

GLOBAL NET OF US MILITARY BASES GUARENTEE NEVER ENDING WAR

Hans-Peter Richter

German Peace Council, member of the board

In March 2007 the first world conference against foreign military bases will be held in Ecuador by the Global Network against foreign military bases, which was established in January 2004 in Mumbai. From the foreign military bases spreads war into all parts of the world. It would be a important step towards peace if the global peace movement can be active against them.

By its more than 1000 military bases the USA wants to have "full spectrum dominance" as planned in the strategy paper "Vision 2020" of the Rumsfeld commission. From 1950 to 1990 the pretext for the military bases was to fight communism, now after the attack against the WTC in New York it is "the war against terror". There are voices that the USA itself created this attack, anyway the USA profits much by using this pretext to wage war against Afghanistan and Iraq and made agreements with many states for the establishing new military bases, so the number of states with US military bases is now 93.

For military dominance the USA has divided the world into nine commands. "There are nine unified combatant commands. Five have regional responsibilities, and four have functional responsibilities. **EUCOM** is considered a regional combatant command, with responsibility for all of Europe, most of Africa, and parts of the Middle East. European Command plans for regional contingencies, and when ordered, employs military forces within the region, either as a Standing Joint Force Headquarters, or through specialized Joint Task Forces. EUCOM is the only regional combatant command with a headquarters forward deployed outside the United States. Other Unified Combatant Commands include Pacific Command (**PACOM**), Southern Command (**SOUTHCOM**), Central Command (**CENTCOM**), Northern Command (**NORTHCOM**), Special Operations Command (**SOCOM**), Strategic Command (**STRATCOM**), Joint Forces Command (**JFCOM**), Transportation Command, (**TRANSCOM**)."

EUCOM is responsible for over 90 countries and territories, from the North Cape of Norway, through the waters of the Baltic and Mediterranean seas, most of Europe, parts of the Middle East, to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

SOUTHCOM encompasses 30 countries (19 in Central and South America and 12 in the Caribbean).

CENTCOM is responsible for a region consisting of 27 countries in Northeast Africa, Southwest and Central Asia, and the island nation of the Seychelles.

NORTHCOM includes air, land and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles. It also includes the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida, Canada and Mexico.

PACOM is responsible for a region consisting of the Pacific Ocean, 43 countries, 20 territories and possessions, including China, Russia, India, Korea, Japan, Australia, Indonesia and 10 U.S. territories, like Hawaii and Alaska.

What the bases are for

Following Joseph Gerson the US bases have 7 purposes:

To reinforce the status quo: for example the deterrent role of U.S. bases in South Korea, and the intimidating role of many of the U.S. bases in Middle East which are designed to ensure continued U.S. privileged access to, and control of, the region's oil

To encircle enemies: as was the case with the Soviet Union and China during Cold War and China to this day. This is a role played by U.S. bases in Korea, Japan, Philippines, Australia, Pakistan, Diego Garcia, and in many of the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia

To serve & reinforce the aircraft carriers, destroyers, nuclear armed submarines and other warships of the U.S. Navy. This includes bases in Okinawa, Yokuska outside Tokyo, and "visiting forces" and "access" agreements in the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and many other countries.

To train U.S. forces, as was long the case for bombardiers in Vieques and as jungle war fighting and other training which continues in Okinawa.

To function as jumping off points for U.S. foreign military interventions as: the cases of Okinawa, the Philippines, now Korea with the changing missions of U.S. forces here, Spain, Italy, Honduras, Germany and the new bases in Eastern Europe, Kuwait and likely in Iraq.

To facilitate C3I: command, control, communications and intelligence, including essential roles in nuclear war fighting, and the use of space for intelligence and warfare as we saw in Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. bases in Okinawa, Qatar, Australia and even China serve these functions.

To control the governments of host nations. Japan, Korea (where U.S. military forces were deeply involved in military coups,) Germany, Saudi Arabia, and today's Iraq begin the list.

Chalmers Johnson sees also an economical aspect. By its military power the USA serves the US companies and the weapons industry. This concerns big parts of the US economy, like Kellogg, Brown & Root Company, daughter of the Haliburton Corporation, which build and maintain the wide spread outposts, including the comfortable housing of the uniformed personal, which is well fed and enjoys the recreation centres, the 234 gulf ranges and the ski resort in Garmisch.

