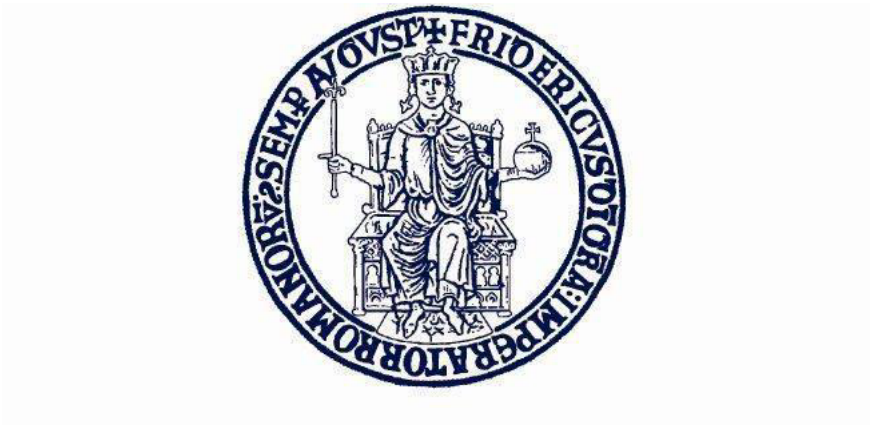

SSM

Scuola Superiore Meridionale

Università di Napoli Federico II – Scuola Superiore Meridionale
PhD Program in Global History and Governance

More than Munitions: Military Bases, the Cold War, and the Projection of U.S. Power

A dissertation presented by
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Global History and Governance

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December 2025

Abstract

This research examines the impacts of U.S. foreign military bases during the Cold War period in the fields of economics, urban architecture, infrastructural power, and international law. Since the time of the Roman Empire, foreign military bases have served vital roles providing military security, protecting trade routes, and projecting political and economic power abroad. After the Second World War, the United States possessed thousands of foreign military bases across the globe. Many of these facilities were closed in the following decades, but hundreds remain as integral components of U.S. grand strategy in the twenty-first century. Recent research has analyzed the political dimensions to these bases and their impacts on communities within host countries. This research adopts an interdisciplinary and global approach to examine aspects of the expression of U.S. power abroad during and after the Cold-War period through the use of three case studies in South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy. The purpose of this work is to analyze under-researched impacts of U.S. foreign military bases abroad and to contribute to the growing body of literature on base studies that is increasingly adopting regionally contextual approaches to global phenomena. This research concludes that within the current literature on base studies, conceptions of military power are conceived of too narrowly to properly assess both the breadth and scope of the impacts of U.S. power expression during the Cold War period and thereafter. Through the analysis of these case studies, this research also concludes that commonly accepted temporal boundaries to demarcate the Cold War — 1945 to 1991 — do not accurately reflect the wide range of economic, infrastructural, and legal impacts of U.S. foreign military bases on the global community.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Illustrations and Figures v

Acknowledgements vi

Chapter I: Introduction 1

Chapter II: Methodology and Approach 30

Introduction to the State of the Field 46

A Short History of Overseas Basing 49

Base Studies – State of the Field 54

Case Study Selection Rationale 65

Case Study #1: Korea 68

Case Study #2: Saudi Arabia 76

Case Study #3: Italy 81

Conclusion 87

Chapter III: Korea 89

Introduction 89

Section I: Korea and Cold War 93

Section II: Japan in Korea: 1904 – 1945 107

Section III: The United States: 1945 – 2000 118

Section IV: Mixed Ownership: 2004 – Present 147

Section V: Conclusion 156

Chapter IV: Saudi Arabia 160

Introduction 160

Section I: Saudi Arabia and the Cold War 166

Section II: Beginnings: 1933 – 1961 178

Section III: Forging the Corporate Crucible: 1962 – 1975 193

Section IV: King Khalid Military City and the End of Corps Activities: 1973 – 1991 206

Section V: Conclusion: The Gulf War and Beyond 219

Chapter V: Italy 225

Introduction 225
Section I: Historical and Legal Context 238
Section II: Legal Context of the NATO SOFA 247
Section III: Sigonella – 1985 256
Section IV: Cavalese Cable Car Disaster – 1998 270
Section V: Conclusion 286
Chapter VI: Conclusion 292
Bibliography 302

Illustrations and Figures

Figure 1 – Carney Park just outside of Naples, Italy. The space features an Olympic sized swimming pool, golf course, and picnic areas – 6.

Figure 2 – Carny Park Golf Course, located just outside Naples, Italy – 7.

Figure 3 – Sketched plans for the South Post Area of Yongsan Garrison in the early 1950s – 143.

Figure 4 – Image of the South Post of Yongsan Garrison in 1969 – 144.

Figure 5 – Corresponding image key to Figure 4 – 145.

Figure 6 – Map of Yongsan Garrison from the late 1990s to early 2000s. The South Post, depicted in Figures 3 and 4 can be seen in the center – 146.

Figure 7 – Front and back of second issue of Saudi Riyal banknotes (1968) depicting the Dhahran Airport and the Dammam Sea Port – 192.

Figure 8 – Front and back of third issue Saudi Riyal banknotes (1976) depicting the al-Nur Mountain in Makkah and again, the Dhahran Airport – 193.

Figure 9 – Depiction of the standoff from the 1985 Italian documentary, “La Notte di Sigonella” –227.

Figure 10 – “Good-Bye Bettino,” cover of L’Europeo, October 19, 1985. Ronald Reagan depicted spanking Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi following the Sigonella standoff – 264.

Figure 11 – One of the Alpe Cermis cable cars near Cavalese, Italy. This kind of cable car was in the 1998 disaster where twenty people lost their lives – 273.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people and institutions that have helped me complete this dissertation and this degree. Thank you to the professors, faculty, and staff at the Scuola and a special thanks to my supervisor Dr. Della Cananea and director, Dr. Caglioti. I would also like to thank my MA supervisor, Dr. Andrew Buchanan, for encouraging me to apply to the program in the first place — I would not have made it to Italy otherwise. I also would like to express a special thanks to my parents, Barbara and Tom, for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this entire process. The degree, and the dissertation, would not have been completed without you. For everyone not mentioned here, from Colombia to Northern Ireland, I also want to express my gratitude for welcoming me and helping me learn a bit more about the world along the way. And a final mention needs to be made to the city of Napoli itself. I have eaten the best food of my entire life there, seen the team win the Scudetto after more than thirty years, been robbed, and met some of the most intelligent and amazing people. Forza Napoli, sempre.

Chapter I: Introduction

I hope that your village is a new Philadelphia
— Roberto Ciambetti, the Regional Council of Veneto, Italy, on the construction of a new $373 million U.S. Army Housing Facility in Vicenza, December 6, 2021.

The famous folk musician, Woody Guthrie, born in Oklahoma in 1912, made his mark on U.S. popular culture and history as a voice for the working class. His songs about farmers, drifters, and the struggles of the common man immortalized the zeitgeist of the dust-bowl-era through song. Alongside the iconic story about Guthrie's painting of the phrase "This machine kills fascists" on his guitar, he is most probably best known for the song he recorded in 1944, "This Land Is Your Land." The song's lyrics emphasize a collective ownership of property in the United States declaring:

> This land is your land, and this land is my land
>
> From California to the New York Island
>
> From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream Waters
>
> This land was made for you and me.[1]

But the sentiment that the land in the United States should be something for all to share was never fully realized. In fact, despite serving in the military himself, Guthrie would have likely been troubled to see how little of that land is really "ours" decades later. Guthrie's song was not a celebration at all, but rather an ironic lament of how much land in America was off limits to the

[1] U.S. Army, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy: SecArmy Priority," *U.S. Army*, October 27, 2021, https://www.army.mil/article/252495/373m_army_housing_groundbreaking_in_italy_secarmy_priority; Woody Guthrie, *This Land Is Your Land*, recorded 1944, track 3 on *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*, Smithsonian Folkways, 1997, CD – corresponding bib Guthrie, Woody. *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*. Smithsonian Folkways, 1997. CD.

common people. He would have surprised ultimately to see how much of that land was set aside for the U.S. military.

According to the Department of Defence's (DoD) Base Structure Report of 2025, the DoD manages a sprawling network "consisting of 736,330 facilities (valued at more than $2,555 billion) on nearly 26.8 million acres of land located at 4,876 sites."[2] This makes the United States military "the single largest landowner, equipment contractor, and energy consumer in the world."[3] Not only does the United States military use more energy than any other organization or government on the planet, they own more land, and requisition more equipment through government contracts, than entire countries such as China, Russia, India, Germany, or Brazil.

In order to populate and operate this gargantuan organization, a significant level of funding is required. The funding for the DoD for 2021 was $801 billion dollars.[4] For perspective, "In fiscal year 2021, budget authority for defense programs was about 10 percent of the total [American] federal budget (mandatory and discretionary) and about 44 percent of all discretionary budget authority."[5] The fact that the United States spends more money on its military than nearly every other country in the world combined is not a revelation. The United States Military has consistently spent billions of dollars annually in order to manage its over 736,000 facilities across the globe since they were constructed during and after the Second World War. The answer to the question of *why* so much money is necessary to support this massive constellation of facilities and millions of acres of land may seem self-evident — to protect the United States and its allies. Nonetheless, it is instructive to utilize the Department's own words as to why so much funding is necessary.

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[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report – Fiscal Year 2025 Baseline: A Summary of the Real Property Inventory Data, 2024*, Installations and Environment, Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (Washington, DC: 2025), https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/imr/rpid/library.html.

[3] Pierre Bélanger and Alexander Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power: Countermapping the Logistical Landscapes and Military Geographies of the US Department of Defense* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 16.

[4] U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) (Washington, DC: 2020), 1–4, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2021/fy2021_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf. The 2025 budget has increased to $872 billion. U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) (Washington, DC: 2024), 1–3, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2025/FY2025_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf.

[5] Congressional Budget Office, *Eliminate the Department of Defense's Elementary and Secondary School System*, December 15, 2022, https://www.cbo.gov/budget-options/58632.

On March 28, 2022, the acting Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III presented a written response to the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. In this response, he outlined that the proposed budget (of $773 billion) "reinforces our commitment to the concept of integrated deterrence, allows us to better sequence and conduct operations around the globe that are aligned to our priorities, modernizes the Joint Force, and delivers meaningful support for our dedicated workforce and their families."[6]

Outside of the claim of deterrence as a legitimate warfare strategy, the ability of the United States military to "better conduct operations around the globe that are aligned to our priorities" appears reminiscent of previous administrations' priorities in the Middle East during the Iraq War or in Latin America during civil wars in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.[7] Further, the call to modernize the Joint Force seems curious as well given the prior decades of billion-dollar funding bills routinely passed by the United States government. If the United States military has consistently been receiving nearly half of the annual discretionary budget (as well as 10% of the total budget) for the fiscal year, it is perplexing that the most well-funded military in the world requires even *further* "modernization." Finally, "meaningful support" for the "dedicated workforce and their families" poses another interesting question — what does such "meaningful support" look like?

The report aimed at answering that question by noting that "The DoD recognizes that its most critical asset is our people. The FY 2023 Budget aims to cultivate our military and civilian workforce, grow our talent, build resilience and force readiness, and ensure accountable

[6] U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget," *U.S. Department of Defense*, March 28, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2980014/the-department-of-defense-releases-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2023-defense-budg/. In the 2025 budget proposal, Secretary of Defense Austin III noted that "The President's budget request for the Department of Defense is once again rooted in our 2022 National Defense Strategy." U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*, ii.

[7] Within the field of security studies, the concept of deterrence has been disputed by several different authorities. For example, as Amir Lupovici notes, "there is a methodological challenge to exploring this theory. This is because the tautology according to which deterrence fails when war erupts leads to a bias in the case selection" and "In spite of the important methodological progress in the field, this major problem has not been resolved. Deterrence theory and most deterrence scholars are only able to show a correlation between deterrence strategy and avoidance of violence, and they find it difficult to establish the causal connections between the two." Amir Lupovici, "The Emerging Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory: Toward a New Research Agenda," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2010): 709. For an overview of some of the issues related to the concept of deterrence within defense strategies, see Lupovici, "The Emerging Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory," 705–32. For a perspective regarding the concept of deterrence specifically to a U.S. military base in Okinawa, see, Paul O'Shea, "Strategic Narratives and U.S. Military Bases in Japan: How 'Deterrence' Makes the Marine Base on Okinawa 'Indispensable,'" *Media, War & Conflict* 12, no. 4 (2019): 450–67.

leadership."[8] This statement was followed by a series of bulleted points for how certain funds would be allocated in order to support the goals of building "resilience and force readiness":

- 4.6% pay increase for military and civilian personnel
- Funds $15 Per hour Minimum Wage for the Federal Workforce
- Investments in child care, including fee assistance, new construction, and sustainment
- Funding the new Basic Needs Allowance to help the most vulnerable military families and fully funding anticipated Housing and Subsistence inflation increases
- $479 million to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military
- A focus on talent management initiatives to improve racial and gender diversity at key points in the military career life cycle
- $34 million to improve the Department's capability to deter, detect, and address concerning behaviors and extremism in the ranks
- $1 billion for a new Red Hill Recovery Fund to enable DoD to quickly and flexibly address the health, environmental, and national security needs of the Hawaii community and the Department
- $12.2 billion for Construction and Family Housing programs, including $2 billion for family housing and $1.3 billion supporting the construction of quality of life and medical facilities.[9]

These allocations (though a drop in the bucket compared to the total sum of the budget) aim at addressing concerns related to quality of life: healthcare, inflation, childcare, and affordable housing. These are all legitimate and pressing issues that individual U.S. citizens and families might contend with in any funding cycle. What seems distorted about this picture, however, is that each of these issues — alongside their funding allocations — would appear more at home within a

[8] U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget."

[9] U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget." The 2025 budget echoes similar sentiments, including several billion dollars for further infrastructure development and remarking that childcare is "a top priority." The budget notes that $169 million will be spent on the construction of four different childcare facilities across the United States. U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*, 4–5.

domestic annual budget rather than the United States military. At what point did childcare or family housing programs become part and parcel of the United States military rather within the domestic realm of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development?

The purpose of the United States military, at least according to Secretary Austin, has fundamentally superseded, in many different ways, the traditional goals of what a military should be. The goals and purpose of the United States military in the twenty-first century have ceased to solely be those of an organization tasked with waging a war or protecting U.S. citizens against a rival nation but has morphed into those of an organization that exists in a perceived state of "permanent war" in absence of a clearly defined enemy.[10]

This is now an organization that bequeaths a range of goods and services to those within, while leaving others in the homeland behind. The function of the United States military has, over the course of decades, transformed into not only the wielder of the most advanced nuclear arsenal on the planet, but also at the very same time the eclectic purveyor of subsidized child daycare services and dog park architecture.[11] Examples of these facilities are embedded into the landscape of overseas U.S. bases that cannot even be accessed by locals without explicit permission, like the multi-use Carney Park right outside of Naples, Italy. All the while, billions of dollars are siphoned away from domestic departments and, sometimes literally, blown into the air. Only one figure is necessary to illustrate the degree of this dysfunction. In 2011, it was reported by National Public Radio (NPR) that "the United States military spends $20.2 billion annually on air-conditioning for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than the entire annual budget for NASA, one and a half times that that of the Department of Transportation."[12]

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[10] Derek Gregory, "The Everywhere War," *The Geographical Journal* 177, no. 3 (September 2011): 238–50.

