites have built bases as a visible sign of the nation’s standing, much as they have constructed monuments and battleships. So, too, contemporary US politicians and the public have treated the number of their bases as indicators of the nation’s hyperstatus and hyperpower. More darkly, overseas military bases can also be seen as symptoms of irrational or untethered fears, even paranoia, as they are built with the long-term goal of taming a world perceived to be out of control. Empires frequently misperceive the world as rife with threats and themselves as objects of violent hostility from others. Militaries’ interest in organizational survival has also contributed to the amplification of this fear and imperial basing structures as the solution as they “sell themselves” to their populace by exaggerating threats, underestimating the costs of basing and war itself, as well as understating the obstacles facing preemption and belligerence (Van Evera 2001).

As the world economy and its technological substructures have changed, so have the roles of foreign bases. By 1500, new sailing technologies allowed much longer distance voyages, even circumnavigational ones, and so empires could aspire to long networks of coastal naval bases to facilitate the control of sea lanes and trade. They were established at distances that would allow provisioning the ship, taking on fresh fruit that would protect sailors from scurvy, and so on. By the 21st century, technological advances have at least theoretically eliminated many of the reasons for foreign bases, given the possibilities of in transit refueling of jets and aircraft carriers, the nuclear powering of submarines and battleships, and other advances in sea and airlift of military personnel and equipment. Bases have, nevertheless, continued their ineluctable expansion.

States that invest their people’s wealth in overseas bases have paid direct as well as

opportunity costs, whose consequences in the long run have usually been collapse of the empire. In *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Kennedy notes that previous empires which established and tenaciously held onto overseas bases inevitably saw their wealth and power decay as they chose “to devote a large proportion of its total income to ‘protection,’ leaving less for ‘productive investment,’ it is likely to find its economic output slowing down, with dire implications for its long-term capacity to maintain both its citizens’ consumption demands and its international position” (Kennedy 1987:539).

Nonetheless, U.S. defense officials and scholars have continued to argue that bases lead to “enhanced national security and successful foreign policy” because they provide “a credible capacity to move, employ, and sustain military forces abroad,” (Blaker 1990:3) and the ability “to impose the will of the United States and its coalition partners on any adversaries.” This belief helps sustain the US basing structure, which far exceeds any the world has seen: this is so in terms of its global reach, depth, and cost, as well as its impact on geopolitics in all regions of the world, particularly the Asia-Pacific.

A short history of US basing

After consolidation of continental dominance, there were three periods of expansive global ambition in US history beginning in 1898, 1945, and 2001. Each is associated with the acquisition of significant numbers of new overseas military bases. The Spanish-American war resulted in the acquisition of a number of colonies, but the US basing system was far smaller than that of its political and economic peers including many European nations as well as Japan. US soldiers were stationed in just 14 bases, some quite small, in Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Midway, Wake, and Guam, the Philippines, Shanghai, two in the Aleutians, American Samoa, and Johnston Island (Harkavy 1982). This small number was the result in part of a strong anti-statist and anti-militarist strain in US political culture (Sherry 1995). From the perspective of many in the US through the inter-war period, to build bases would be to risk unwarranted entanglement in others’ conflicts.

England had most of the bases of this period, with some countries with large militaries and even some with expansive ambitions having relatively few overseas bases; Germany and the Soviet Union had almost none. But the attempt to acquire such bases would be a contributing cause of World War II (Harkavy 1989:5).

From 14 bases in 38, by the end of WW II, the United States had an astounding 30,000 installations large and small in approximately 100 countries. While this number contracted significantly, it went on to provide the sinews for the rise to global hegemony of the United States (Blaker 1990:22). Certain ideas about basing and what it accomplished were to be retained from World War II as well, including the belief that “its extensive overseas basing system was a legitimate and necessary instrument of U.S. power, morally justified and a rightful symbol of the U.S. role in the world” (Blaker 1990:28).