In the last month another purpose of the US bases became public. Using the international network of US bases the CIA can kidnap any person in any country under the pretext to be suspicious being a terrorist and kill him or bring him in any other country for investigation and torture. The media in Germany reported about "black sites" in Poland and Romania. There are many cases of such CIA transports from Aviano in Italy and Ramstein and Frankfurt to Guantanamo and Afghanistan. In the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 there were more than 85 CIA flights from Frankfurt-Rhine-Main-Airbase. So Germany is not only the military center in northern Europe but also very important for the CIA, which can act without any control. I assume that in all the countries with US military bases there exist also secret prisons, centers where human rights are broken blatantly.

Germany plays a key role

If you compare the US military bases outside the USA you will see that Germany today has more US-bases and more US-soldiers (68,000), than any other country except Iraq and Afghanistan. So you can say Germany is still a occupied country; the US troops and the British never left Germany since 1945.

More than 60% of the US troops in Europe are stationed in Germany. In Germany **Ramstein** is the biggest US-airbase outside the USA. **Grafenwöhr** is the biggest army training area outside the USA. The current war against Iraq showed again the strategic importance of the German bases for the logistic, bringing the supply to the gulf from Ramstein and starting the fighter jets from **Spangdahlen**. Both the bases were enlarged.

Air Force Gen. Charles F. Wald, deputy of General Jones (EUCOM), interviewed by the Air Force's internal information news service in August 2003, said, "Ramstein was critical to the success of the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom missions. A lot of airlift aircraft landed at Ramstein" which "has significant infrastructure, and we have a great relationship with the Germans. It makes a lot of sense to keep places like Ramstein and Spangdahlem and **Moron [AB], Spain**, open because they have large ramps that can handle large numbers of aircraft." "One of the things we like about Ramstein, for example, is the footprint of one strategic flight without refueling for an airlifter," Wald said. "You can take off from the States, no refueling, [and] land at Ramstein."

Of the 68,000 US soldiers stationed in Germany today, the US Army maintains nearly 59,000, along with a squadron of US Air Force and the European headquarters of the Marine Corps. A main contingent of the army is the V corps in Heidelberg (approx. 42,000 soldiers) under the command of lieutenant general Ricardo S. Sanchez.

In **Stuttgart** is the central command of the American forces in Europe (**EUCOM**). EUCOM gives orders to 112 000 soldiers on 499 military bases in **Europe, Middle East and Africa**, this concerns 68 000 in Germany, 12 000 in the UK, 2 000 in Portugal, Spain, 10 000 in Italy, 2000 in Turkey, also soldiers in **Greece, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg** and - very important - the **6. Fleet**, which is cruising in the Mediterranean Sea (home harbour Suda on the Greek island Crete) and consists of 14 000 sailors. Important air- and sea-bases are **Lajes Field** (Portugal), **Incirlik** (Turkey), **Aviano, Sigonella, La Maddalena, Livorno und Vicenza (Italy)**, **"Able Sentry"** (Macedonia), **"Camp Bondsteel"** (Kosovo) oder **"Comanche", "Dobol" und "Mc Govern"** (all in Bosnia).

1400 US soldiers are deployed in **Incirlic** (Turkey). From here the Iraq northern territories were observed and bombed until the war against Iraq began in 2003. In Incirlic are also US nuclear bombs.

In Poland a so called "Joint Force Training Center" was established in **Bydgoszcz**. New bases will be built in **Krsiny** and **Bidla Polaska**. The CIA used the Polish airfield in **Szymany**.

Beginning in 2003 the US first used the harbour of **Constanza** and the airbase **Mihail Kogalniceanu** in Romania. Also since 2003 Bulgaria allowed the use of the airbase **Sarafowo**. The Pentagon plans to deploy 15 000 soldiers in Romania and Bulgaria.

The legal status

The bases are **de facto extritorial areas**. The US-expert Chalmers Johnson wrote:

"America's 703 officially acknowledged foreign military enclaves (as of September 30, 2002), although structurally, legally, and conceptually different from colonies, are themselves something like microcolonies in that they are completely beyond the jurisdiction of the occupied nation¹. The United States virtually always negotiates a "status of forces agreement" (SOFA) with the ostensibly independent "host" nation, including countries whose legal systems are every bit (and perhaps more) sophisticated than our own... Rachel Cornwell and Andrew Wells, two authorities on status of forces agreements, conclude, "Most SOFAs are written so that national courts cannot exercise legal jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel who commit crimes against local people, except in special cases where the U.S. military authorities agree to transfer jurisdiction."²