[11] Among other facilities, the United States military owns bowling alleys, movie theatres, and dog parks. For example, see Military.com, "U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys: Recreation," accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.military.com/base-guide/us-army-garrison-humphreys/recreation. For more information regarding the U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys "Splish and Splash Outdoor Pool," see Military.com, "Splish and Splash Outdoor Pool," *U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.military.com/base-guide/us-army-garrison-humphreys/contact/splish-and-splash-outdoor-pool/15641.

[12] Bélanger and Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power*, 110.

Figure 1 – Carney Park just outside of Naples, Italy. The space features an Olympic sized swimming pool, golf course, and picnic areas.[13]

Unfortunately, cases like the one huge investment in air conditioning for facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan are closer to the norm, rather than an aberration when it comes to the questionable spending of the DoD. Architects concerned with similar cases of waste by the United States military, Alexander Arroyo and Pierre Belanger, note that "More than 75 percent of DOD fuel today is used for the *transporting and conveying* of fuel prior to arrival at its final destination."[14] An astonishing 3/4ths of the fuel that is used by the United States military is burned into the atmosphere in order to get the *remaining* 25% to its intended destination. One wonders if the $3 billion allocated in the budget in order to "address the Climate Crisis" will indeed be able to make much of a difference when the U.S. military burns "8.5 billion gallons of fuel annually."[15]

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[13] U.S. Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation Naples, *Carney Park*, accessed July 24, 2025, https://www.navymwrnaples.com/programs/5a552a41-7b5f-4308-af49-c2f368632796.

[14] Bélanger and Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power*, 59. Emphasis added.

[15] U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget"; Pierre Bélanger and Alexander Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power*, 50. The prospect of the DoD acting to reduce its ecological footprint in the future is in doubt given that the current Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, has written publicly that "The (Department of Defense) does not do climate change crap." Reuters, "U.S. Military

Figure 2 – Carny Park Golf Course, located just outside Naples, Italy.[16]

Anthropologist and author of *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* (2015), David Vine, once interviewed a private security contractor at a defense conference who had described the DoD's spending as "a self-licking ice cream cone." Vine concludes that military spending is a "self-perpetuating system with no purpose or function except to keep itself going."[17] One of the most fundamental ways in which the DoD achieves this feat is through the use of the construction and maintenance of overseas military bases.

Cancels Climate Change Studies That Pentagon Chief Calls 'Crap,'" *Reuters*, March 10, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-military-cancels-climate-change-studies-that-pentagon-chief-calls-crap-2025-03-10/.

[16] Carney Park Golf Course, *Golf Napoli: Carney Park Golf Course*, accessed July 24, 2025, https://www.golfnapoli.it/.

[17] David Vine, *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015), 231.

Catherine Lutz asserts that these bases are an extension, and the epitomization, of these issues of spending and that they are "the result of bureaucratic and political economic carry-on imperatives, that is, corporations and the military itself as an organization have profited from bases' continued existence, regardless of their strategic value."[18] The DoD appears to agree with Lutz's conclusion. In their own 2014 Quadrelennial Defense Review, the DoD noted that "We estimate that we already have more infrastructure than we need." This conclusion was followed up by the recommendation that "Substantial long-term savings will be realized if the Department is permitted to eliminate unneeded infrastructure."[19]

Despite these assessments from the 2014 review, included in the 2023 budget request, there are requests from the DoD for further construction:

- $12.2 billion for Construction and Family Housing programs, including $2 billion for family housing and $1.3 billion supporting the construction of quality of life and medical facilities.[20]

- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, $6.1 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, including military construction

- Joint Force Readiness ($134.7 billion, an increase of $6.3 billion or +4.9% over the estimated FY22 enacted amount of $128.4 billion). The Department is approaching readiness through a strategic lens, expanding beyond operational readiness to incorporate multi-dimensional and long-term readiness.[21]

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[18] Catherine Lutz, "Introduction," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz and Cynthia Enloe (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 8.

[19] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC, 2014), XI, https://www.acq.osd.mil/ncbdp/docs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf.

[20] U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget."

[21] It is not explicit what "Joint Force Readiness" is, however. One 2013 report from the DoD noted that "One of the major obstacles to ensuring a force is ready is understanding what readiness really means." Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Chairman's Readiness System Handbook* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 1, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Library/Handbooks/g3401.pdf. The report then outlines several different definitions for several different purposes. As indicated on the website for the "Camp Humphreys River Bend Golf Course" located in South Korea, the golf course and other "G-9" facilities serve to integrate and serve "Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs and services enabling readiness and resilience for a globally-responsive Army." "Big Break Scramble Tournament," River Bend Golf Course calendar event, U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys Family & MWR, May 7, 2023, https://humphreys.armymwr.com/calendar/event/big-break-scramble-tournament-rbgc/6000531/75469. In this allocation of funds, it is not unwarranted to assume that the funds detailed in this allocation would go towards similar projects.

This continued DoD spending on infrastructure, despite its very own recommendations to pursue the exact opposite path, gives credence to the conclusion of Lutz and Vine that bureaucratic and private interests have simply created a force of inertia too strong for the DoD to control.[22] The series of constantly changing internal posturing and realignment is likely one of the reasons that the DoD has remained the only government agency to date to fail to conduct and pass a comprehensive audit. In October of 2020, Reuters reported that it has been "the third year it [the DoD] has failed since the first audit was conducted in 2018, reflecting system and accounting problems across its vast bureaucracy that could persist until 2027."[23] They concluded the article by noting that "Fees for the audit were $203 million this year."[24]

A part of the issue related to the failure of the DoD to successfully conduct an internal audit has as much to do with the DoD's complex real estate profile, as its continued spending on infrastructure. In order to complete a Property, Plant and Equipment Audit, one must generally conduct a series of five audit procedures ranging from "1. Physical verification of fixed assets" to "5. Substantive Analytical audit procedure on depreciation."[25] It is perhaps then not surprising that the DoD has not successfully passed such an audit given the fact that "The military has so many

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[22] For more on the profiting of private interests through the use of military contracting through the department of defense (In Iraq and South America in particular), see Pratap Chatterjee, *Halliburton's Army: How a Well-Connected Texas Oil Company Revolutionized the Way America Makes War* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2010); Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008); Marcelo Bucheli, "Multinational Corporations, Totalitarian Regimes and Economic Nationalism: United Fruit Company in Central America, 1899–1975," *Business History* 50, no. 4 (2008): 433–54; and Peter Chapman, *Bananas: How the United Fruit Company Shaped the World* (New York; Edinburgh: Canongate, distributed by Publishers Group West, 2007). The proposed military budget in the "One Big Beautiful Bill" funding legislation includes nearly two billion dollars for further "infrastructure" in the Indo-Pacific region alone. U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget, *The One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., accessed July 17, 2025, 131, https://www.budget.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/the_one_big_beautiful_bill_act.pdf.

[23] Mike Stone, "Pentagon Fails Audit Yet Again, Could Pass Around 2027, Comptroller Says," *Reuters*, November 16, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pentagon-auditor/pentagon-fails-audit-yet-again-could-pass-around-2027-comptroller-says-idUSKBN27X03P. As of 2025, the DoD has still yet to complete a financial audit. See both Project on Government Oversight, "Fact Sheet: Auditing the Department of Defense," updated January 18, 2024, https://www.pogo.org/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-auditing-the-department-of-defense and Thomas Mahnken, "Fixing DoD's Audit Problem," *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, March 25, 2024, https://www.csis.org/analysis/fixing-dods-audit-problem.

[24] Stone, "Pentagon Fails Audit."

[25] Sabbir Ismail, "How to Audit Property, Plant, and Equipment," *LinkedIn*, March 22, 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-audit-property-plant-equipment-sabbir-ismail.

bases, it doesn't know the true total."[26] David Vine even noted in his recent publication, *The United States of War* (2021), that a recent DoD-funded study by the RAND Corporation, *U.S. Presence and Incidence of Conflict* (2018), opted to use his own self-published list of foreign military bases rather than the Pentagon's.[27] But it is not just foreign military installations that the DoD has difficulties keeping track of; it even struggles with coming up with the true total of military installations *within* the United States. A senior aide to Senator Bernie Sanders, I-Vt, remarked in an interview from 2021 that, "Right now, the Pentagon can't even tell you where all of its buildings are located in the United States."[28]

The widespread instances of fraud, financial abuse, and wastefulness that have proliferated within the DoD are staggering.[29] The Commission on Wartime Contracting, established to "investigate waste and abuse," estimated that in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan alone, there had been "$31 billion to $60 billion in contracting fraud" with the bulk of it occurring in bases "in and around the two countries."[30] But despite audit failures, contract fraud, and an inability to account for its own infrastructural assets, the United States military rumbles along steadily.[31] If one expected a reduction in the overseas basing by the DoD at any point since 1945, one would be

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[26] David Vine, *The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts, from Columbus to the Islamic State* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), 350.

[27] Vine, *The United States of War*, 350; The RAND report noted above: Angela O'Mahony et al., U.S. Presence and Incidence of Conflict (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018).

[28] Claudia Grisales, "The Pentagon Has Never Passed an Audit — Some Senators Want to Change That," *NPR*, May 19, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/05/19/997961646/the-pentagon-has-never-passed-an-audit-some-senators-want-to-change-that.

[29] A failed audit from one recent year "uncovered a warehouse full of aircraft parts for planes that haven't been used in over a decade," the Sanders aide said. Grisales, "The Pentagon Has Never Passed an Audit." Despite the well-documented instances of accounting errors and fraud within the department, the newly created "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE) heralded in by President Trump in 2025 has yet to make any meaningful or transparent cuts to department spending. Scott Amey, "VA's DOGE Cuts Sting and Will Reduce Efficiency," *Project on Government Oversight*, June 10, 2025, https://www.pogo.org/analysis/vas-doge-cuts-sting-and-will-reduce-efficiency.

[30] Vine, *Base Nation*, 212.

[31] Statements made by the DoD in "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget," reflect their attitude toward the internal audit. The very first thing mentioned regarding the audit is not that it is a valuable tool to reduce corruption and waste, or to better comprehensively understand financial and physical assets, but rather, amounts to the fact that it was illegal not to: "The Department needs auditable financial statements for several reasons. First, the law requires them." U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget." Furthermore, their inability to pass an audit to date, regardless of the legal requirement to do so, seems to reflect the DoD's perceived value of completing the process.

continually disappointed. Regardless of the modest series of base closures (mostly occurring within the United States) that have occurred since the 1980s though the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) procedures, "the proliferation of new lily pads and other relatively small bases in recent years has meant that the global collection of bases has actually grown in geographic scope."[32]

Instead of heeding its own recommendation regarding the closure of "unneeded infrastructure," the DoD has continued to construct *more* military infrastructure across the globe with a particular eye towards the home to several of fastest growing global economies: "Since around the turn of the century, and with little public debate, the Pentagon has been spending tens of billions of dollars to build a large and unprecedented U.S. military presence across Africa."[33]

Beyond these numbers, figures, and budget allocations, when one discusses figures in the billions it is almost impossible to form some sort of perspective for the amount and the scale of spending. As much as these numbers illustrate how much money goes into the DoD, historical and cultural components play important roles in the "self-licking ice cream cone" as well.

The militarization of U.S. society, defined by historian Richard H. Kohn as a vast series of interlinking processes by which a given society's "institutions, policies, behaviors, thought, and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war,"[34] has become nearly total in nature. Gonzalez and Gusterson note that "the United States is the most studied and leading model of what might be called a militarized society" and Kohn (who served in the Air Force for 10 years as its historian) maintains that the United States has "experienced a degree of militarization heretofore unknown in American history."[35]

The militarization of the United States manifests itself in many subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle ways. The vast and sustained support for the DoD's annual budget over other government agencies (education and transportation for example), reflect the degree to which the United States' "policies, behaviours, thought, and values" are devoted to the military. But militarization does not

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[32] Vine, *The United States of War*, 297.

[33] Vine, *The United States of War*, 287.

[34] Richard H. Kohn, "The Danger of Militarization in an Endless 'War' on Terrorism," *Journal of Military History* 73, no. 1 (2009): 177–208, quoted in *Militarization: A Reader*, ed. Roberto J. González, Hugh Gusterson, and Gustaaf Houtman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 6.

[35] Kohn, "The Danger of Militarization," in *Militarization: A Reader*, 6.

just occur within the government, however; it has seeped into the social fabric of U.S. society as well.

A few examples here can serve to illustrate Rohn's point. The three largest airlines in the United States, Delta, American Airlines, and United, all offer "military benefits" to "those who serve and protect us."[36] These benefits range from priority boarding, additional baggage, and even "Military and State Department pet exceptions."[37] William Astore, a former Air Force member (now academic) recalled watching the 2018 Major League Baseball All-Stars Game and noted that "Before it even began, about fifty airmen paraded out in camouflage uniforms, setting the stage for everything that would follow." He recalled that "the next night was a celebration of Medal of Honor recipients." He continued to question this presence throughout the sporting event remarking, "I have deep respect for such heroes, but what were they doing on a baseball diamond?"[38]

From the ballpark to the movie theatre, the process is the same. Brett Pardy discusses the role of the recent Marvel *Avengers* film franchise, three of which are within the top-ten highest grossing box-office films of all time, highlighting that "Marvel's film universe … embraces a model of 'heroism' that mirrors how the military frames itself for the public, a liberal ideal of the military as an inclusive, supportive pseudo-family that brings out the best in each individual and uses precise, unerring violence only because it is necessary."[39]

Even the field of higher education has not been immune to the pervasive pull of militarization. Henry A. Giroux asserts that "While higher education in the United States has long been a major site for producing the neoliberal subject, it is only in the aftermath of 9/11 that the

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[36] Forbes, "Global 2000: The World's Largest Public Companies," *Forbes*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.forbes.com/lists/global2000/?sh=22bf95645ac0 and United Airlines, "Military Benefits," *United Airlines*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/products/milgov/military-benefits.html.

[37] Delta Air Lines, "Military Travel Overview," *Delta*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.delta.com/us/en/special-circumstances/military-travel/overview; United Airlines, "Animal Travel Exceptions," *United Airlines*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/travel/animals/exceptions.html; and American Airlines, "Military Benefits," *American Airlines*, accessed July 17, 2025, https://www.aa.com/i18n/customer-service/programs-products/military-benefits.jsp.

[38] William Astore, "The Militarization of Sports and the Redefinition of Patriotism," in *Militarization: A Reader*, ed. Roberto J. González, Hugh Gusterson, and Gustaaf Houtman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 39.

[39] Brett Pardy, "The Militarization of Marvel's Avengers," *Studies in Popular Culture* 42, no. 1 (2019): 119.

university has also become an intense site of militarization."[40] Giroux presents several examples such as the "over 150 military-educational institutions in the United States," and the "hundreds of colleges and universities that conduct Pentagon-funded research, provide classes to military personnel, and design programs specifically for future employment with various departments and agencies associated with the warfare state."[41] The militarization of public life in the United States has made public or political discourse about the reduction of military spending nearly impossible. This has had profound effects on the United States and across the globe.

The issues presented by the militarization of U.S. society cannot be understood as solely domestic in nature.[42] Gonzalez and Gusterson maintain that "Militarization—and militarism—are integral to global society today."[43] The United States military does not just exist or project its influence within the United States; it is a *global* organization. As such, the influence of the United

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[40] Henry A. Giroux, "The Militarization of US Higher Education," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no. 5 (2008): 58.

