By Janine Solanki

Excerpt

The world today is defined by a new era of war and occupation. This is seen with foreign occupations like the U.S.-led occupations of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, the U.S.-led war on Syria, U.S.-backed coups like the 2014 coup in Ukraine and the U.S./Canada/EU sanctions and economic war against Venezuela and Iran. This has also included dozens of U.S. special forces secret wars on all continents. Today, every region of the world is engulfed by U.S.-led military aggression and intervention.

U.S. Number One Warmonger Anywhere

How is the United States, the greatest imperialist force in history, able to reach so far and conduct so many military operations at one time? The map of the world that the U.S. government looks at is not the same that you and I look at. From the perspective of the U.S. Department of Defense, the world is a battlefield, on which every inch of the planet falls under six geographical “Areas of Responsibility,” over which the U.S. has a “Combattant Command.” Each command is complete with a headquarters, a Commander and chain of command, and a collection of bases, military installations, or military agreements outside of U.S. borders. According to the U.S. Department of Defense website, the U.S. military operates in more than 160 countries, on all seven continents, with approximately 4,800 defence sites. An estimated 800 to 1000 of these bases are foreign bases, with approximately 450,000 soldiers stationed overseas according to Business Insider.

U.S. bases in Europe also serve to assist the U.S. imperialist interests in Africa. U.S. bases in Italy, Germany and the U.K., alongside NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member state’s bases in the region, served as launching pads for the U.S.-promoted and the NATO-led war on Libya in 2011. From these bases, 26,000 aircraft sorties were launched over seven months, 42% of which resulted in airstrikes on Libya. What else is USAFRICOM up to? A Military Times article on the most recent quarterly report from the Department of Defense Inspector General noted that during the summer of 2018, the U.S. military was conducting missions in at least 20 African nations!

Threatening Central and South America

In Cuba, the U.S. Southern Command covers the U.S. military command of South and Central America and much of the Caribbean. One of three task forces in the region operates out of Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras, the U.S. Joint Task Force Bravo. While the Honduran constitution prohibits a permanent foreign troop presence, the U.S. has circumvented this by declaring their presence on the base as “temporary.” Since 1962! The U.S. base in Honduras is a good example of how dangerous the presence of U.S. troops are, and how difficult it is to get rid of U.S. foreign bases in the Americas.

Occupying Guantánamo

Base in Cuba

Another arm of USSOUTHCOM is the illegally occupied U.S. base in Guantánamo, Cuba. February 23, 2018, marks 115 years since the 120 square kilometres of Cuban territory was seized by the U.S., making it the oldest U.S. foreign base. While it retains use as a naval base, it is primarily, and infamously, used as an off-shore prison. On January 30th, 2018, U.S. President Trump signed an executive order to keep Guantáno Bay prison open. The notorious prison, where the U.S. arbitrarily detains and tortures people, denying them of legal and human rights, has held close to 800 people under the guise of the U.S. so-called “war on terror.” The executive order signed by Trump is in line with statements that he made as presidential candidate regarding Guantánamo Bay prison, that he would “load it up with some bad dudes.” While justice-minded people around the world have demanded the closure of the U.S. prison at Guantánamo, the Cuban people and government have also demanded the return of their illegally occupied territory.
PEACE IN THE U.S.
STATEMENT BY VETERANS FOR
PACIFIC PRIORITY: NO TROOPS TO THE BORDER!

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns the recent announcement by President Trump to deploy active duty military personnel to the U.S. border. These troops will join the National Guard units already assigned to the border. Veterans For Peace calls on all our members and all veterans who see the rapidly increasing injustice of the current policies to call their Congressional Representatives and Senators to demand the military be pulled back from the border, and that the members of the approaching caravan be treated with dignity and processed according to international humanitarian standards. We call on all service members participating in this deployment to follow the long American tradition of listening to their conscience and responding to their duty to obey the law, including refusal to follow illegal orders. (For further information contact the GI Rights Hotline or Courage to Resist).

The U.S. government, instead of welcoming the approaching refugees, the majority of whom will arrive after the implementation of legal processes, is treating individuals and families fleeing to the U.S. as if they are "terrorists" (even when "counterterrorism" officials in the administration are stating that no such people exist within the caravan). The majority of these refugees are women and children, who since fleeing from violence in Honduras and fleeing a political situation United States officials have made worse. The U.S. government’s claim that active duty troops are providing only "security support" while protection is misleading. This is the intensification of U.S. military force as a deterrent to those who are pursuing their rights as asylum seekers, fleeing from extrajudicial violence and in their homes, or trying to follow the law. The U.S. is required under international humanitarian standards to welcome those seeking refuge.

Veterans For Peace recognizes that these borders did not happen in a vacuum, but represent a long history over several administrations of racial and violent policies that has perverted justice and the world and horrific domestic policies that created MTEC, military training and recruitment centers and a wall that already exists. Veterans For Peace believes that more military at the border is rooted in justice and the lack of compassion. It is not only about the continued disregard of federal law. Federal law enforcement tactics have long been at a crisis point and we are extremely concerned about the increased militarization of the border but we are extremely concerned about the continued disregard of federal law.