Nonetheless, pressure came from Australia, France, and England, as well as from

Panama, Denmark and Iceland, for return of bases in their own territory or colonies, and domestically to demobilize the twelve million man military (a larger military would have been needed to maintain the vast basing system). More important than the shrinking number of bases, however, was the codification of US military access rights around the world in a comprehensive set of legal documents. These established security alliances with multiple states within Europe (NATO), the Middle East and South Asia (CENTO), and Southeast Asia (SEATO), and they included bilateral arrangements with Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. These alliances assumed a common security interest between the United States and other countries and were the charter for US basing in each place. Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) were crafted in each country to specify what the military could do; these usually gave US soldiers broad immunity from prosecution for crimes committed and environmental damage created. These agreements and subsequent base operations have usually been shrouded in secrecy.

In the United States, the National Security Act of 1947, along with a variety of executive orders, instituted what can be called a second, secret government or the “national security state”, which created the National Security Agency, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency and gave the US president expansive new imperial powers. From this point on, domestic and especially foreign military activities and bases were to be heavily masked from public oversight (Lens 1987). Many of those unaccountable funds then and now go into use overseas, flowing out of US embassies and military bases. Including use to interfere in the domestic affairs of nations in which it has had or desired military access, including attempts to influence votes on and change anti-nuclear and anti-war provisions in the Constitutions of the Pacific nation of Belau and of Japan.

Nonetheless, over the second half of the 20th century, the United States was either evicted or voluntarily left bases in dozens of countries.[2] Between 1947 and 1990, the US was asked to leave France, Yugoslavia, Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Vietnam, Indonesia, Peru, Mexico, and Venezuela. Popular and political objection to the bases in Spain, the Philippines, Greece, and Turkey in the 1980s enabled those governments to negotiate significantly more compensation from the United States. Portugal threatened to evict the US from important bases in the Azores, unless it ceased its support for independence for its African colonies, a demand with which the US complied.[3] In the 1990s and later, the US was sent packing, most significantly, from the Philippines, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Vieques, and Uzbekistan.

At the same time, US bases were newly built after 1947 in remarkable numbers (241) in the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as in Italy, Britain, and Japan (Blaker 1990:45). The defeated Axis powers continued to host the most significant numbers of US bases: at its height, Japan was peppered with 3,800 US installations.

As battles become bases, so bases become battles; the bases in East Asia acquired in the Spanish American War and in World War II, such as Guam, Okinawa and the Philippines, became the primary sites from which the United States waged war on

Vietnam. Without them, the costs and logistical obstacles for the US would have been immense. The number of bombing runs over North and South Vietnam required tons of bombs unloaded, for example, at the Naval Station in Guam, stored at the Naval Magazine in the southern area of the island, and then shipped up to be loaded onto B-52s at Andersen Air Force Base every day during years of the war. The morale of ground troops based in Vietnam, as fragile as it was to become through the latter part of the 1960s, depended on R & R at bases throughout East and Southeast Asia which would allow them to leave the war zone and yet be shipped back quickly and inexpensively for further fighting (Baker 2004:76). In addition to the bases' role in fighting these large and overt wars, they facilitated the movement of military assets to accomplish the over 200 military interventions the US waged in the Cold War period (Blum 1995).

While speed of deployment is framed as an important continued reason for forward basing, troops could be deployed anywhere in the world from US bases without having to touch down en route. In fact, US soldiers are being increasingly billeted on US territory, including such far-flung areas as Guam, which is presently slated for a larger buildup, for this reason as well as to avoid the political and other costs of foreign deployment.

With the will to gain military control of space, as well as gather intelligence, the US over time, and especially in the 1990s, established a large number of new military bases to facilitate the strategic use of communications and space technologies. Military R&D (the Pentagon spent over \$52 billion in 2005 and employed over 90,000 scientists) and corporate profits to be made in the development and deployment of the resulting technologies have been significant factors in the ever larger numbers of technical facilities on foreign soil. These include such things as missile early-warning radar, signals intelligence, space tracking telescopes and laser sources, satellite control, downwind air sampling monitors, and research facilities for everything from weapons testing to meteorology. Missile defense systems and network centric warfare increasingly rely on satellite technology and drones with associated requirements for ground facilities. These facilities have often been established in violation of arms control agreements such as the 1967 Outer Space Treaty meant to limit the militarization of space.