[41] Henry A. Giroux, "The Militarization of US Higher Education after 9/11," in *The Marketing of War in the Age of Neo-Militarism*, ed. Kostas Gouliamos and Christos Kassimeris (New York: Routledge, 2013), 63.

[42] For a good introduction to this topic, see Jody Berland and Blake Fitzpatrick, "Introduction: Cultures of Militarization and the Military-Cultural Complex," *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2010): 9–27. The set of articles contained in this special issue on militarization reflect a wide range of ways in which militarization is affecting inter-personal and inter-social relationships in global culture. See in particular: Uli Linke, "Fortress Europe: Globalization, Militarization and the Policing of Interior Borderlands," *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2010): 100–120; Neil Balan, "A Corrective for Cultural Studies: Beyond the Militarization Thesis to the New Military Intelligence," *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2010): 144–77; Stuart Allan and Kari Andén-Papadopoulos, "'Come On, Let Us Shoot!': WikiLeaks and the Cultures of Militarization," *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2010): 244–53; and David A. Clearwater, "Living in a Militarized Culture: War, Games and the Experience of US Empire," *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2010): 260–85.

[43] Roberto J. González, Hugh Gusterson, and Gustaaf Houtman, "Introduction," in *Militarization: A Reader*, ed. Roberto J. González, Hugh Gusterson, and Gustaaf Houtman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 6. Different notions of militarization also have culturally and nationally specific characteristics. Cynthia Enloe notes in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, 2nd. Ed.* (2014), that "Notions of masculinity are not identical across generational or across cultural boundaries." Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 31. Militarization functions in a similar way, also containing culturally and nationally specific characteristics across different geographies. Julian Schofield, in *Militarization and War* (2007), states "Militarization theory has its origins in the concept of militarism, which had to do with the glorification of the military and war as a value, and how this was represented aesthetically and socially within that society" and that "the national manifestations of militarism in states as diverse as Napoleonic France, fascist Italy, imperial Japan, or nazi Germany, depend on specific historical contingencies and paths." Julian Schofield, *Militarization and War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007), 2–3. What remains unique to the United States military in this context is that its national "brand" of militarization and militarism has been afforded the ability to spread globally in ways that other national types of militarization or militarism have not. This is largely due to the confluence of hegemony achieved in the post-war period and modern technological globalization — a significant part of which was through the use of foreign military bases.

States and its militarized culture does not stop in border control offices; it circulates through radio waves, neatly packaged in television streaming services, within the threads of Levi's jeans, and in the bricks that foreign military bases are built from.[44] The combination of the "soft power" of U.S. media or fashion products, in conjunction with the presence of U.S. military bases, undoubtably symbols and installations of "hard power" in "approximately 100 countries," or over half of the countries in the entire world, are monuments to the success of global militarization.[45] The hegemonic influence the United States achieved after its unparallel success during the Second World War put the country in position to expand its political, cultural, and economic influence. This influence was in large part achieved through construction of thousands of military installations, many of which still stand today despite the decades of hard-fought decolonization and civil rights movements.[46]

U.S. military bases are anything but benign. According the Lutz, these installations, apart from influencing global militarization, have also "been used to control the political and economic life" of host nations in which they reside.[47] Lutz reminds us that "The environmental, political, and economic impact of these bases is enormous."[48] Certainly, one could point to the explicit instances of military interventionism by the United States, from funding ruthless dictators in Latin America, to predator drone strikes in Afghanistan, to gunboat diplomacy in Korea. But arguably more lethal and all-encompassing is the network of foreign military bases across the rest of the

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[44] Cynthia Enloe suggests that one of the reasons for the distinct lack of interest for what the United States military is doing abroad is rooted in militarization. She remarks that militarism suggests that "not only the believer embraces militarized notions of enemy, of threat, and of security, but that coping with that trinity must be unquestioningly prioritized over all other forms of danger and insecurity." Cynthia Enloe, "Preface," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz and Cynthia Enloe (New York: NYU Press, 2009), xiii.

[45] Catherine Lutz, "Introduction," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz and Cynthia Enloe (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 10.

[46] Decolonization, U.S. foreign military bases, and base protests have been linked in several different academic works. See: William E. Berry, *U.S. Bases in the Philippines: The Evolution of a Special Relationship* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Colleen T. McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest: The U.S. Navy in Vieques, Puerto Rico* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Jennifer Miller, "Fractured Alliance: Anti-Base Protests and Postwar U.S.-Japanese Relations," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 5 (November 2014): 879–901; Lauren Hirshberg, "Navigating Sovereignty under a Cold War Military Industrial Colonial Complex: U.S. Military Empire and Marshallese Decolonization," *History and Technology* 31, no. 3 (2015): 255–58; and Marc Becker, "Ecuador's Early No Foreign Military Base Movement," *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 3 (June 2017): 518–42.

[47] Lutz, "Introduction," in *The Bases of Empire*, 9.

[48] Lutz, "Introduction," in *The Bases of Empire*, 9.

world from which these missions were carried out, bases which pose legal, environmental, economic, and social issues that reverberate beyond their border fences, directly into local communities that function as their hosts. Mark Gillem, writing from the architectural perspective, emphasizes that the impact of these bases "involves a complex web of spatial, social, cultural, and political factors not easily addressed by an Excel spreadsheet."[49]

The central focus of this dissertation is U.S. foreign military bases. However, it is impossible to fully appreciate them as objects of study without spinning many metaphorical plates at the same time. Bases are both historical and contemporary objects. They are both results and drivers of historical and contemporary change. They are simultaneously important results and tools of U.S. foreign policy, military planning, and international politics. The land they sit on, the legal regimes that they necessitate, and the inhabitants that filter through them are all valuable for understanding their historical and contemporary role in global affairs.

Though the field of base studies has grown substantially in recent years, there are still a myriad of questions left to be investigated which are best done with differing methodologies than previous works have employed. Incredibly important studies from earlier scholars have broached the subject from perspectives including the wide-ranging and global (Vine and Lutz), national case studies (McCaffrey and Holmes), and direct nation-to-nation analysis (Calder and Cooley).[50] In this work, I do not take aim at the entire network of global bases since the Second World War or look to compare nations or political regimes and their role in base access. Rather, I have opted for an approach which prioritizes a globally contextual analysis of regional affairs with a focus on how military bases have affected economics, architectural urbanism, infrastructural power, and international law. In this work I look to U.S. bases in South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy before, during, and after the Cold War. This work is not a history of *all* U.S. global basing, but these cases studies similarly are not isolated analyses. Each case study is presented within the context of a network of U.S. global power and Cold War conflict (or in many cases a lack thereof) and the bases

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[49] Mark L. Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xviii.

[50] Vine, *Base Nation*; Lutz and Enloe, *The Bases of Empire*; McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest*; Amy Austin Holmes, *Social Unrest and American Military Bases in Turkey and Germany since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kent E. Calder, *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Alexander Cooley, *Base Politics: Democratic Change and the U.S. Military Overseas* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). Other works will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter II.

themselves serve as prisms to better understand regional contexts at the same time as global affairs. In some cases, a single base is focused on whereas in others entire legal frameworks are examined. In doing so, the goal is to emphasize the polyvalent nature of these institutions and to explore the complex and less-obvious ways in which U.S. foreign military bases have affected U.S. and global history.

The underlying philosophy of this approach is rooted a perspective championed by the feminist political scientist Cynthia Enloe. She notes in the introduction to her highly influential work *Bananas Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (first edition 1990) that "what is 'international' is far broader than mainstream experts assume" and "what is 'political' reaches well beyond the public square. A disco can become an arena for international politics. So can someone else's kitchen or your own closet."[51] This idea, to more critically analyze the initially unexceptional, underscores the entire research project.

Alongside specific conclusions *within* each case study chapter, the use of this approach has yielded two major conclusions with implications for both the current state of scholarship and for future research. The first is the blurring of the terms "soft" and "hard" power. Although the discussion of these terms within fields of security studies, international relations, and political science has evolved from a strictly dichotomous debate, the terms are still routinely utilized.[52] Hard power, or quantifiable elements of an army (i.e., troop numbers, munitions, aircraft or ships) often stands in contrast to that of soft power (diplomacy or persuasion). Read more broadly, soft power can be understood as the spread of ideas, music, fashion, or culture. The case of military bases upends this traditional conceptual dichotomy. In wartime, they may function differently, but in the case of a country such as South Korea which is analyzed in this research, U.S. forces have been more-or-less stationed across the country through decades of peace. Consequently, cultural exchange is promoted between U.S. troops and their families and locals. Food is exchanged. Locals play golf on military base golf courses. Soldiers leave the base and drink soju. Korean citizens are employed on the base and return home after work.

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[51] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, xv.

[52] For example: Ernest J. Wilson III, "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 110–24; Brígida Rocha Brito, "Hard, Soft or Smart Power: Conceptual Discussion or Strategic Definition?," *JANUS.NET* 1, no. 1 (2010): 112–14; and Colin S. Gray, *Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu.com, 2011).

The military facility itself is simultaneously a node of hard power, but the soldiers and the communities they create with locals due to the imbedded nature of the bases, result in a whole host of cultural, political, and social exchanges that typify the dissemination of soft power. Other scholars of base studies have emphasized the specifics and subtleties of these interactions, but they are also important from an international political and security studies level as well. The case studies in this dissertation all support this conclusion and provide further evidence of its importance for policymakers and scholars in other disciplines alike.

The second important conclusion in this work is that by looking at U.S. foreign military bases from this global perspective, a forceful argument against current Cold War periodization emerges. These facilities have impacted local and regional politics, informal diplomacy, and infrastructure development in foreign nations as well as U.S. foreign and defense policy beyond the bookmark of the 1991 conclusion of the Cold War and well into the twenty-first century. The case study in Saudi Arabia in particular stands as evidence for a re-evaluation of Middle Eastern Cold War historiography whereas the case study of South Korea emphasizes an earlier periodization back to the beginning of Japanese colonialization in 1910. While being considerate of the impacts that the Cold War had on global affairs, one of the major benefits of base studies is that it frees one from tacitly accepting or repeating more strict periodization within the field of Cold War history. The distinction of the work presented here as base studies, rather than exclusively a Cold War history, or a history of U.S. foreign policy, means that interdisciplinary research is more easily incorporated into this work.

Though it is not the overall purpose of this work to be proscriptive or influence public policy, it is increasingly likely that the study of U.S. bases will become even more important as the global community continues to evolve in unprecedented ways. The repeated threats by the United States to distance itself from mutual military defense with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and other allies around the globe means that U.S. bases will (and already have) become focal points in international political and defense discourse. A better understanding of these institutions, their effects on local populations, their histories, and their role in U.S. foreign policy are all tangible benefits of this research which will continue to be of relevance as these situations continue to develop.

It is important to note that because U.S. bases are a *global* phenomenon, the domestic U.S. community is not immune from their impacts either. While one might expect that the bases that

the United States military own and operate abroad are routinely the subject of political and legal disputes, it is revealing that U.S. citizens are also frequently are the victims of their presence as well. Bridget Dorfman has outlined that in several different instances U.S. citizens have sued the federal government for personal injury directly caused by military bases within the United States but "the federal courts regularly and summarily dismiss these constitutional claims" in favor of national security concerns.[53] John W. Hamilton describes the breadth of the issue domestically noting that "Pollution at military bases is so widespread and endemic that more than two-thirds of all Superfund sites listed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — nearly nine hundred sites in all — are military affiliated."[54]

Curiously, many of the residents of the mountainous and rural state of Vermont have something intimately in common with nearly half of a million Okinawans living on the other side of the world. They also have trouble sleeping due to the tremendous amount of noise caused by United States Air Force fighter-jets during take-offs and landings. The Marine Corps presence on the island of Okinawa has garnered some of the strongest anti-military protests and activism across the world since its completion in the 1940s following the United States victory in the Pacific.[55]

The city of Burlington, Vermont, on the other hand, has just recently begun to experience the effects of its own country's military presence beginning in 2019 when Burlington airport began

[53] Bridget Dorfman, "Permission to Pollute: The United States Military, Environmental Damage, and Citizens' Constitutional Claims," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law* 6, no. 3 (March 2004): 604.

[54] John W. Hamilton, "Contamination at U.S. Military Bases: Profiles and Responses," *Stanford Environmental Law Journal* 35, no. 2 (2016): 224. Superfund sites are "the nation's worst hazardous waste sites" according to the Dorothy M. Daley and David F. Layton. Dorothy M. Daley and David F. Layton, "Policy Implementation and the Environmental Protection Agency: What Factors Influence Remediation at Superfund Sites?," *Policy Studies Journal* 32, no. 3 (2004): 375–92.

[55] For literature on base protests specifically in Okinawa, see: Arasaki Moriteru, "The Struggle against Military Bases in Okinawa – Its History and Current Situation," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2001): 101–8, https://doi.org/10.1080/14649370120039506; Céline Pajon, "Understanding the Issue of U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa," *Asie.Visions* 29 (June 2010): 1–22; Gavan McCormack and Satoko Oka Norimatsu, *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States* (Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); and Akemi Johnson, *Night in the American Village: Women in the Shadow of the US Military Bases in Okinawa* (New York: The New Press, 2019). For more general literature regarding base protests, see: Andrew Yeo, *Activists, alliances, and anti-US base protests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Yuko Kawato, *Protests against US military base policy in Asia: Persuasion and its limits* (Connecticut: Stanford University Press, 2015).

hosting several next-generation F-35 fighter jets.[56] The jets became the focus of local news organizations and activist groups in the city after several residents complained about the noise generated by the 20 new F-35s which had begun conducting training flights twice a day. Some residents described the noise as, "extremely loud, almost like a roar," "Almost like a rocket taking off," and "They sound like they could be splitting the sky open."[57] Bryan Bender, a senior national correspondent for POLITICO who covers military affairs, the defense industry, and space, described the jets as "the largest single weapon system ever procured by the Pentagon. And by largest I mean, the costliest."[58]

The noise generated by these modern jetfighters garnered over 1500 complaints from Burlington residents in less than two years of their operation according to Grace Elleston of the *VT Digger*.[59] The F-35 fighter jet is known to "reach up to 115 decibels of noise" which greatly exceeds the 65-decibel limit imposed by the Federal Aviation Administration's "limit for residential land use compatibility."[60] According to the final Environmental Impact Study that compared sites in Vermont and South Carolina (prior to the decision to base the planes in Vermont), it was reported that:

> while it is not anticipated there would be adverse health effects, the noise evaluation does indicate that when compared to baseline conditions both basing scenarios would affect more acres, people, and housing units that are exposed to noise levels exceeding 65 dB DNL and greater. There would also be continued disproportionate impacts to low-income and minority populations exposed to noise levels exceeding 65 dB DNL.[61]

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[56] 158th Fighter Wing, "F-35 Program," *Vermont ANG*, Vermont National Guard, accessed July 2025, section "About the F-35A," para. 3 ("The initial two F-35A's … 20 fighter jets a year later"), https://vt.public.ng.mil/About/Our-Missions/F-35-Program/.

[57] Angela Evancie, host, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?", *Brave Little State*, July 22, 2021, Vermont Public Radio, accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state/2021-07-22/why-is-the-f-35-based-in-vermont.