You can find the legal frame for Germany in the **NATO-Status of forces agreement (SOFA)** from June, 19., 1951. There are **Additional Agreements to SOFA (ZA-NTS)** between

¹ The number of 703 U.S. military bases located in other people's countries is from the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (Installations and Environment), Base Structure Report (A Summary of DoD's Real Property Inventory) (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2003), www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2003/basestructure2003.pdf. The figure for 2001 was 725. For details and analysis of these reports, see Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), pp. 151-60. The figure 703 seriously underestimates the actual number since it omits secret intelligence bases, those disguised by national identities (e.g., Royal Air Force bases in Britain), those omitted in order to avoid embarrassment to foreign governments, and most of the bases in the Balkans, Persian Gulf, and Central Asia acquired in recent American wars.

² Rachel Cornwell and Andrew Wells, "Deploying Insecurity," *Peace Review* 11:3 (1999), p. 410.

Germany, Canada, Great Britain, Netherlands, Belgium and France, which have been modified 1993. There are special agreements for admission and coordination of manoeuvres from March 18., 1994.

Also for three US-German training shooting and bombing ranges there are administration agreements, which adapt regulations to the practice of the Bundeswehr. The same happened with three shared UK-German, and one shared range with Belgium, France and Netherlands.

The question is if the "allied forces" will obey this regulations, and if not what happens. I remind the incident in 1998 in **Cavalese (Italy)** where a US warplane killed 20 people of an alpine carriage lift while flying at dangerously low (and not permitted) levels. **A US-military tribunal** found the pilots not guilty.

This reflects an experience elsewhere in the world with US bases, violators and criminals will not be punished. They act in this awareness and make the military bases an **outlaw area**. Even worse is that using the military bases means **breaking international law**.

In a verdict on June 21, 2005, (BVerwG 2 WD 12.04) the highest administration court in Germany stated that the war against Iraq violated international law. It was a violation of the ban against violence of the Charter of the United Nations. There was neither a UN mandate nor could the USA use the excuse of self defence, which would only have been possible in the case of a direct attack against the USA and only as long the UN took no measures. Neither was the case. The (alleged) enemy's possession of weapons of mass destruction is no reason for war anyway.

The verdict stated that Germany gave aid for the violation of international law and therefore violated international law also, for the following reasons:

- allowing the use of the US and UK military bases on German territory,
- allowing the USA and UK to fly over German territory,
- guarding the US and UK military facilities in Germany,
- participation of German soldiers in AWACS-planes for Turkish air space.

The court stated: "The act of a state allowing that its territory, given for use to another state, is used by this state for an act of aggression is in itself an act of aggression." Germany should have been neutral in the US war against Iraq. This means the following acts are forbidden:

- transport of soldiers
- use of communication
- use of cars, airplanes and rockets.

Germany was obliged to arrest US soldiers

The court was even more strict: "Troops of conflicting parties, who pass a neutral territory, coming to the neutral territory after the start of the armed conflict are to be arrested. Only officers giving their word of honour not to leave the neutral Territory without permission, can be released."... "The obligation for internment comes from the very meaning of the law of neutrality, because only in this way can it be hindered, that armed conflicts are supported from neutral territory thus leading to an escalation of armed conflicts and including the neutral state. The Federal Republic of Germany was not released from this obligation of international law, in the case of the war, which began on March 20th, 2003, and in which we see severe violations of international law, by being a member of NATO, which includes also the USA and the UK (and other members of the war coalition)." ...

"Neither the NATO treaty nor the NATO Status of Forces Agreement nor the additional agreements to SOFA oblige the Federal Republic of Germany to support acts of NATO partners that violate international law or the UN Charter."

"A NATO state that prepares and makes war against international law, violates not only the UN Charter but also article I of the NATO treaty. Therein all NATO states are obliged "in accordance with the statutes of the United Nations to solve every international conflict, in which they take part, with peaceful means, so that the international peace and the security and justice are not endangered and to abstain from every threat or use of violence, which is not in the framework of the goals of the United Nations." "This means also that a war, which is not justified by article 51 of the UN Charter, also cannot represent or justify a 'NATO case of alliance' according to Art. 5 of the NATO treaty."

"A war of aggression by a NATO state, prohibited by the UN Charter, cannot become a war of defence by declaring the 'NATO case of alliance'".