The assumption that US bases served local interests in a shared ideological and security project dominated into the 1960s: allowing base access showed a commitment to fight Communism and gratitude for US military assistance. But with decolonization and the US war in Vietnam, such arguments began to lose their power, and the number of US overseas bases declined from an early 1960s peak. Where access was once automatic, many countries now had increased leverage over what the US had to give in exchange for basing rights, and those rights could be restricted in a variety of important ways, including through environmental and other regulations. The bargaining chips used by the US were increasingly sophisticated weapons, as well as rent payments for the land on which bases were established.[4] These exchanges were often become linked with trade and other kinds of agreements, such as access to oil and other raw materials

and investment opportunities (Harkavy 1982:337). They also, particularly when advanced weaponry is the medium of exchange, have had destabilizing effects on regional arms balances. From the earlier ideological rationale for the bases, global post-war recovery and decreasing inequality between the US and countries – mostly in the global North – that housed the majority of US bases, led to a more pragmatic or economic grounding to basing negotiations, albeit often thinly veiled by the language of friendship and common ideological bent. The 1980s saw countries whose populations and governments had strongly opposed US military presence, such as Greece, agree to US bases on their soil only because they were in need of the cash, and Burma, a neutral but very poor state, entered negotiations with the US over basing troops there (Harkavy 1989:4-5).

The third period of accelerated imperial ambition began in 2000, with the election of George Bush and the ascendancy to power of a group of leaders committed to a more aggressive and unilateral use of military power, their ability to do so radically precipitated and allowed by the attacks of 9/11. They wanted “a network of ‘deployment bases’ or ‘forward operating bases’ to increase the reach of current and future forces” and focused on the need for bases in Iraq: “While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.” This plan for expanded US military presence around the world has been put into action, particularly in the Middle East, the Russian perimeter, and, now, Africa.

Pentagon transformation plans design US military bases to operate even more uniformly as offensive, expeditionary platforms from which military capabilities can be projected quickly, anywhere. Where bases in Korea, for example, were once meant centrally to defend South Korea from attack from the north, they are now, like bases everywhere, meant primarily to project power in any number of directions and serve as stepping stones to battles far from themselves. The Global Defense Posture Review of 2004 announced these changes, focusing not just on reorienting the footprint of US bases away from Cold War locations, but on grounding imperial ambitions through remaking legal arrangements that support expanded military activities with other allied countries and prepositioning equipment in those countries to be able to “surge” military force quickly, anywhere.

The Department of Defense currently distinguishes between three types of military facilities. “Main operating bases” are those with permanent personnel, strong infrastructure, and often including family housing, such as Kadena Air Base in Japan and Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. “Forward operating sites” are “expandable warm facilit[ies] maintained with a limited U.S. military support presence and possibly prepositioned equipment,” such as Incirlik Air Base in Turkey and Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras (US Defense Department 2004:10). Finally, “cooperative security locations” are sites with few or no permanent US personnel, which are maintained by contractors or the host nation for occasional use by the US military, and often referred to as “lily pads.” In Thailand, for example, U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield has been used extensively for US combat runs over Iraq and Afghanistan. Others are now cropping up

around the world, especially throughout Africa, as in Dakar, Senegal where facilities and use rights have been newly established.

Are Guam's bases domestic or overseas bases? Are there racial underpinnings of the difference in how they are treated?

So far, I have been talking mostly of US bases on foreign soil. Where does Guam fit in here? Is Andersen AFB a domestic base or a foreign base? As you know, Guam is a US territory, neither a fully incorporated part of the US nor a free nation. The Guam license plate represents the wish of some, rather than the reality – which might perhaps be better, Guam, US sort of A. International legal norms make the status clear, however. Guam is a colony, and primarily a military colony, in keeping with the idea that the US' imperial history, especially in the second half of the 20th century, has been a military colonialism around the world.