[58] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

[59] To put this figure into perspective, in order to generate this number of complaints in such a short amount of time, there would have to be at least two officially filed complaints every single day for nearly two years. This figure furthermore does not reflect the number of individuals and families who have been affected by the noise but have decided to *not* file an official complaint. Colin Flanders, "Pandemic Isolation and Increased Flights Spike F-35 Noise Complaints," *VTDigger*, April 27, 2021, https://vtdigger.org/2021/04/27/pandemic-f-35-noise-complaints/.

[60] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?"; Flanders, "Pandemic Isolation and Increased Flights," *VTDigger*.

[61] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

To the thousands of Koreans living near the Kunsan Air Base in South Korea, the noise produced by U.S. Air Force jets is nothing new. The Okinawans living near Kadena Air Base have experienced the same. Those living in these communities have taken action against the presence and detrimental effects of the noise to their wellbeing.[62] As a result, thousands of residents living near the bases have sued the Air Force in class-action lawsuits and been awarded million-dollar settlements for "living in areas consistently exposed to more than 70 decibels" and those who "endured 75 decibels or more."[63]

Back in the Green Mountain State, there remained a looming question regarding the stationing of the new fighter jets in the airport just several miles away from the small city that hosts less than 250,000 residents, and that was, why Burlington? The Vermont Public News investigated the issue and the answer given to them by then acting Vermont National Guard Assistant Adjutant General Richard Harris, was "There is a need militarily for national defense" as well as the oft heard justification of bringing jobs to the community.[64]

Like many on the island of Okinawa who opposed the presence of fighter jets so close to their homes, schools, and daycare centers, there were Vermont residents who endeavored to contest the decision to base the jets in the community. Rosanne Greco, a retired Air Force colonel, as one of the community leaders against the stationing of the jets remarked, "There was enough in the Environmental Impact Statement that I think would cause any rational and caring human being to say, 'This is not appropriate to put in a residential neighbourhood.'"[65] Gerco and others opposed

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[62] Gillem, *America Town*, 47. As Mark Gillem highlights, issues of proximity to military bases can have profound effects on one's health and wellbeing. He notes, "In 1995 a study by Asahikawa Medical College in Okinawa found that 480,000 residents of Okinawa (38 percent) lived in areas with noise levels exceeding Japanese environmental noise standards.12 In the four year study, researchers analyzed over 350,000 medical records, sent questionnaires to 1,580 school children and their parents, and surveyed 4,245 residents living on the island and concluded: Lower than average birth weights around the bases were due to aircraft noise. Children living around these bases had greater emotional and health problems than their peers on other parts of the island. Adults experienced higher stress levels that disturbed their work and sleep patterns. In addition, retired schoolteacher Fujiko Nakasone claims that schoolchildren lose an average of two years during their twelve years of education due to the noise. They experience increased nervousness, hearing loss, and an inability to concentrate." Gillem, *America Town*, 41.

[63] Gillem, *America Town*, 52.

[64] Ric Cengeri and Jane Lindholm, "Will the F-35 Fly in Vermont?," *Vermont Public*, June 4, 2013, accessed July 2025, https://www.vermontpublic.org/programs/2013-06-04/will-the-f-35-fly-in-vermont.

[65] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

to the jets eventually took the bold step to sue the Air Force, which was eventually unsuccessful. However, in the process, she and others gained access to 68,000 internal Air Force documents.

After sifting through thousands of pages, a memo from March 2013 was discovered regarding the environmental impact study of moving the jets to Burlington. Vermont Public News reported that, "The memo indicated that there was 'overwhelming evidence' from the EIS [Environmental Impact Study] that the McEntire base, in South Carolina, should be the 'environmentally preferred alternative.' Not Burlington."[66] The memo continued, explaining bluntly that "[Air Combat Command] leadership indicated that there is *no operational benefit* of Burlington Air National Guard base over McEntire Air National Guard Base."[67] If there was indeed "no operational benefit" for Burlington to host the F-35 jets, then why did they end up in the state? The memo even admits to the blunder: "Burlington scored higher than McEntire overall due to incorrect scoring."[68]

Instead of comprehensively robust decision-making and rigorously considered cost-benefit analysis, the Air Force stayed the course despite the scoring error and moved forward with the plan to host the twenty F-35 jets in Burlington despite the memo advising against it 6 years prior. This type of behavior is neither an aberration nor exceptional. The Department of Defense's approach to fiscal responsibility, despite claims to "rebalance internally to control cost growth and generate greater efficiencies in order to prioritize spending on combat power," as per the Quadrennial Defense Review (2014), is rather casual if not simply contradictory. In 2023, the DoD budget passed in both the Senate and the House "Authorizes assignment of special duty pay for members based on cold-weather climate conditions in which their duties are performed."[69] The average "high" temperature in January in Burlington Vermont, is -3 degrees Celsius.[70] It appears that

[66] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

[67] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?". Emphasis added.

[68] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

[69] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, XI; U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget."

[70] National Centers for Environmental Information, "About," *NCEI*, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed July 2025, https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/about-us; WorldClimate.com, "Vermont Average Weather, Climate, and Temperature Information," accessed July 2025, https://www.worldclimate.com/climate/us/vermont.

stationing the jets in Burlington would not only provide "no operational benefit," but as of this year, it'll even cost more too.

Albeit a smaller matter compared with the billions in contract fraud that occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan, these seemingly local matters give a glimpse into the issues present in the constant and seemingly ceaseless process of further "modernization" and militarization by the U.S. military. Not only do the outcomes of an expanding global military presence cause legitimate health issues for American citizens, as well as others abroad, but they also reflect the seemingly aimless and incoherent military planning strategy by the DoD. It is difficult to determine how suggestions to further efficiency, like "reducing the Department's major headquarters budgets by 20 percent and decreasing the number of direct reports to the Secretary of Defense," as indicated in the Quadrennial Review (2014), will "lower the Department's operating costs."[71]

Though it would not be uncommon for the DoD to continue to pursue construction, basing, and realignment procedures based on a simple internal error related to an environmental impact survey, there are generally political dimensions to these decisions as well. When decisions related to military bases occur *within* the United States, state-level politics are generally the medium by which conversations and negotiations are carried on with the DoD.

When decisions related to military bases occur *outside* of the United States, the implications of such decisions, the actors, and the stakes, rise exponentially. The decision by the United States to host a military base or store munitions in Turkey or Italy has the potential for massive geopolitical repercussions that can lead to cascading effects related to regional or even global diplomatic relations. The decision by the Soviet Union to send munitions — ballistic nuclear missiles — to Cuba nearly "brought the world to the brink of nuclear disaster."[72]

The decision to relocate a squadron of twenty F-35 fighter jets in Burlington was an example of what POLITICO's reporter Bryan Bender describes as "the politics of defense."[73] This notion is related to the potential political gains that may be scored by senators or politicians from the local region in which military forces may be stationed, or where bases can be built. Primarily,

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[71] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, XI.

[72] Graham Allison, "The Cuban Missile Crisis at 50: Lessons for U.S. Foreign Policy Today," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 4 (2012): 11.

[73] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

these benefits are either to the political career of the individual or can be related to the perceived economic benefit to the local community. Although serving on the Senate Appropriations Committee which directly oversees the DoD budget, Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy remarked of the jets, "I wish I had the power to tell our Army or Air Force or Navy what they must or must not do. But I can't think of any senator of either party who has ever had that kind of power."[74] Greco remarked, however, that "after spending 30 years in the Air Force, you know [that] whatever a U.S. senator wants from the military in their state, they get."[75]

Whether in a small Vermont community or at a major overseas base like Okinawa, the issues ranging from poor DoD environmental planning and assessment, lack of concern for the residents of the local community (despite their statements to the contrary), and the political jockeying that occurs behind closed doors to allow further military access to the base, are all issues of concern for millions across the globe. From Honduras to Italy, Saudi Arabia to Djibouti, or South Korea to the Philippines to Vermont, local communities are affected in ways small and large by the global U.S. military footprint. [76]

The case of the F-35s in Burlington is a microcosm of the kinds of issues that these military bases pose to communities in other parts of the world. In fact, those international facilities, like the massive $11 billion Camp Humphreys right outside of Seoul in South Korea, pose even *more* complicated and delicate political, legal, and environmental issues. Mark Gillem colorfully notes that "The standard of behavior is higher for a guest. After all, if a child acts horribly at the dinner table, that is one thing, but if a guest spits in the host's face that is quite another."[77] From instances

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[74] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

[75] Evancie, "Why Is the F-35 Based in Vermont?".

[76] In other locations such as Germany, Italy, the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea, negative externalities stemming from bases include environmental damage, noise and light pollution, military accidents related to fighter jets, jeeps, and naval ships, dispossession of property, rape, manslaughter, and murder. Takako Hikotani et. al. note that "The alleged negative externalities include the frequent occurrence of crimes involving U.S. soldiers in the areas near the U.S. bases and the environmental degradation (e.g., noise and pollution) associated with U.S. military activities" and that in Okinawa, "For instance, the Town of Kin, where the U.S. Marines' Camp Hansen and Kin Blue/Red Beach Training Areas are located, has an official website that specifically mentions the history of hosting U.S. troops' negative consequences in the town. The website specifically asserts that the town has suffered from noise pollution and environmental destruction caused by U.S. military exercises and from criminal incidents caused by members of the American military." Takako Hikotani, Yusaku Horiuchi, and Atsushi Tago, "Revisiting Negative Externalities of US Military Bases: The Case of Okinawa," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 23, no. 3 (2023): 412–15, https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcac002.

[77] Mark Gillem, *America Town*, 22.

of sexual violence against local women by soldiers to military accidents that can cause massive damage, like when a fighter jet on a training run severed a ski-lift cable in 1998 in northern Italy killing twenty people, foreign military bases serve as incredibly fertile ground for analyzing a myriad of pressing issues related to almost all sectors of modern life.[78] From the seeping influence of U.S. militarization into other national cultures, to complex questions of legal jurisdictions, to the internal dynamics of vibrant local resistance movements, the United States military bases and their vast infrastructure abroad touch nearly every aspect of our modern world.

Despite the range of complex issues related to U.S. foreign military bases, it does not appear that there is a fundamental or comprehensive change to the expansion or enlargement of bases on the horizon. In 2021, the Biden administration approved the changes suggested by the DoD in their global posture review which included "greater regional access for military partnership activities" and "enhancing infrastructure in Guam and Australia and prioritizing military construction across the Pacific Islands."[79] This type of expansion is by no means exclusive to the Pacific region, however.[80]

In an article published in December 2021, the U.S. Army announced that new ground had been broken on a "$373 million Army family housing" facility in northern Italy in the city in Vicenza. Roberto Ciambetti, the president of Italy's Veneto regional council for the European Committee of the Regions, commented on the beginning of construction and happily remarked that "I hope that your village is a new Philadelphia - the city of brotherly love - a dwelling of life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness."[81] The housing facility that is "the Army's current largest housing investment program" includes homes that are "nearly double in size" to those from the 1950s. The article notes that "courtyard-based neighborhoods will include covered parking spaces

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[78] John Tagliabue, "20 Die in Italy as U.S. Jet Cuts a Ski-Lift Cable," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1998, https://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/04/world/20-die-in-italy-as-us-jet-cuts-a-ski-lift-cable.html.

[79] Jim Garamone, "Biden Approves Global Posture Review Recommendations," *DOD News*, U.S. Department of Defense, November 29, 2021, https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2856053/biden-approves-global-posture-review-recommendations/.

[80] The 2025 budget report outlines several billion dollars for infrastructure development domestically and abroad. See chapters 2 and 4 in U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*.

[81] Maria Cavins, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy, SECARMY Priority," *Army.mil*, December 6, 2021, https://www.army.mil/article/252495/373m_army_housing_groundbreaking_in_italy_secarmy_priority.

and allow community members to gather in green spaces."[82] These spaces are supplemented by "Sports and fitness areas in Villaggio's 'green spine,'" as well as a fitness trail along the perimeter of the facility.[83] For children of service members, a new high school valued at $31.5 million will "consolidate all Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Vicenza on one installation."[84] Finally, seeing as how "pets are part of the Army," there will be a new dog park constructed as well.

Outside of highlighting that the above described military installation serves no direct military function outside of housing family members of soldiers, and despite the façade of integrating the facility into the local environment by making them "Italian-themed," or naming them after "prominent Italian cities like 'Venezia, 'Milano,' 'Pisa,' 'Roma,' and 'Verona,'" they remain distinctly and culturally American.

Mark Gillem emphasizes that "America's outposts are similar to small towns, with offices, homes, shopping centers, schools, parks, fire stations, and industrial areas" and that "Underlying these familiar facades are familiar policies concerning design and construction that apply to outposts worldwide. These policies, in turn, reflect sociocultural norms exported across the globe by designers locked on a blueprint of their version of America."[85] Col. Matthew Gomlak, commander of U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Italy, remarked on the family housing facility and the new high school in 2021 noting that "The Army designed this community to provide families larger, modern housing with new schools and community centers," echoing Mark Gillem's assessment that "Americans have a clear tendency to change the landscape into familiar forms despite differences in ecology, geology, and climate."[86]

These choices to recreate familiar architectural and physical areas are made in order to recreate a sense of familiarity among built environments. In every way, these spaces, whether they be in Okinawa, Vicenza, or Ramstein, serve to provide the path of least resistance when cycling U.S. troops from one deployment in a part of the world to the next. Familiar standards of behaviour,

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[82] Cavins, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy."

[83] Cavins, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy."

[84] Cavins, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy."

[85] Gillem, *America Town*, 73.

[86] Gillem, *America Town*, 80.

architecture, and culture ensure that, "Wherever they go, America's soldiers are bound to arrive at the same familiar vision of 'home.'"[87] Roberto Ciambetti agreed when he "expressed hope that the new housing will represent a 'home away from home'" for soldiers and their families.[88]

Many questions arise from the example of the United States military's record-breaking new architectural project in Vicenza. Some have to do with local politics, such as why would Roberto Ciambetti, a staunch "Lega Nord" politician, be so happy to have the new U.S. Army family housing in his town? After all, the far-right party's platform is based largely on anti-immigration, anti-globalization, and Euroscepticism, which would directly question the region's relationship with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, and thus the U.S. military.[89] Even the very agreement that allows U.S. forces to be present in Italy in the first place, the 1954 Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement (which is still secret to this day) is widely considered by Italian legal scholars to be "a significant breach of the constitution and in particular of the principles of parliamentary control over the country's foreign policy."[90]

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[87] Gillem, *America Town*, 73.

[88] Cavins, "$373M Army Housing Groundbreaking in Italy."