According to the additional agreements to SOFA, the USA and UK have to ask the German government for allowance "if their military planes -outside the framework of NATO- use the German air space or airfields given for their disposal for transport of troops, deployed in the USA or UK, for stopover, refuelling or taking material or weapons on board on their way without NATO mandate to the war theatre outside the NATO area." Therefore the concerned German authorities, especially the German government, have the legal right in a case of conflict to control, if the deployed military forces use the yielded facilities (and the air space above) in every case only for 'duties of defence' according to the additional agreements to SOFA and the NATO treaty, or use or prepare them for other activities." The German government has to start and take "all necessary measures to hinder that actions and support for war in violation of international law are initiated from the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany. One more reason for this is Art. 2 of the treaty, concerning the final regulations about Germany (so called Two-Plus-Four Treaty), which was adopted as part of the framework for German reunification. This was the essential basis for establishment of the German union of states. By this treaty Germany is obliged by international law to take care, "that only peace comes from German territory."

Secret Agreements are invalid

"This is also valid for the case of secret agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and the USA and the UK, which are not registered and published by the Secretary of the United Nations in spite of Art. 102 of the UN Charter and which might foresee different arrangements in the case of a military conflict. Independent from the validity of such secret agreements, Art. 103 of the UN Charter, has to be fulfilled strictly. It says: ' In the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Members of the United Nations under the present Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail.'"

Indeed there seems to be such a secret agreement between the German government and the USA. This was mentioned in a radio broadcast with author Albrecht Müller, who worked in former German governments. He said that at the time of German reunification the US government was very anxious to ***loose (leave? give up?) their military bases in Germany. But that Chancellor Kohl made a secret agreement with the USA that they could use their bases for any reasons they wanted at any time. I heard the same from the former member of the German government Oskar Lafontaine at a conference in January 2006 in Berlin. He said that Germany in this sense is not a sovereign country like France.

This explains why the USA was allowed use of its German bases for the illegal war against Iraq.

Another violation of international law is the deployment of nuclear weapons in Germany. This is forbidden by the NPT and the advisory opinion of the International Court from July 8th, 1996.

Generally international law and the constitution is broken by the SOFA and additional agreements.

Nuclear Sharing within NATO

In Europe the USA have deployed 480 nuclear bombs, in Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Turkey. The NATO still follows the **doctrine of first use**. In the strategy concept of NATO nuclear weapons still have an important role. But the deployment of US nuclear bombs in countries, which don't have own nuclear bombs, is a violation of international law (**NPT-treaty**) and also prohibited by the **advisory opinion of the International Court** from July, 8th, 1996.

Abandonment of Sovereignty and Justice

In every SOFA the uncontrolled entering of US soldiers into the host nations is guaranteed. So the military bases are de facto extraterritorial areas. So the 93 states which have agreed on SOFAs have abandoned a part of their sovereignty and gave a carte blanche to the USA. So the USA can commit all types of crimes, violations of the international right and the Geneva conventions. In every SOFA there is a paragraph, that no US soldier may be sent to the new International Criminal Court. So we see an erosion of the Charter of the United Nations and other international right. Every year there are new wars and new pretextes are invented.

How to get rid of the military bases

Only very seldom the USA gives up military bases. This happened of course after wars in North Korea and Vietnam. But there are also other examples. In 1991 after much protest the USA had to leave the military bases in the **Philippines**. In 2002 the USA had to give up their shooting and bombing range in **Vieques** in Puerto Rico after many people had occupied the territory several month.

In 2004 in **Henoko (Okinawa)** people occupied the construction ground for a "heliport" for 500 days and forced the government of the USA and Japan to new negotiations. Unfortunately both governments agreed in May 2006 for intensified military cooperation and also for the "heliport". So this struggle goes on.

On Nov., 21st, 2005 the last US soldier left the airbase of **Karshi-Kamabad(Usbekistan)**. The USA had used this airbase after Sept. 11th, 2001. But then the "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation"(SCO) was established by China, Russia, Kasachstan, Kirgisie, Tadschikistan and Usbekistan. The SCO forced the USA to leave Usbekistan.

So it needs a strong and enduring resistance of the people or a union of states to get rid of military bases.

After several wars there have been official and unofficial tribunals about war crimes. It is far better to hinder the training of wars of aggression. That means we have to close all foreign military bases in our countries and we must hinder our own military forces to train with weapons of aggression.

And all politicians who violated the charter of the United Nations and other international law and the constitution of their own country must be punished by national and international courts.

The world conference in Ecuador in 2007 is utmost important to foster these goals. As before in Cuba in November 2005 the World Peace Council encourages all members to join the conference and to become active against foreign military bases.