Guam's status shifts by context, however. The DoD's Base Structure Report puts Guam and its 39,287 "owned" acres between Georgia and its 560,799 and Hawaii and its 175,911 acres. No SOFA regulates the US forces on Guam, and as far as I know, the DoD does not need to report each day to the government of Guam on how many soldiers have been brought in or sent out of Guam, nor is it negotiating with Guam about whether it will grow its bases on Guam

I think one very important and empirical measure of the degree to which Guam's bases are foreign or domestic can be indexed by the quality of care that has been taken with its environment and health. Overseas bases have seen environmental devastation. Unexploded ordnance killed 21 people in Panama before the US was evicted and continues to threaten communities nearby. In Germany, industrial solvents, firefighting chemicals, and varieties of waste have ruined ecological systems near some US bases. The Koreans are finding extremely high levels of military toxins in bases returned to them by the US from near the DMZ.

Environmental standards have not been high for domestic bases either, let it be said. Fort Bragg, for example, engaged in outdoor burning of very large numbers of its unwanted, old wooden barracks at one point in the 1970s, and an ancient water treatment plant was used on Fort Bragg up until quite recently. One can also point to the Formerly Used Defense Sites whose cleanup would be so expensive that they are termed "national sacrifice zones," or permanent no man's lands by some.

But the environmental and judicial standards that are negotiated into each country's SOFA have long been taken by activists as an index of how much respect their country's are accorded. If we measure the amount of toxins spilled onto Guam v. Germany v. Philippines v. California v. North Carolina, we could hypothesize that we would find a wide range of impact, in a scale that appears quite racial, with the US mainland at the top, Germany next, and the Philippines and Guam at the bottom. If Guam's political status were truly domestic, we might expect Guam to look more like the mainland in terms of how the environment has been cared for. It obviously does not.

But the internal racial history of the US itself demonstrates that the military base has

been a booby prize for many of the internally colonized in the US as well: the distinction between domestic and foreign bases has been blurry on the mainland, too. All domestic military bases are in fact, of course, built on Native American land, and even after that land was taken, the bases were often intentionally sited on land inhabited by poor white, black and Indian farmers. Thousands of them lost their land in the buildup to WW II in North Carolina alone.

And there, too, we can ask, as we ask on Guam, who benefited then and who benefits now from base building and base buildups? What costs are externalized and borne by others? And how has a rhetoric of national security over all contributed to the notion that the military can be and should be excepted from environmental protection standards?

The externalized costs of bases

The people of Guam have been engaged in a several year exercise of trying to detail the impact of military bases in order to gain some relief from the expected continuing externalization of the physical and social costs of military basing onto the people of Guam. One example would be the health and environmental effects and long term maintenance of roads, like Marine Drive and the suburbanization/car culture of Guam.

In this final section, I would like to discuss the economic impact of bases. Obviously the health and wellbeing effects of base are more crucial, but we need to speak about the economic effects because they are the primary thing that people in many base communities focus on. This is so for two reasons:

1. The military advertises that, focusing on dollars brought in via soldier's salaries, civilian work on post, and construction and other sub-contracts, particularly in domestic cases. So the First Hawaiian Bank published a Guam Economic Forecast that claimed "The military expansion is anticipated to benefit Guam's economy in the amount of \$1.5 billion per year once the process begins.[5]"

2. Those effects can be major and would appear overall positive (unlike the environmental, sovereignty, cultural, crime, noise, etc. effects)

But one of the reasons they look positive is because the powerful benefit and convince others that they, too, benefit even when they palpably do not. Moreover, the military has a large numbers of personnel, military and civilian, doing public relations work with communities to make that case. In addition, those locals who are most likely to benefit monetarily do similar PR work. For example, the Chamber of Commerce funded an early 2008 survey that found that "71 per cent of Guam residents supported an increase in the United States military presence, with nearly 80 per cent of the view that the increasing military presence would result in additional jobs and tax revenue; according to the poll, 60 per cent felt the additional Marines on the island would have a positive effect and would ultimately improve the island's quality of life.[6]" The methodology of

that study would be important to examine, however, as we know polls are often as much an attempt to create reality as to reflect it.