[89] Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania, or the more common "Lega Nord," is a right-wing political party based in Northern Italy and founded in 1991 by Umberto Bossi. Daniele Albertazzi, Arianna Giovannini, and Antonella Seddone note that, "If the distinctiveness of Bossi's LN resided in its ideology, which was best defined as 'regionalist populist,' as well as its unwavering reliance on the 'mass party' organizational model, both party ideology and organization appear now to be in flux under the new leader. Indeed … the LN now stands out as the only Western 'regionalist' party to have turned to nationalism – a unique case on which, to date, very little is known." Daniele Albertazzi, Arianna Giovannini, and Antonella Seddone, "'No Regionalism Please, We Are Leghisti!' The Transformation of the Italian Lega Nord under the Leadership of Matteo Salvini," *Regional & Federal Studies* 28, no. 5 (2018): 646, https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2018.1512977. The party, like other regionally defined political parties, is principally concerned with "territorialized" issues and political perspectives. Furthermore, they generally present themselves as "anti-system" as Albertazzi et al. note, but significantly, also anti-immigration: "Arguably, 9/11 was a godsend for the Lega, as it helped justify radicalizing the party's position from being critical of how immigration had been managed by successive governments, to framing it as an existential threat to the very survival of the identities and cultures of northern Italians, thus tapping into the increasing fear and resentment of the local population towards foreigners." Albertazzi, Giovannini, and Seddone, "'No Regionalism Please, We Are Leghisti!'," 645. Thus, the incredibly positive statements by Ciambetti regarding the U.S. military's housing project in Vicenza, "I hope your village is a new Philadelphia," is particularly interesting from the perspective of a domestic and international politics and power relationships. For further general readings on the Lega Nord, see: Jorge del Palacio Martín, "La Nueva Lega Nord," Cuadernos de Pensamiento Político, no. 46 (2015): 157–73 and Roberto De Luca and Domenico Fruncillo, "La Lega 'nazionale' di Salvini alla conquista elettorale del Meridione," *Quaderni dell'Osservatorio Elettorale QOE-IJES* 82, no. 2 (2019): 49–84.

[90] Matteo Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy: From a Cold War Frontier to a Hub for Power Projection," in *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases*, edited by Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 44. For further on the legality of the agreement, see Luca Saiu, *Basi e strutture militari degli Stati Uniti in Italia: Il negoziato 1949–1954* (Rome: Aracne, 2014).

Other questions, at an international level, have to do with the overall effectiveness of the United States global security strategy. When Col. Matthew Gomlak states that "Investment in Soldiers and families, with both housing and support infrastructure - like the new high school - is essential to the future of our families stationed here in Italy," one is confronted with the question of why such facilities are "essential" in foreign countries — allied countries with their own facilities which serve the exact same functions — but similar budgetary requests within the United States, and *not* abroad, are routinely denied.[91] The answer provided by Gomlak, that they "will enable readiness for years to come as our Soldiers prepare for unforeseen contingencies in support of our Allies overseas" is not convincing. Similar answers and statements were frequently utilized by DoD officials to gain increased military budgets after George Bush's declaration of a "War on Terror" in 2003.[92]

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[91] In fact, not only have increased budget requests for public education in the country been declined, but there have also been a steady series of budget *reductions* since the Recession beginning in 2008. Phil Oliff, Chris Mai, and Michael Leachman note that "States have made steep cuts to education funding since the start of the recession and, in many states, those cuts deepened over the last year. Elementary and high schools are receiving less state funding in the 2012-13 school year than they did last year in 26 states, and in 35 states school funding now stands below 2008 levels — often far below" and that as a result, "States' large cuts in spending on education have serious consequences for the economy, in both the short and long term. Not only do they directly impact jobs, but they also counteract and sometimes undermine important state education reform initiatives, and put upward pressure on local property taxes." Phil Oliff, Chris Mai, and Michael Leachman, *New School Year Brings More Cuts in State Funding for Schools* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2012), 1, 8. Michael Leachman, Kathleen Masterson, and Eric Figueroa note that "Federal policymakers have cut ongoing federal funding for states and localities — outside of Medicaid — in recent years, thereby worsening state fiscal conditions." Michael Leachman, Kathleen Masterson, and Eric Figueroa, *A Punishing Decade for School Funding* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, November 29, 2017), 8. In the same period, between 2007 and 2017, federal funding for the Department of Defense has fluctuated between $589 billion and $646, peaking in 2011 with $752 billion. While defense spending has enjoyed a steady and gradual increase in the twenty-first century, federal funding for education has consistently declined. Statista, "U.S. Military Spending from 2000 to 2021 (in Billion U.S. Dollars)," *Statista*, accessed July 2025, https://www.statista.com/statistics/272473/us-military-spending-from-2000-to-2012/. Even most recently in the 2023 budget for the Department of Defense, changes under the "Military Education and Readiness" section include, "a pilot program to hire special education inclusion coordinators at Child Development Centers (CDC) with a high population of military children enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program and also at the CDCs" as well as the requirement to complete a report on the "on the recruiting and retention of DOD childcare providers." U.S. Department of Defense, "The Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Budget."

[92] For example, in the Department of Defense's "Summary Justification" Budget Request for the Fiscal Year of 2010 under the Obama administration, they note that "The necessity of securing U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan, while *preparing for a complex future defined by the interaction of enduring security challenges* with a changing operational environment, requires that the Department of Defense develop and sustain military forces capable of succeeding in the wars of today *while preparing for an uncertain tomorrow*." Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, *Fiscal Year 2010 Summary Justification* (Washington, DC: May 2009), 1–1, accessed July 2025, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2010/fy2010_SSJ.pdf. Emphasis added. The language utilized in the justifications for further funding almost always revolve around the notion of unforeseen or unknowable enemies or threats. In consequence, funding is *always* necessary due to the inarguable logic of deterrence and "future conflicts" that cannot be predicted or understood until they actually occur. One of the

A better explanation, which will be explored further within this work, is rooted in what Andrew Bacevich highlights as Washington's "Permanent War."[93] In this landscape, which began during the Cold War and has intensified since 2003, "When not actively engaged in hostilities, the nation faces the prospect of hostilities beginning at any moment, with little or no warning. In the setting of national priorities, readiness to act becomes a supreme value."[94] He continues: "Professing alarm at the prospect of any would-be adversary gaining an edge anywhere in anything, they [the United States government] devote huge sums not just to enhancing existing U.S. capabilities, but to developing entirely new ones."[95] Like the case in Vicenza and with new infrastructure approved by President Biden regarding the U.S. military's posture review in the Pacific Islands, the demands of perceived and imminent conflict result in an even further militarized global community from Italy to Diego Garcia. However, Bacevich reminds us that "Amid this constant clatter of sabers being honed, rattled, drawn, and thrust, fundamental questions about efficacy go unasked."[96]

This research will in fact address several of these "unasked" questions regarding not just the efficacy of the United States military's presence within the global community but also questions of how people in different parts of the world have reacted to this presence. It is not enough to solely trace the United States' ascension to a global hegemon, to criticize the DoD's lack of fiscal responsibility, or to ruminate upon the impacts of U.S. "soft power" during the Cold War. Though these are all significant aspects of the research I present here, I wish to take a more dynamic approach by focusing on the agency of local communities and countries in their

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results of this logic, other than increased and globalized militarization, is the maintenance of overseas communities that are described in the exact same rhetorical language as contained in "summary justifications" for funding. "Enduring security challenges" call for "enduring communities" such as Camp Humphreys in South Korea or new base in Vicenza. Even taking a moment to consider the language utilized in this context is revealing about how transparently the Department of Defense sees exactly what foreign military bases *are*. If "enduring security challenges" are indeed "enduring" in the sense that they are permanent, then military bases abroad that share the same moniker of "enduring" are understood in the same terms. Furthermore, the term "community" rather than "military base" or "military installation" suggests that the bases themselves function in a fundamentally different ways than simply for military functions.

[93] Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010).

[94] Bacevich, *Washington Rules*, 32.

[95] Bacevich, *Washington Rules*, 32.

[96] Bacevich, *Washington Rules*, 32.

relationship with the United States both at the international and the local level. Too often these considerations of research on the impacts of U.S. bases are eclipsed by high-level discussions regarding international political theory, global U.S. military or security, or simply as footnotes in a long list of global U.S. military indiscretions, while the effects of these decisions have direct consequences for average people within the United States and in other countries.

Though the research contained in this work stretches across a wide geography — three different continents — and is rooted in several different methodological backgrounds and frameworks — ranging from legal analysis to architectural urbanism — the purpose of this research is rooted in the discourse and display of power by the United States during a more flexible definition of the traditional Cold War period. In many ways, this work follows in the footsteps of Gretechen Heefner's chapter, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion of US Military Presence," in the recently published *Cambridge History of America and the World* (2022) where she seeks to explore "the surprisingly intimate ways in which negotiation for and maintenance of foreign military bases illuminate the operation of US power."[97] This research aspires to the same goal, but continues further into exploring the "surprisingly intimate ways" that the effects of these bases have been inscribed into local societies. Heefner notes that the study of bases involves "both stories of high politics and strategic thinking as well as on the ground realities of day to day interaction."[98] The following research attempts to strike a similar balance in preserving and highlighting the experiences of individuals and communities that have been affected by these military installations, while at the same time attempting to make sense of their wider effects on the post–World War II global order.

[97] Gretchen Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion of US Military Presence," in *The Cambridge History of America and the World, Volume IV: 1945 to the Present*, ed. David C. Engerman, Max Paul Friedman, and Melani McAlister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 56, 57.

[98] Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion," 56, 57.

Chapter II: Methodology and Approach

In the following chapter I will address several different technical aspects of the research contained in this dissertation. In order of appearance, I will address: 1) my approach and methodological considerations; 2) the current state of various fields of academic research that have touched on similar issues; 3) the series of case studies which will be considered in this research; 4) a brief historiography of base studies; and finally, 5) a note on the source materials that will be utilized throughout this work.

Encompassing architects, human rights organizations, journalists, and international lawyers, research on the impact of U.S. foreign military bases weaves throughout highly differentiated fields of study and academic communities. Julian Aguon, writing about the continuing buildup of U.S. bases and military presence in her home of Guam, summarizes the range of these impacts: "The boys and the bombers are coming. So are the nukes, the subs, the brand new bowling alleys and movie theatres and gas stations for the soldiers on now-expanding bases. Ruby Tuesday also. Home Depot. Walmart."[99]

One could take a highly specific approach to the study of these institutions, focusing solely on one aspect of base studies, such as economics or law, but in doing so, one runs the risk of overprioritizing one element of these multifaceted institutions which are definitely *more* than the sum of their parts. These bases host nuclear missiles and top-of-the-line fighter jets, but they also exist and function as homes for soldiers, their partners and their families. They boast golf courses and water slides, and at the same time, they serve as internationally significant and politically contentious bargaining chips for U.S. government and host countries. U.S. bases profoundly affect the ways in which the rest of the world views the United States, its people, and its broader place in a global society.

Research that approaches one aspect of these foreign military bases or understands their presence or influence through a single methodological lens such as political or historical analysis fails to capture the scope, reach, and integration of the United States military's influence in global and domestic affairs. When the United States military decides to fund "major initiatives to improve the quality of life of its military members and their families" abroad with initiatives that "focus

[99] Julian Aguon, "Afterward: Down Here," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz and Cynthia Enloe (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 333.

primarily on the military member, while others - like child care and school programs - focus on the children and youth" and yet others that "are devoted to spouses," we cannot forget that those decisions cause reverberations elsewhere.[100] The ability for a homeless family in the United States to receive a subsidized housing voucher is tied to a yearly federal budget. That yearly federal budget delineates discretionary funding for both Housing and Urban Development as well as the Department of Defense. When the Department of Defense insists on the need to expand family housing and schools for soldiers, their spouses, and their children in Vicenza, Italy, with the justification that it is vital for "military readiness," the money must come from somewhere. In the world of budgets, if we rob Peter to pay Paul, Peter is indeed the poorer as a result.

David Vine references these opportunity costs when he described the expense of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, noting that the money that was used for these invasions represents a significant missed opportunity to address domestic shortfalls:

> The roughly $5 trillion that U.S. taxpayers have already spent on the wars could have paid, for example, for eighteen years of health care for the thirteen million U.S. children now living below the poverty line while simultaneously paying for two years of Head Start for all those children, while simultaneously funding four-year public college scholarships for twenty-eight million students, while also providing twenty years of health care for one million military veterans, while still having enough to pay the salaries of four million people working clean energy jobs for ten years.[101]

Of course, federal budgets are malleable and simply stating that money not spent in once instance would immediately be reallocated for uses such as healthcare or education are more easily said than practically achieved. However, the notion that there are links between foreign military bases not just to negative externalities (e.g., jet fuel seeping into drinking water, noise and light pollution, vehicle and plane collisions) or the spread of militarization in places such as Italy or South Korea, but also to childhood education in Missouri or affordable housing in Illinois, is a significant aspect of this research. The Department of Defense itself said it best in its *Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request Overview*, when they justified funding requests for housing and day-care costs by claiming

[100] U.S. Department of Defense, *FY 2011 Budget Request*, 3–4.

[101] Vine, *The United States of War*, xix.

that these aspects of family, military, and social life were "All … inextricably interwoven."[102] The same holds true for military bases and their effects on communities across the globe.

What do we lose by only addressing only one aspect of these bases? If we focus on only one aspect of these basing relationships, we lose the wider context in which they were built and the purposes for both their initial, and continued existence. Meredith Lair demonstrates the value of this approach in her book, *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War* (2011) where she uses U.S. military bases to question the entire framing of the Vietnam conflict itself in historical memory — a feat not possible if one focused solely on single questions of economics or military history. She highlights the highly successful myth-making that surrounds the conflict, noting the emergence of a "deeply flawed narrative" that has succeeded in popular memory: "American wars are fought by ascetic citizen-soldiers who willingly forgo the comforts of home to serve the homeland, and the nation is represented abroad by valorous warriors confronting mortal peril in an equal fight with a dastardly foe."[103] She concludes, "It is a good story, and for Americans, a comforting and affirming story, but it bears little resemblance to what actually happened."[104]

Instead, in Vietnam, as elsewhere all over the globe, "the U.S. military built an Americanized world for its soldiers to inhabit, while the high-tech nature of American warfare and a sophisticated logistics effort to care for the troops guaranteed that a majority of soldiers—perhaps 75 to 90 percent, depending on when they served —labored in supporting roles, out of danger and in relative comfort. Material satisfaction displaced national interest as the animating war goal for many individuals."[105] Similar prevailing mythologies exist regarding the expansion and maintenance of the U.S. power in the "post-war" era.[106] When the purely political or military

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[102] U.S. Department of Defense, *FY 2011 Budget Request*, 3–4. The 2025 budget request echoes this language noting that "Further underpinning and inextricably linked to the Department's efforts to fully implement the 2022 NDS [National Defense Strategy] are the Secretary's top three priorities – to Defend the Nation, Take Care of Our People, and Succeed through Teamwork." U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*.

[103] Meredith H. Lair, *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 5.

[104] Lair, *Armed with Abundance*, 5.

[105] Lair, *Armed with Abundance*, 14.

[106] Enloe expands on this, noting that "The maps we put together of this basing policy have rarely circulated among the U.S. public, which has little awareness about U.S. military activities beyond the bare bones of

functions of foreign U.S. bases take the spotlight, these overshadow other, and more subtle, ways in which the bases serve as nodes of diffusing different types of U.S. power abroad.