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Military Threat to Venezuela
The U.S. has been steadily expanding its foothold in Latin America beyond its bases in Honduras and Cuba. In 2008 the Colombian government had agreed to host a U.S. military force, several times acknowledged, but this was struck down by Colombia’s constitutional court in 2010. However, through various ploys and subterfuges, the military still can have a presence of up to 1,400 U.S. troops in Colombia. U.S. forces are also present in three U.S.-place through military exercises. In September 2018 Colombia hosted the 11-country UNITAS Pacific multinational maritime exercise, which included U.S. forces. U.S. military operations in Colombia are also particularly threatening to Venezuela, which borders Colombia. Dangerous statements from U.S. President Trump and his administration that intervention in Venezuela is an option that the U.S. "certainly could pursue" and that we have many alternatives to the Venezuela situation is impossible military option." With U.S. military operating in neighboring Colombia and the deployment of a multinational military exercise near Venezuela's coast, the threat of U.S. intervention in Venezuela could not be more obvious.

The Middle East
In the Middle East (or "USCENTCOM") as per U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. government has also expanded military bases in the region to the full occupation. For the last 17 years, the U.S. government has occupied Iraq with the help of NATO, and Iraq has now been occupied by the U.S. for over 10 years. The U.S. government has justified military force in Iraq as "counterterrorism" and promises of liberation have resulted in the self-destruction of the Afghan and Iraqi people being denied under ongoing foreign occupation. Quality of life from education to healthcare has declined, and poverty and unemployment have increased. In Afghanistan, 2018 has been the record high year for civilian deaths according to the UN. In Iraq, over 1 million Iraqis have been killed as a result of the war, according to Britishroll Call. U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

Japana, China and North Korea
Locking to the Asia-Pacific region, this is the U.S. Department of Defense calls "USINDOPACOM." The U.S. has carried out their provocations and threats against North Korea since about the U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. The majority of troops in the region are stationed in Japan, and 37.5% of U.S. soldiers in the country. 73.9% of U.S. bases in Japan are in the small but strategic southern island of Okinawa, close to the Korean peninsula. For the people of Okinawa, Japan, the U.S. military presence is a very dangerous to their daily day lives, and strike against their self-determination as the U.S. operates on their land with impunity. According to local police statistics in Okinawa, 741 serious crimes involving U.S. military personnel or civilians employed by the U.S. forces or their relatives were investigated between 1972 to the end of 2015. There were 574 criminal complaints for rape and other cases of burglary and 26 murders. This include the 1995 gang rape of a 12-year-old local girl, who were raped by U.S. military personnel, and more recently in 2015 the rape and murder of a 20-year-old Okinawa woman by a U.S. Army base worker.

U.S. Military Basis and Destruction of Environment
The U.S. government also disregards the environment while building up its military bases. As of 1992, the U.S. Army had identified more than 350 contaminated sites at its facilities in the U.S. It was found that polluted wastes from these facilities had "begun to threaten the health of thousands of U.S. and German citizens," as documented by Michael Satchell in the 1992 report "The Mess We’ve Left Behind." While Germany has more leverage to get continued from page 2

the U.S. to clean up, the same is not true for many poor and oppressed countries. According to an Institute for Policy Studies study in 2005, in Iraq, Puerto Rico studies have found high rates of cadmium, lead, mercury, uranium, and other contaminants present in the soil, food chain, and human bodies of island residents due to U.S. military bases. Vietnamese residents have elevated levels of disease, including a 28.5% higher incidence of cancer than other Puerto Ricans. In Vietnam, the U.S. military left behind 100,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance on firing ranges in the fast-growing canal area, despite the Canal Treaty provision for removing such dangers. In Okinawa, Japan, environmentalists say the construction of two aircraft runways as part of a base realignment plan will proceed with the critical feeding grounds and habitat of the onychophora Dugong animal.

No to U.S. Foreign Military Bases! No to NATO!
The list goes on and on, but it is a global movement that is necessary to bring an end to U.S. military bases worldwide. On February 23, 2018, a Global Day of Action was called by the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases. Activists are now held around the world, including here in Vancouver, Canada, in 2018 the up-and-coming International Conference Against U.S. NATO Military Bases in Dublin, Ireland, this will be an important chance for worldwide coordination and collaboration to build a strong, united and effective movement against the U.S. as NATO foreign military bases.

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Global Campaign Against U.S./NATO Military Bases
November 16-18, 2018, Dublin, Ireland
The increasingly aggressive actions of US/NATO forces, the rearming in the Middle East, the use of force in Venezuela, the ongoing occupation of the Balkans, the collapse of diplomatic efforts, the economic blockade of countries across the globe, the destruction of the global environment through air and underwater explosions, the attack on local and international law and order, the increase in militarization and police state tactics and war.

None of this can stop this madness alone. Global peace forces must come together, mobilizing the millions in our countries, and around the world, for peace. Based on this understanding, we have initiated the Global Campaign Against US/NATO Military Bases.

For updated information about the conference and to join the Global Campaign Against US/NATO Military Bases go to: usnato.org

2 www.mawo.org 3 www.mawo-vancouver.org www.mawo-vancouver.org