This is a cultural narrative, one that is purchased with media time and power. The narrative says “you will all benefit.”

What are the economic effects of bases?

1. The economic effects are – if you look at the US as a whole, primarily redistributive rather than generative (unlike, for e.g. manufacturing or education jobs). Certain sectors atrophy and others grow in military areas. In 2007 in Guam, for example, “While employment in manufacturing, transportation and public utilities and retail trade decreased, increases were seen for jobs in the service sector and public sector; with the construction sector experiencing the largest increase, that is, 1,450 jobs, or 35 per cent.[7]” More usually, retail jobs are the main type created, and they pay less than any other category of work, accelerating the growth of inequality.

2. The military is a highly toxic industrial operation and it externalizes much of its costs of operations to the civilian world, e.g. environmental waste, PTSD, lower human capital development of populations that have gone into the military. JROTC, for example, seems to add resources to school districts but in fact draws on significant local education resources, while serving as recruiting devices. The math on these costs – the subtraction from the general welfare and general public funds – is rarely done.

3. Military economies are volatile. While the “war cycle” is different from the business cycle, it also has booms and busts. For example, businesses in military personnel cities like Fayetteville regularly go under when service members are deployed. Median single family home prices on Guam went up 13 percent in 2006, 19 percent in 2007, and 10 percent in 2008. And a volatile real estate market encourages liquidation.

Conclusion

There are of course legal questions in the military buildup as well, and I will simply conclude with them. In her testimony before the UN Committee of 24 in 2008, Sabina Flores Peres referred to the extremity of “the level and grossness of the infraction” of the UN Charter by the US in its military buildup. This is not hyperbole, because Guam’s militarization is objectively more extreme in its concentration than that found virtually anywhere else on earth. There are only a few other areas that are in similar condition – all, not coincidentally islands such as Okinawa, Diego Garcia, and, in the past, Vieques.

Guam, objectively, has the highest ratio of US military spending and military hardware and land takings from indigenous populations of any place on earth. Here there might have been rivals in Diego Garcia or in some areas of the continental US if the US had not forcibly removed those indigenous landowners all together, something the US had hoped to do in Guam as well back in 1945. The level and grossness of the infraction

has to do with the racial hierarchy that fundamentally guides the US in its “negotiations” with other peoples over the sting of its military bases and the treatment they are accorded once the US settles in.

Endnotes

[1] The major current concentrations of U.S. sites outside those war zones are in South Korea, with 106 sites and 29,000 troops (which will be reduced by a third by 2008), Japan with 130 sites and 49,000 troops, most concentrated in Okinawa, and Germany with 287 sites and 64,000 troops. Guam with 28 facilities, covering 1/3 of the island’s land area, has nearly 6,600 airmen and soldiers and is slated to radically expand over the next several years (Base Structure Report FY2007).

[2] Between 1947 and 1988, the U.S. left 62 countries, 40 of them outside the Pacific Islands (Blaker 1990:34).

[3] Luis Nuno Rodrigues, ‘Trading “Human Rights” for “Base Rights”: Kennedy, Africa and the Azores’, Ms. Possession of the author, March 2006.

[4] Harkavy (1982:337) calls this the “arms-transfer-basing nexus” and sees the U.S. weaponry as having been key to maintaining both basing access and control over the client states in which the bases are located. Granting basing rights is not the only way to acquire advanced weaponry, however. Many countries purchased arms from both superpowers during the Cold War, and they are less likely to have US bases on their soil.

[5] Economic Forecast — Guam Edition 2006-2007, First Hawaiian Bank, pp. 8-9.

[6] <http://www.guampdn.com>, 18 February 2008.

[7] www.guamdol.net, September 2007, Current Employment Report.

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