After the end of World War II and alongside increasing tensions with Moscow, the decision to proceed with European reconstruction through the Marshall Plan, and the temporary monopoly on nuclear weapons, set the United States on a path that was increasingly interventionist in global affairs. But even then, Odd Arne Westad reminds us that "a majority of Americans were still against any permanent foreign stationing of US troops."[107] This process by which the United States reached the level of global overseas bases and troop placements it has today, in over half of the countries on the planet, and with self-described "enduring communities" intended to be permanent overseas basing locations for troops and their families, is integrally and essentially linked to the Cold War. But this process was not pre-determined, pre-planned, and was as asynchronous as it was ad-hoc.[108] Cynthia Enloe notes that "Most American military strategists would explain that the U.S. government opens and closes its bases according to its own strategic assessments." However, she concludes "it turns out that those alterations of strategic calculus are not the only reasons for the historical changes."[109]

How, why, and where bases developed in the places and contexts in which they did requires a fundamental and comprehensive rethinking of the binary nature of the Cold War. Furthermore, the effects of these institutions on local countries and communities goes beyond political science theories or equations. The effects are inscribed in newspapers, State Department cables, and even the architecture in these countries. They must be considered in the wider context of the Cold War

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the latest war." She continues with several reasons for this, the first being that there still exists a "widespread belief among Americans that any U.S. military base is of material value to the people living within its vicinity." Another contributing factor is that "There is virtually no news coverage – no journalists' or editors' curiosity – about the pressures or lures at work when the U.S. government seeks to persuade officials… that providing U.S. military-basing access would be good for their countries." In a final statement by Enloe, that, "Thus this popular assumption derives from faith, not evidence" rings true not just in popular public discourse surrounding U.S. foreign bases, but is almost identical to the "faith, not evidence" arguments which have been struck down by economists studying the effects of base closures. Enloe, "Preface," in Lutz and Enloe, *The Bases of Empire*, x, xi.

[107] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (London: Penguin; Random House, 2018), 118.

[108] Gretchen Heefner explicitly notes in, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion of US Military Presence," in *The Cambridge History of America and the World Volume IV: 1945 to the Present* that "There were no plans for permanent overseas garrisons" in U.S. policy circles during the Second World War and that "It is more accurate to see the creation of the US military empire as a sporadic and contested undertaking. Inter service rivalries, domestic political disagreements, shifting strategic ideas, concerns about resources, and fiscal demands all delayed the articulation of a coherent program." Heefner, "Overseas Bases," 58.

[109] Enloe, "Preface," in *The Bases of Empire*, x.

but understood on their own terms that are more intimate, at the level of the individual, the family, and the community. In utilizing differing methodological approaches to assess the effects and histories of these institutions in different parts of the world, we are able to gain a better understanding of not just the bases within varied host countries, but we are also in a better position to understand the Cold War and the United States' place in that history as well. The expansion of U.S. presence across the globe during the Cold War manifested itself in many different ways, from CIA interventions into local politics in France and Italy to safeguard those regions from administrations potentially sympathetic to communist forces, to direct military action against Kim Il-Sung's North Korean/Chinese army under the guise of UN forces in Korea. These world-changing events were made possible by the U.S. military's foreign base presence which only grew throughout the Cold War.

But at the same time, other no less significant effects of these institutions, from building civilian airports in Saudi Arabia, to informing the historical development of South Korean architecture, are less visible. As a part of a wider discussion on the growth of U.S. power in these decades, foreign military bases remain a highly significant, yet understudied subfield for many scholars in many different disciplines. This research aims to bring elements of these disaggregated arguments into one cohesive whole centered around the projection of various manifestations of U.S. power in the Cold War era. From how the U.S. sovereignty became physically embedded into foreign soil, influenced legal changes, altered local architectural trends, to how the United States is thought of in the wider geopolitical system, the study of these bases benefits from an inclusive consideration of interdisciplinary arguments, concerns, and evaluations.

In order to approach the topic of U.S. foreign military bases from an interdisciplinary perspective, this study will consider three different regional case studies of bases in South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy. The decision to approach the study of U.S. foreign military bases in a set of countries as diverse as these is rooted in the opportunity to look at the wider network of U.S. power abroad through a syncretic lens. Throughout the discussions of these "enduring communities" and their inhabitants, their environmental and economic impacts, their political and legal ramifications, and their social and cultural influences, lies an implicit discourse about the notion of power both "hard" and "soft." The manifestation of that discourse appears in different ways, in different places, and for different purposes. The presence of Patriot Missile Launchers and attack helicopters in South Korea are clear examples of "hard power." Bruce Springsteen's

Born in the USA or the Grateful Dead's *American Beauty* are clear examples of "soft power." But what about more subtle or complex expressions of this discourse?

Alongside this consideration of power is a reassessment of the traditional periodization of the Cold War, often seen as a mirror image of U.S. base expansion in the post–World War II era. Many a Cold War history begins with the major conflict of the Korean War, then moves to Vietnam, and follows many of the general events associated with a bipolar power struggle and a series of proxy wars between the United States and the Soviet Union. In this narrative, South Korea is rapidly eclipsed by the Vietnam War. Then the narrative quickly diverges into a more complex tale. The Iranian Revolution — and its subsequent ripple effects — dominates narratives of the Middle East along with the multipolar conflict with Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, and Syria. In Latin America, the Iran-Contra affair, and U.S. involvement with authoritarian forces in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Brazil, and Argentina draws the spotlight. In Western Europe, domestic terrorism of the Baader–Meinhof group in Germany, the Red Brigade in Italy, the authoritarian regimes of Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal, and the tension created by the omnipresent Cold War spying organization of the East-German state, the Stasi, are frequent center points for Cold War historians. Expressions of power by the United States in these different contexts are obvious in retrospect, even if they were not transparent at the time.

In this traditional recounting of the Cold War narrative, U.S. base expansion seems a natural, even expected aspect of Cold War history. The United States "delivered more than 2.3 million tons of food, fuel and supplies to West Berlin via more than 278,000 airdrops" and "made more than 189,000 flights, totalling nearly 600,000 flying hours and exceeding 92 million miles" during the year-long Berlin Airlift.[110] In the 1950s, "With President Eisenhower's approval, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles … conceived and orchestrated a plot that would put in power a government 'compatible' with United Fruit" in the country of Guatemala, an approach which led to both a long and bloody civil war, but also the Guatemalan Genocide. In light of news that Iran's leader Mohammad Mosaddegh intended to nationalize oil in the country, a coup d'état organized by the United States and the UK governments put in place Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last "Shah of Iran," to rule with favorable policies to Western interests. The United States sent thousands and

[110] Katie Lange, "The Berlin Airlift: What It Was, Its Importance in the Cold War," *DoD News*, June 24, 2022, U.S. Department of Defense, https://www.defense.gov/News/Inside-DOD/Blog/article/2062719/the-berlin-airlift-what-it-was-its-importance-in-the-cold-war/.

thousands of troops to secure portions of East-Asia in the Korean and Vietnam wars for U.S. interests, both private and political.

These examples of the projection of power by the United States in the context of the Cold War are well known. What I wish to take aim at in this research are the more subtle ways in which these discourses of power have been expressed — by looking at the "discos" or "kitchens" described by Enloe — in different countries across the globe during the Cold War period, and which continue to dominate U.S. policy today. As Ruth Morrow and Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem contend, coming from the architectural perspective in their work *Peripheries: Edge Conditions in Architecture (2013),* "for any global discourse to gain traction it has to be rooted, lived, and significant across a range of diverse locations."[111]

Those lived experiences are more than just "military" power. The development and use of architecture and space in South Korea is one example. One can explore how the United States, through its bases in Korea, has progressively and substantially developed land in one of the most densely populations regions of the entire world, culminating in the construction of water slides, dog parks, and golf courses outside of the highly urbanized city center of Seoul. As Gary A. Boyd and Denis Linehan remark in *Ordnance: War + Architecture & Space* (2013), "the pervasiveness of war," especially in the twentieth century, "reaches beyond physical contexts, to inform methods and memories, process and systems."[112] Speaking of the former site of the downtown Yongsan U.S. military garrison which is being partially converted into a park in downtown Seoul (not without several controversial issues of its own), Thomas Maresca reports that "Choi Ha-yeon, 74, said that he'd been near the base many times but had never been allowed to set foot inside — until now."[113] Ha-yeon stated, "This is a very big part of [Korean] history … I want to see it before it changes."[114]

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[111] Ruth Morrow and Mohamen Gamal Abdelmonem, eds., *Peripheries: Edge Conditions in Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 265.

[112] Gary A. Boyd and Denis Linehan, *Ordnance: War + Architecture & Space* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 2.

[113] Thomas Maresca, "Yongsan Garrison: U.S. Military Base in Seoul to Become Park," *UPI*, July 1, 2022, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/01/Yongsan-Garrison-Park-military-base-Seoul/9551656675158/.

[114] Maresca notes, "South Korean citizens have not been allowed access to the site for almost 120 years, since Japanese colonizers first established a military facility here in 1904." Maresca, "Yongsan Garrison."

The case of Saudi Arabia shows that, overshadowed by the United States military's presence in spurring Osama Bin-Laden's attacks on the twin towers in 9/11, questions have been left unasked about how the presence of multi-billion-dollar construction projects in the country managed by the U.S. military during the Cold War have affected the contemporary U.S.-Saudi economic and political partnership today. Jeronimo Delgado-Caicedo highlights the importance of incorporating the Persian Gulf, and Saudi Arabia in particular, into discussions of the "US security umbrella:" "It is the birth of this modus vivendi that is relevant worldwide today, since the vital interests of the United States are also the stability of the Saudi kingdom, this is part of a priority and a constant of American policy throughout the second part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century."[115]Absolutely integral to the formation of the modern Saudi state has been the presence and assistance of U.S. military forces in the country.

Similarly, in Latin America, the coups, military involvements, CIA presence, and anti-drug trafficking forces have overshadowed narratives of the Cold War, leaving the dynamic and forceful role of substate actors and democratic institutions within Latin American countries in rebuffing these advances less well understood. Doug Stokes concludes, "Orthodox narratives of US foreign policy have been employed as uncontested modes of historical interpretation with US post–Cold War foreign policy in the Third World."[116] The full range of U.S. military impacts is one part, but only one of the full story.

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[115] Jeronimo Delgado-Caicedo, ed., *Handbook of Regional Conflict Resolution Initiatives in the Global South* (Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis, 2022), 43. Another important aspect to U.S. military presence in the region was how it affected both gender and religion. Feminist and gender perspectives on these issues are impossible to ignore since, as Amélie Le Renard notes, "The formation of a national identity implies a specific discourse about women's place in society: it is not possible to understand the current situation of women in Saudi Arabia without taking into account the history of the formation of the state." Amélie Le Renard, "'Only for Women:' Women, the State, and Reform in Saudi Arabia," *The Middle East Journal* 62, no. 4 (2008): 612.

[116] For example, Stokes maintains that the end of the Cold War was rather one change in a series of changes related to U.S.-Colombian relations, rather than a singular monolithic moment and champions a "continuity" argument in his work. He notes, "In the post-Cold War era anti-drugs and the 'war on terror' serve as the latest justifications for the continued US backing of a terror war in Colombia. There has thus been a major continuity in US Colombian policy that has crossed from the Cold War to the post-Cold War period." Rather than seeing the U.S. involvement in the country and the region as being ideologically against communism, he sees it primarily as a means to extract wealth, a desire that has persisted even beyond the Cold War period. Doug Stokes, "Why the End of the Cold War Doesn't Matter: The US War of Terror in Colombia," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 4 (2003): 585. Convincing evidence to support the notion of continuity of operations by the United States government in the region of Latin America to maintain *some* sense of the system of the previous Cold War decades can be found in the Department of Defense's "Summary of Justification" for yearly funding requests. The summary from 2010 notes, "From the end of World War II to the conclusion of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the United States remained committed to sustaining an international system whose very existence was commensurate with America's desire to maintain open commerce, ensure the security of its friends and allies, and help further the spread of liberty and

The final case study, Italy, demonstrates how the United States military's presence in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) affected the ways in which power has been expressed throughout Europe during the Cold War. We know that the United States intervened in Italy early after 1945 to ensure that the Christian Democratic Party maintained a stranglehold on national politics for years, but how did the presence of the new NATO regime affect power relationships between Italy and the United States? Matteo Dian understands the relationship as highly significant for both domestic and international politics in Italy: "After the end of the Cold War, forms of opposition and resistance to the role of U.S. and NATO bases deeply changed, together with the international environment and the Italian political system."[117] In Italy, the presence of U.S. military bases has evolved over time, but they have remained deeply connected to domestic Italian concerns as well as the regional and global events of international politics and law.

These arguments and questions will not be addressed through traditional references to presidential administrations in Washington, but rather by looking at specific pieces of evidence presented by the bases in these different regions. The *origins* of these discourses of power may have been in Washington D.C., Moscow, Riyadh, Seoul, or Rome, but the *expressions* and *manifestations* of that power are reflected through a network of military bases across the globe. In looking at ways in which these military bases have affected different parts of the world, and how locals have reacted to their presence and displays of power, we may achieve the dual purpose of decentralizing the overarching and incomplete narrative about the bipolarity of the Cold War period, while at the same time reframing the discussion of American hegemonic ascendancy after 1945.

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peace. *In this respect, the touchstone of American strategy during last century's Cold War remains relevant to today's challenges*" and "U.S. interests include protecting the nation and its allies from attack or coercion, promoting international security to reduce conflict and foster economic growth, and helping to secure the global commons – sea, air, space, and cyberspace. *To advance these interests, the U.S. has developed military capabilities and alliances, participated in and supported international security and economic institutions, used diplomacy and soft power to cooperate with and shape the behavior of individual states and the international system, and used force when necessary. These tools help inform the strategic framework with which the United States plans for the future*." Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, *FY 2010 Summary Justification*, 1, 2. Emphasis added. In essentially explicit terms, the DoD notes that they have utilized a wide range of tools to fundamentally alter to "cooperate and shape the behavior of individual states and the international system" for their goals. Regardless of how altruistic or morally objective those goals can be, it is absolutely clear that the United States, and particularly the United States military abroad, understands and admits to an element of procedural continuity from the Cold War era to today.

[117] Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," in Kawana and Takahashi, 48.

These bases are part and parcel of a global military network. At the same time, they have had (and continue to have) intensely specific effects on local communities. By looking at several of the under-prioritized aspects of their presence in different parts of the world, we have much to gain about the ways in which some aspects of base presence are considered, resisted, accepted, or decried within their local contexts. At the same time, we also benefit from the wider-ranging arguments and views that seek to re-evaluate the Cold War period as one of unfettered U.S. ascendancy in economic or hegemonic terms.

Vital to the exploration of these issues, more so than any other single methodological approach, is both the acknowledgement and the embrace of interdisciplinarity to research of this kind. In this regard , it is helpful to note the perspective of the editors of *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory* (2011), Greig Crysler, Hilde Heynen, and Stephan Cairns who insist that contemporary approaches to both theoretical and practical architecture must similarly be receptive to such influences: "The complexity of the current moment requires an impure, inclusive approach enlivened by the possibilities produced by the critical intersection and juxtaposition of competing positions."[118] As one example, they note that "architecture has always borrowed from other disciplines to illuminate its central questions, to augment its legitimacy, to find a language to redefine its agenda."[119]

The same could be said of other disciplines within the humanities such as sociology, anthropology, or history. Even in the field of economics, a rigid adherence to doctrine or disciplinary focus without consideration of a wider contextual whole means that research can remain both bound and rendered static by an internal epistemology that doesn't seek to place itself into conversation *among* other equally valid and relevant epistemes. Matthew Farish invoked the economist Philip Mirowski's own words in his book *The Contours of America's Cold War (2010)*, "you cannot understand modern economics simply by confining your attention to self-identified economists; it is always far more fruitful to keep your eyes on the military and the operations researchers."[120]

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[118] Greig Crysler, Hilde Heynen, and Stephen Cairns, *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publication, 2011) 11.

[119] Crysler, Heynen, and Cairns, *The SAGE Handbook*, 15.

