



Japanese peace activists protest a U.S. base at historic Walden Pond. Photo: Joseph Gerson

## 9 Bases bring the risk of life-threatening accidents

Military accidents can kill and injure people. The most dangerous accidents involve nuclear weapons. In 1960, an attack aircraft rolled off the U.S. aircraft carrier Ticonderoga 80 miles off the coast of Okinawa, embedding its hydrogen bomb in the sea bed two miles below. More common are accidents like the Marine pilot whose low-flying jet severed a ski lift cable in Italy, killing 20 people; bombs that missed their practice targets, killing a civilian in Vieques, Puerto Rico, and destroying homes in the Korean village of Maehyangri; and the stray bullets and shells used in live-fire exercises that strike people's homes and property in Kin Town, Okinawa.

## 10 Military bases are expensive and divert funding from addressing urgent human needs at home and abroad

The Pentagon squanders tens of billions of dollars on foreign military bases. In addition to war-fighting capabilities, expenses include housing for families of U.S. soldiers, commissaries where U.S. troops and their families enjoy special discounts, and pristine golf courses. Meanwhile, human needs of both

U.S. and host nation people go unmet. In Japan and other host nations, anger is building as their tax dollars are used to help pay for the intrusive military bases and their luxury accommodations, while local people go without adequate housing and social services.



Native Hawaiians protesting the impending presence of the Stryker Brigade. Photo: Ikaika Hussey

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# TEN REASONS

Why  
U.S.  
Military  
Bases  
Must Go



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## 1 Bases increase the likelihood of war

The U.S. maintains an unprecedented infrastructure of more than 700 U.S. foreign military bases. In recent years such bases have been essential to the U.S. wars against Iraq, the 1998 war against Serbia, the U.S. invasion of Panama, and the current wars within Colombia and the Philippines. The 200-plus U.S. military bases and installations in Japan and South Korea increase the likelihood of future U.S. wars against North Korea and China.

## 2 Bases provide a launching point for nuclear attack

In many ways, the U.S. first-strike nuclear doctrine is made possible by the forward deployment of nuclear weapons in Belgium, Britain, Greece, Germany, Holland, and Turkey. U.S. communications bases in Britain, Japan, Australia, and other nations are essential for communicating orders to initiate nuclear war and for targeting nuclear and other high-tech weapons.

## 3 Bases undermine the sovereignty of nations

Hawai'i, the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba were invaded and occupied by the U.S. because they were ideal sites for bases needed to conquer markets in China, elsewhere in Asia, and Latin America. Colonial and client governments were imposed or created by the U.S. to ensure continued U.S. access to the bases. After the wars in which they were defeated, the U.S. has insisted that Japan, Germany, Serbia and other nations "host" U.S. military bases for the long term. Consistent with this tradition, the Bush administration is spending \$1 billion a year for "enduring" military bases in Iraq.



International communities post a banner protesting the U.S. military base in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Photo: Natalia Cardona

## 4 Bases hurt democracy and human rights

The U.S. has supported or imposed dictators and other repressive governments to gain or preserve access to military bases. For more than a decade, Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan supported the brutal Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines to preserve the U.S. hold on strategically located air and naval bases. In Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the U.S. has defended repressive monarchies to secure its military bases as well as privileged access to oil reserves. The presence of U.S. military bases contributes to the cultural genocide of indigenous peoples in Hawai'i and Guam.

## 5 Often bases are built on seized property

The recent bulldozing of Daechuri village in South Korea to make way for a new U.S. military headquarters while inhabitants protested was not unique. Military bases are often built on seized private property, on land which the host nation forces its citizens to "rent" to the U.S., or on communal property. The most extreme case is the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. There, to make way for two mile-

long runways, a massive naval port, and pre-positioned U.S. weapons, all of the island's people were deported.

## 6 Bases reinforce violent and dehumanizing treatment of women and girls

Foreign military bases threaten women and children in host communities, in poor countries, female troops, and the family members of U.S. service men. The use of communities near bases for "Rest and Relaxation" makes local children and women, especially sex workers, vulnerable to sexual harassment, rape, beatings, and murder. Levels of sexual violence can be a function of the relative power of host nations. Last year, U.S. Marines involved in the rape of a Filipina were shielded by provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement in the Philippines. In contrast, comparable agreements between the U.S. and oil-rich Gulf states have at least partly shielded local women from sexual aggression by U.S. troops. Some service men return home to the U.S. and commit domestic violence within their homes. In addition, female service members risk being raped by their male counterparts, a situation that is often exacerbated by long-term deployments.

## 7 Bases condone criminal activities committed by U.S. troops

Most GIs are law-abiding, but many alienated and drunken troops do commit a disproportionate number of crimes. Worse, they are often protected by the provisions of unequal treaties which give the U.S. military "primary right to exercise jurisdiction over members of the U.S. armed forces." In Korea, a deep wound was the killing of two schoolgirls who were run over by a U.S. tank; no one was held accountable. In 2006 in the Philippines, after a U.S. Marine was convicted of rape in a Philippines court, the U.S. exerted diplomatic pressure at the highest level to effect his removal, during the appeal process, to the U.S. Embassy (rather than the Philippines jail to which the judge had consigned him). However, the service men are not only perpetrators, but they also struggle in their circumstances, as they are sent abroad with little preparation or understanding of the local culture, language, and social conditions, which brings about anger and fear against their surroundings and often drives them to commit crimes.

## 8 Bases cause environmental contamination and serious health risks

In 2000, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright conceded the legacy of "serious public and environmental problems" caused by U.S. military bases in the Philippines but she reiterated that the U.S. has no legal obligation to clean up the deadly residue. The U.S. Defense Department has identified at least 70 military sites in Europe where its bases have caused serious environmental damage. Various military toxics are widespread, and often lead to many life-threatening and debilitating diseases, such as lung cancer, blood disorders, leukemia, ulceration, liver and brain damage, and damage to the central nervous system. In one egregious case, the U.S. military was caught disposing of deadly formaldehyde directly into the Han River that runs through Seoul, South Korea.