[120] Matthew Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) xiv; Philip Mirowski, *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 379.

The study of U.S. foreign military bases is neither geographically, temporally, or epistemologically distinct. One of the premier scholars of base studies, Alexander Cooley, notes that "For host governments and citizens, U.S. bases are also concrete institutions and embodiments of U.S. power, identity, and diplomacy."[121] Another well-known historian of the U.S. military, Gretchen Heefner, distilled the notion of this oftentimes complicated nexus of "power, identity, and diplomacy," noting that "The Pentagon built the Turkish Highway system."[122] To view military bases in purely economic or political terms means overlooking the totalizing nature of their expression of power in different ways, both subtle and overt.

The methodological approach of this research is not explicit or doctrinal, responding rather to the concrete needs of each case study. However, it contains elements rooted in a tripartite and syncretic understanding of concepts put forward by the late Prussian general and military theorist Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz, the polemic author and philosopher Paul-Michel Foucault, and contemporary academics and advocates of interdisciplinary approaches such as James Grossman and James Jacob.

Clausewitz is best known for his notion of statecraft and the role of war and conflict in its production. In his monograph *On War (1832)*, Clausewitz insisted that "war is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means."[123] The United States' militarization of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has resulted in state of permanent and perpetual war footing resulting in what some have termed "The Forever War."[124] The expansion of foreign U.S. military bases, whether or not they are publicly presented or discussed as tools of a "continuation of political intercourse," remain an expansion of the concept put forward by Clausewitz.

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[121] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 7.

[122] Heefner, "Overseas Bases," 58.

[123] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J. J. Graham (Ware, England: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), 280.

[124] An homage to the science fiction novel of the same name by Joe Haldeman. Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1974). Some believe that the work depicts the futility and senselessness of the Vietnam War through a space opera lens. For more on interpretations of Halderman's novel as a Vietnam allegory, see H. Bruce Franklin, "The Vietnam War as American Science Fiction and Fantasy," in *The Fantastic Other: An Interface of Perspectives*, ed. Brett Cooke, George E. Slusser, and Jaume Marti-Olivella, vol. II of *Critical Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 165–86.

Harry Brownea *et al.* in their article, "'Pitstop of Death': Irish newspaper coverage of Iraq war protests at Shannon airport," note that in 2003 during the manpower and munitions buildup for the war in Iraq, "The Irish government, when forced to comment, stated that allowing US-military use of the airport did not constitute participation in any war."[125] They continue, however, by noting that "US diplomatic cables later released by Wikileaks show that events at the airport and the public debate about its use were a high priority for both the US and Irish governments."[126] Even in countries that do not host U.S. foreign military bases, like Ireland highlighted here, have been utilized in the "continuation of political intercourse" that facilitate the expansion and maintenance of the heightened level of permanent militarization emanating from the twentieth century.

This expression of political influence is irrevocably linked to a discourse of power among and between states, institutions, and individuals. U.S. foreign military bases are perhaps the most visceral, yet underprioritized and infrequently invoked examples of this discourse in studies of the Cold War. The bases themselves, as expressions and nodes of power diffusion, expand and contort the concepts of war, political influence, and power depending on the sensitivities of their particular geographic contexts.

Foucault, undisputedly one of the touchstones of academic thought surrounding concepts of the state, society, and power, was not ignorant of his Prussian history either. Matthew Farish, in *The Contours of America's Cold War* (2011), references the interviews that Foucault had regarding geography and power. Foucault's statements regarding space and power were of principle concern for Farish as a geographer, as Foucault noted that a history of spaces would also "at the same time be the history of powers (both these terms in the plural)—from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat."[127] Though Farish invokes Foucault to link the study of space and "spatiality" more generally, "Much of Foucault's own work was spatial history—a phrase that he never used formally," the concept is exceedingly relevant for the study of foreign military bases.[128]

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[125] Harry Browne, Colin Coulter, Roddy Flynn, Vanessa Hetherington, and Gavan Titley, "'Pitstop of Death': Irish Newspaper Coverage of Iraq War Protests at Shannon Airport," *Irish Political Studies* 34, no. 1 (2018): 93.

[126] Browne et al., "'Pitstop of Death,'" 93.

[127] Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 149.

[128] Farish, *Contours of America's Cold War*, xvii.

The huge network of U.S. overseas bases military bases simultaneously act as part and parcel of "great strategies of geopolitics," while at the very same time embodying "little tactics of the habitat." U.S. military bases in South Korea serve as geopolitical and militaristic deterrents to North Korean and Chinese aggression to South Korea and Taiwan. At the very same time, they engage with smaller "little tactics of the habitat" in far more subtle ways. Similar situations occur with all of the case studies included in this research. From Italy to Saudi Arabia to South Korea, these bases serve as objects of study for wider geopolitical concerns, but are *also* part and parcel of a larger discussion and discourse about the notions of power as envisaged by Clausewitz. They are the product and the evidence of an ongoing and constant process of U.S. militarization that began in the twentieth century, windows into a reimagined and decentralized historiographical re-evaluation of Cold War history, and evidence and objects of study for the type of discourse of spatial and geographic power that Foucault articulated decades ago. As part of the larger discussion of Cold War power politics, this work will contextualize these bases and case studies taking up the object of the "little tactics of habitat" that Foucault elucidated which are part and parcel of the wider system of power projection and Clausewitz's "continuation of political intercourse" by other means.

In order to achieve this analysis, new methods, new approaches, and more syncretic theories must be used. Foucault noted that "It took Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel to develop a history of rural and maritime spaces" but also that, "The development must be extended, by no longer just saying that space predetermines a history which in turn reworks and sediments itself in it."[129] Beyond their military functions, U.S. foreign military bases exert extreme political, economic, and legal pressure in many different ways. David Immerwahr concludes that "These tiny specks—Howland Island and the like—are the foundations of U.S. world power."[130] Foucault understood the polyvalent nature of physical spaces, regardless of size, in exerting influence. He further noted that "Anchorage in a space is an economico-political form which needs to be studied in detail."[131]

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[129] Foucault, "The Eye of Power," 149.

[130] Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States* (New York: Random House, 2019), 24.

[131] Foucault, "The Eye of Power," 149.

An important aspect of base studies, and one that Immerwahr engages with explicitly in his most recent book-length work, *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States* (2019), is the imperial element. It is important to clarify that this research is not an imperial history of the United States and does not extensively engage with the wider debate on definitions of empire or U.S. exceptionalism (or lack thereof). This is a conscious decision born of practicality and purpose. Just as positioning one's work as a Cold War history runs the risk presupposing more strict limits of periodization, positioning one's work as an analysis or discourse of U.S. empire opens the door to other kinds of essentialization. Paul Kramer, a historian of modern U.S. history who has written extensively on U.S. empire, emphasizes that "The imperial is a necessary tool for understanding the United States' global history, with both prospects and limits."[132] The focus on U.S. bases can quickly be eclipsed and subsumed into the study of U.S. empire, rather than observing them on their own terms, as legitimate and important objects of academic study.

Though this would be a sufficient reason alone to not incorporate a discourse of U.S. empire extensively within this work, Kramer has also highlighted other important reasons to be cautious in engaging wholesale with the "empire debate." He emphasized that both "The historical and social science scholarship on empire is massive" and "The literature on race, gender, and colonialism is colossal."[133] Furthermore, Kramer has repeatedly and forcefully argued that the extensive debate regarding if the United States is, or is not, in fact an empire — prominent across several different academic disciplines — is ultimately an "(endless, fruitless) debate."[134] He argues that the tools provided by the study of the imperial such as "the way that power resides in and operates through long-distance connections; the mutual and uneven transformation of societies through these connections; and comparisons between large-scale systems of power and their histories" are far more relevant than the "mostly unproductive question of whether the United States is or has 'an empire'—and if so, what type it is, and whether or not it measures up to the rubrics built to account for other empires."[135] Works that engage with questions of empire will be

[132] Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1349.

[133] Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1349, 1350.

[134] Paul A. Kramer, "How Not to Write the History of US Empire," *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 5 (2018): 916.

[135] Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1350.

utilized throughout this work as well as the language models and conceptual categories that abound in these fields, but ultimately, bases will be the focus. The goal of this work is to not ask what bases can tell us about empire, but rather, what can *empire* tell us about *bases themselves*.

The question remains; however: how can we even attempt to study such installations if their effects and influences *are* so diverse and multifaceted? Even if we take aim at the "little tactics of the habitat" which is a far more manageable object of study, how are we to study the different kinds or manifestations of these institutions on local populations? The answer is by utilizing interdisciplinary methods that react and respond to differing circumstances, geographies, and historical contingencies. James Jacob asserts in his article "Interdisciplinary trends in higher education" that, "While disciplinary experts are essential for understanding particular ways of knowing within specific fields of study, their perspectives in addressing larger and more complex issues is often limited. ID [Interdisciplinary] approaches take a much broader view of the entire landscape, first by surveying the forest and afterwards drawing upon various … experts depending on the needs, contexts and circumstances."[136]

In 2022, Mark Philip Bradley, published an article with the American Historical Association titled "Art as Historical Method" which represents a concrete example of what Jacob describes.[137] In this work, Bradley discussed the collaboration of Historian Alexis Dudden (Univ. of Connecticut) and graphic novelist Kim Inthavong who produced "Okinawa: Territory as Monument," which "excavates the layered dimensions of the Okinawan past as a site of Japanese colonization and American military bases."[138] In "Art as Historical Method" Bradley argues for the use of other sources and approaches to the study of history by looking at "historically situated works of contemporary art in museums, international expositions, and arts spaces."[139] James Grossman, executive director of the AHA agrees. In his article, "Guidelines for broadening the

[136] W. James Jacob, "Interdisciplinary Trends in Higher Education," *Palgrave Communications* 1, no. 15001 (2015): 2.

[137] Mark Philip Bradley, "Art as Historical Method: In the September Issue of the American Historical Review," *Perspectives on History*, November 11, 2022, American Historical Association, https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/art-as-historical-method-in-the-september-issue-of-the-american-historical-review-november-2022/.

[138] Bradley, "Art as Historical Method."

[139] Bradley, "Art as Historical Method."

definition of historical scholarship," he concludes that "The first decades of the 21st century have witnessed a broadening of the ways historical knowledge is advanced, applied, accessed, integrated, diffused, and taught."[140]

Key to these efforts are the need to "acknowledge both long-standing and increasingly diverse genres of historical scholarship that go beyond traditionally valued models of single-authored and peer-reviewed books, journal articles, and other essays."[141] Zahir Irani, in her article, "The University of the Future Will Be Interdisciplinary" notes that increasingly we must turn to interdisciplinary methods for a "broader view" and the "sharper insights that come from the intersection between multiple disciplines that defines new territory."[142]

These reflections speak to the efficacy of utilizing interdisciplinary methods to understand the world around us. Fields such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis and departments of Digital Humanities point to the future of where historical scholarship is headed.[143] The need to utilize interdisciplinary methods to approach complex problems is at the core of this research. Jacob concludes that "Societal, environmental, economic, and philosophical issues and challenges are often so complex that it is impossible to fully understand them from a single perspective or knowledge framework."[144] The multiple dimensions of the U.S. global power structures abroad require multiple different tools, including those borrowed from the study of empires, to understand how they function in different contexts and environments.

In this research, I will be using a series of different methodological analyses that include close reading and legal analysis for bases in Italy, architectural theory for bases in South Korea, and infrastructural power for bases in Saudi Arabia. The totality of this research will then be set

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[140] Bradley, "Art as Historical Method."

[141] Bradley, "Art as Historical Method."

[142] Zahir Irani, "The University of the Future Will Be Interdisciplinary," *The Guardian*, January 24, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2018/jan/24/the-university-of-the-future-will-be-interdisciplinary.

[143] For more on GIS, see the introduction by Anne Kelly Knowles and Amy Hillier, eds., *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* (Redlands, CA: ESRI, Inc., 2008). For more on digital humanities, see: David M. Berry, *Understanding the Digital Humanities* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012) and Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, "What Is Digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments?," in *Defining Digital Humanities*, ed. Melissa Terras, Julianne Nyhan, and Edward Vanhoutte (New York: Routledge, 2016), 211–20.

[144] Jacob, "Interdisciplinary Trends in Higher Education," 2.

upon the backdrop of a Fucoidan understanding of the relationship of specifically delineated spaces (the bases themselves), and the exertion of power manifested through differentiated and contextually specific "tactics of habitat." Each case study will employ a different methodological approach that is best suited to understanding understudied aspects of these installations in their expression and maintenance of power within the wider geopolitical network of U.S. power during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the words of the Department of Defense itself, "The United States remains the only nation able to project and sustain large-scale operations over extended distances. This unique position generates an obligation to be responsible stewards of power."[145] It is purpose of this research to investigate the stewardship of that power and its effects.

Introduction to the State of the Field

The study of foreign military bases has attracted a wide range of interest from many different sources. In consequence, it would be impractical to touch on every single disparate thread of research regarding foreign military installations so addressed here are major discussions and works within several different subfields.[146] Works completed by scholars in each of these different subfields have been indispensable in contributing specific or regional knowledge to the study of U.S. foreign military bases.

Anthropologists and sociologists have taken a more recent interest in how institutions have been shaping elements of militarized culture either within or between societies and on military bases. In the case of political science and international relations, the concerns regarding military bases are naturally centered around their efficacy in deterring enemy attacks or how they impact international political leveraging. Within the field of law, there are two more general subdivisions. The first is a corpus of work closer to legal anthropology, discussing the social and cultural circumstances that describe how and why law developed the way that it has near military institutions, the latter being a series of works related to legal science which, according to Benda-

[145] U.S. Department of Defense, *FY 2011 Budget Request*, 2–2.

[146] For example, I will not be providing an extended historiographical overview of the purpose or function of foreign military bases in Roman, Chinese, Mongol, or British empires just as I will not be engaging in the very long and detailed discussions about the notions of colonialism in during the periods of Portuguese and Spain sea-dominion.

Beckmann, "elaborate correct interpretations of general legal abstractions."[147] Economists, historians, and architects have also taken an interest in the functions of military bases as they relate to local or international economies, how they function within the context of empires, and how they contribute to "built" or "structured" environments which in turn shape social behaviors. Though works related to foreign military institutions span a series of subfields, the study of their impacts and their role in many of these discussions is significantly under-researched compared to other aspects of militarization, militaries, and international conflict more generally.

Though for the purposes of clarity it is useful to delineate these pieces of research and focuses into separate subfields, the reality is that many of them weave in and out of differing methodological approaches and focuses. David Vine, in his work *Base Nation* (2015), approached the study of bases through an anthropological lens, but also endeavored to quantitatively calculate (by himself no less), the total cost of overseas U.S. military bases.[148] Similar to Vine, Cynthia Enloe, in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989), also took an anthropological approach analyzing the gender dimension to base politics by discussing international tourism, domestic servants on bases, and the notion of nationalized masculinity through a discussion of nationalism itself.[149]

It is clear that though in name these installations and facilitates are "militaristic" in nature, the involvements of persons related to them, and the effects caused by them, spread far beyond any isolated or abstract notions of "security" or "defense." The bases themselves may be built upon the premise that they primarily serve a military function which inherently requires a degree of insularity for the purposes of security. However, they remain highly porous institutions involving an exchange (at times highly asymmetrically) in spheres such as culture, society, government,

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[147] Franz von Benda-Beckmann, "Who's Afraid of Legal Pluralism?," *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 34, no. 47 (2002): 41.

[148] Vine is currently a professor of anthropology at American University in Washington D.C.

[149] For example, Enloe notes, "All the women and men who have tried to make us genuinely smarter about international politics have revealed that what is 'international' is far broader than mainstream experts assume, and that what is 'political' reaches well beyond the public square" and that "making feminist sense of international politics necessitates gaining skills that feel quite new and redirecting skills that one has exercised before, but which one assumed could shed no light on wars, economic crises, global injustices, and elite negotiations. Investigating the workings of masculinities and femininities as they each shape complex international political life—that is, conducting a gender-curious investigation—will require a lively curiosity, genuine humility, a full tool kit, and candid reflection on potential misuses of those old and new research tools." Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, xv, 5.

attitude, language, and even architecture. This "secuirtyscape," a term coined by the anthropologist Hugh Gusterson, describes this physical, intellectual, militaristic, and cultural landscape as a space of liminality and fluidity among different people groups.[150]

The notion has been expanded by others who had seen the definition to be too narrowly focused in terms of the nation-state in dictating or driving this diffusion, resulting in a more inclusive and less state-centric understanding of how these spaces function. In fact, bases constitute "a broader geographic and institutional expanse of heterogeneous, hybrid, interconnected state and nonstate, public and private, agencies and resources, which variously organize professional expectations, notions of expertise, activities, and goals, through which technology and training are distributed, and knowledge circulates, often but not simply in relationship to the interdiction of threats to the nation-state."[151] The author who proffered this definition, Robert Albro, noted in the introduction to the edited volume *Anthropologists in the Securityscape* (2012) that "We have chosen to give characteristically disciplinary attention to the particular contexts of professional practice within the many corners of the securityscape rather than to apprehend the 'security state' as a monolithic actor."[152] He insists on the need for an "expansive heterogeneity" of study within this space and that because of this gap in scholarship, "anthropologists" and other scholars, "can encounter and engage the securityscape in a multitude of settings, and that its edges or frontiers are often not stationary or easily defined. The problems associated with what it means to operate professionally in these complex arrangements of security often look different from this vantage point."[153]

The points Albro and other anthropologists have made regarding the wide-ranging nature of the interactions between individuals and experiences within securityscapes, though by no means focused on foreign U.S. military bases, are relevant for this research. The effects of these bases

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[150] Gusterson's original description of "securityscape" is as follows: "asymmetrical distributions of weaponry, military force, and military-scientific resources among nation-states and the local and global imaginaries of identity, power, and vulnerability that accompany these distributions." Hugh Gusterson, *People of the Bomb: Portraits of America's Nuclear Complex* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 166; Robert Albro, ed., *Anthropologists in the Securityscape: Ethics, Practice, and Professional Identity* (New York: Left Coast Press, 2012), 7.

[151] Albro, *Anthropologists in the Securityscape*, 11.

[152] Albro, *Anthropologists in the Securityscape*, 11.

[153] Albro, *Anthropologists in the Securityscape*, 11.

form both a network of secuityscapes across the globe, connected by a wider global "national" security strategy by the United States military, but also function as more localized securityscapes themselves within host countries replete with all of the varied and heterogenous effects and relationships as described by Albro. In some of these spaces, certain dynamics or aspects of basing relationships in the area manifest more prominently depending on the context, demanding that an analysis of this kind be as elastic and interdisciplinary as the issues in which they produce.

Lastly, I have included here the most relevant portions of different academic discourses surrounding the study of U.S. military bases as they relate to the research contained in this work. It is not intended to be an exhaustive historiography of different fields, though I have included materials for further reading within each respective subsection.

A Short History of Overseas Basing

One can generally divide the historiography of overseas military installations into three time periods: the discussion of ancient empires and foreign military control (mostly centered around the expansion of the Roman empire between 31 BCE – 476 CE); the "golden age" of Spanish and Portuguese imperialism and overseas military expansionism (roughly the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); and the period of the nineteenth century and the British (and occasionally French) expansion of overseas empire (Some posit the period of British hegemony from the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 to the outbreak of the Second World War, 1939).[154] Below, I will present a short overview of overseas basing through these periods, stretching from the Roman through to the Portuguese, Spanish, and British empires. A significant aspect to note about each of these three periods and subsets of historical base research is that each are tied to the expansion and growth of the empires themselves.

Different approaches to definitions of what constitutes overseas military bases within contemporary research of overseas U.S. military bases and questions of the "Pax Americana"

[154] For example, see Edward K. Spiezio's "British Hegemony and Major Power War, 1815–1939: An Empirical Test of Gilpin's Model of Hegemonic Governance," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1990): 165–81. Other empires of note not considered extensively here include the Ottoman, Russian/Soviet, Japanese, and Chinese empires.

certainly exist, but there is no clear consensus about how we might accurately describe them.[155] When it comes to the historical study of overseas military bases for each of these above-mentioned empires, there is no question that the purpose and function of these military installations were to secure and solidify imperial ownership of fringe regions of the empires, and to control the flow of goods, resources, people, and trade. In the expansion of these empires, Mark Gillem contends that "The common element in all these endeavors was the establishment of some type of military garrison, outpost, or base in the conquered lands."[156] The function of these outposts, however, "varied according to imperial needs."[157]

In terms of the Roman empire, foreign outposts, bases, and "small, dispersed garrisons" were used to "tighten military control" in frontier regions of the empire.[158] These military facilities were oftentimes used to stage offensive military advances, but also could be understood as a "physical expression of the reality that there were limits to empire."[159] Like more modern U.S. foreign military bases however, they also functioned as "social spaces" in which interaction, communication, and movement were dictated by a built environment. Anna Halina Walas notes that "Social networks, stratification, military rank, relations of power (also of physical power) affected presence and movement in the base both in the context of the serving personnel and the extended military community."[160] The same could be said of many of the military installations

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[155] It is curious to note that even as far back as within the Roman Empire, and within Roman historiography, there evidently exists a similar debate regarding definitions of what these installations actually are. Discussing Roman "fortlets," or small, occupied military structures beyond the borders of the Roman empire, Matthew Symonds remarks that "there is currently no universally accepted definition of what precisely constitutes one." Matthew Symonds, *Protecting the Roman Empire: Fortlets, Frontiers, and the Quest for Post-Conquest Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 5.

[156] Gillem, *America Town*, 3.

[157] Gillem, *America Town*, 3.

[158] Symonds, *Protecting the Roman Empire*, 40.

[159] Symonds, *Protecting the Roman Empire*, 40.

[160] Anna Halina Walas, *Roman Military Bases as Social Spaces* (PhD diss., University of Leicester, 2016), 23. I do not mean to suggest a distinct or explicit comparison of U.S. foreign military bases to those of ancient Rome, though many such comparisons exist, especially in the context of the "decline and fall" narrative after the failures of military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan; see, Michael Lind, "Is America the New Roman Empire?," *The Globalist*, June 19, 2002, https://www.theglobalist.com/is-america-the-new-roman-empire/; Niall Ferguson, "Empires with Expiration Dates," *Foreign Policy*, no. 156 (2006): 46–52; Christopher Layne, "Impotent Power? Re-Examining the Nature of America's Hegemonic Power," *The National Interest*, no. 85 (2006): 41–47; and perhaps most famously, Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

considered in this study in terms of how a built environment dictates the decorum and standards of behavior among individuals serving on military bases, but also among those in the local communities in which they reside.

Though the Roman Empire utilized military bases to secure regions within its sphere of influence and to provide military security to its populations, their outposts secured a contiguous land empire closer to those of the later Parthians, Mongols, and Chinese than the overseas empire of the Portuguese and Spanish of centuries later. Despite simplified educational narratives that describe Europeans as having "discovered" the Americas or the "far East," Malyn Newitt notes that when Vasco da Gama arrived in India, he cheerfully "met people who spoke to him in Castilian."[161] In the larger context of the rise of the Portuguese and Spanish maritime empires, it is vital to remember that "prior to the voyages of the Portuguese, the world was largely *known* to its inhabitants."[162] In order to circumvent the taxes, tithes, extortion, and other political and bureaucratic milieu which would reduce the bottom-line profit for European traders, overseas routes were sought to avoid these controls.

What was distinctive in the context and relevance to the historiography of base studies, was that the Portuguese and Spanish empires were maritime empires which constructed wide networks of overseas forts in order to facilitate these empires and the trade that sustained them. The use of seaside fortresses and the military classes, in the Portuguese and Spanish empires who owned them, "provided a reserve of manpower" and security to facilitate overseas military and commercial expansion.[163] These fortresses were essential to the maintenance and success of these empires, but like the inhabitants of the later British or U.S. overseas bases, the locals often "fraternised with the local population," establishing a complex web of social interactions, gendered and social hierarchies, and economic entanglement with the areas around the forts themselves.[164]

The military bases utilized by the Spanish and Portuguese also differed from the Roman model in that negotiation involved in the access and the construction of these forts were far more

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[161] Malyn Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400–1668* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

[162] Newitt, *Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 3.

[163] Newitt, *Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 13.

[164] Newitt, *Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 13.

frequent. The empires of the Portuguese and Spanish routinely constructed fortifications and supply stations for their sea vessels on lands "owned" or otherwise occupied by other peoples. In some cases, the land was acquired by force of arms as was the case with the Roman expansion and construction of military fortifications, but in this later context, coercion, bargaining, and concessions were made by the Portuguese and Spanish to local elites in order to allow access for the fort's construction. The dynamic of negotiating and bargaining for base access in overseas territories is a theme that persisted through the later period of British and French overseas dominion and continues to this day with the United States and nearly all of its overseas installations.

The maritime and economic decline of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, and the rise of British sea power and economic primacy on the global stage led to a far different overseas constellation of imperial possessions than those of the centuries prior. H.V. Bowen notes that "threats from rival European and indigenous powers were gradually removed, political and administrative control was secured, and economic hegemony was firmly established" which meant that "by the 1760s Britain stood in the very first rank of the world's imperial powers."[165] This "economic hegemony" was both implicitly and explicitly secured and maintained through a wide network of overseas colonies from which the British could, and did, draw massive reserves of manpower and resources. Different from distinct colonial administrations of regions such as the North American colonies, Australia, Hong Kong, or India, this economic and militaristic domination was buttressed by a network of overseas military and naval bases. Bowen notes that in the nineteenth century, "paramountcy if not dominion in the Mediterranean became the main aim of [British] statesmen" and that as part of this policy, "Malta and the Ionian Islands were maintained as naval bases and emporia."[166]

It was not enough to exert economic control, however, and like the Portuguese and the Spanish empires before it, the British empire needed to back up trade agreements and trade access "by establishing strategic bases" in order to sustain a measure of influence in a given region.[167]

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[165] Huw Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas Empire, 1688–1775* (New York: Springer, 1996), 3.

[166] Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the British Empire*, 3.

[167] Martin Lynn, "British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 108, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198205654.003.0006.

These bases functioned not just as military tools, but political ones as well. Martin Lynn notes that "the threat of force had to be kept ready to maintain the trade connections that had been created."[168] On February 6, 2023, Thomas L. Friedman, author of one the most well-known books about globalization, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (1999), made the very same observation about the presence of U.S. overseas basing: "I also argued that 'the hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist — McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15.' Somebody needs to keep the order and enforce the rules."[169]

The link between securing economic resources and the establishment of favorable trading conditions with foreign entities coupled with the direct implication of military forces from overseas military posts — one mailed hand alongside a gloved one — was not invented by the British in their age of dominion among the seas. But it was the British who standardized this practice and made it widespread on a scale that had, up until that point, never been achieved.

Within each of these respective scholarly communities, the study of military bases in the context of their empires and societies has generated a corpus of scholarship that contains relevant themes and legacies related to the United States' relationship to foreign military bases, but these connections should not be overstated. Each of these different empires existed in far different contexts which makes extended reflection on their functions within their respective societies too difficult to be included in a work that is primarily concerned with the U.S. bases in a particular temporal context of the long twentieth century. Some benefits may be reaped by peeking into the study of military bases in different historical and temporal contexts ranging from the Roman empire to that of the British, but beyond providing an understanding of their functions, they fail to shed sufficient light on the complex interplay of the global and the local which the modern U.S. military base system represents.

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[168] Lynn, "British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire," 108.

[169] Thomas L. Friedman, "Year Two of the Ukraine War Is Going to Get Scary," *The New York Times*, June 19, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/05/opinion/ukraine-war-putin.html.

Base Studies – State of the Field

In the following section, I will discuss the most significant works within the field of base studies and outline a series of key discussions in the literature today. Compared to other more established fields, the academic literature on U.S. foreign military bases is relatively small. Whereas other fields have active and robust historiographical discourses, the field of base studies has been less concerned about contrasting perspectives or reconceptualization of established norms and more about developing a deeper foundation of knowledge about different aspects of bases and their impacts small and large.

In the twentieth century, the discussion of bases was focused primarily on their roles as important military and strategic sites, but their consideration in their own right largely entered the academic lexicon with Robert E. Harkavy's works *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases: The Geopolitics of Access Diplomacy* (1982) and *Bases Abroad: The Global Foreign Military Presence* (1989).[170] Harkavy approached bases from the perspective of international relations and understood them in political terms rather than viewing them exclusively as security or military assets. He continued to evolve this perspective in his final work on the subject, *Strategic Basing and the Great Powers, 1200–2000* (London: Routledge, 2007).[171]

It was not until the 1990s and early 2000s that academic research on the study of overseas basing began in earnest, however. While not explicitly focused on the study of bases, Chalmers Johnson's works *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (2000) and in particular his 2004 publication *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (2004), were important in arguing that the United States — in part through its network of bases — was no longer searching for global security, but hegemony.[172] At the same time as

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[170] Robert E. Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases: The Geopolitics of Access Diplomacy* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982) and Robert E. Harkavy, *Bases Abroad: The Global Foreign Military Presence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1989). Another foundational work appearing in the same time period was Joseph Gerson and Bruce Birchard, eds., *The Sun Never Sets: Confronting the Network of Foreign U.S. Military Bases* (Boston: South End Press, 1991). This work was one of the first that presented the spread and scope of the U.S. military base network in the context of global militarism. There was a distinct focus on activism and an explicit and conscious presentation of the scope of U.S. power to empire.

[171] Robert E. Harkavy, *Strategic Basing and the Great Powers, 1200–2000* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[172] Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000) and Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*. Christopher T. Sanders focused more explicitly on bases in

Johnson, the attacks of September 11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq spurred a flurry of works related to either the re-emergence or the building of an American "empire" in the twenty-first century.[173] These works began to incorporate bases in the discussion of empire, but did not focus on them as distinctive objects of study.

Two works in the mid 2000s, Kent Calder's *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism* (2007) and Alexander Cooley's *Base Politics: Democratic Change and the U.S. Military Overseas* (2008) represented another important development in the field of base studies.[174] Both works were fundamental in realizing the importance of the argument Harkavy proposed years prior: namely, that bases themselves were important objects of study that are subject to changing conditions depending on political contingencies rather than just military assets. Comparative political analysis of differing case studies is at the heart of these works and base negotiation/access and regime type (authoritarian, democratic, etc.) are investigated at length. In his recent publication *US Military Bases, Quasi-bases, and Domestic Politics in Latin America* (2016) Sebastian Bitar points to Kent Calder's *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism* (2007) and Alexander Cooley's *Base Politics: Democratic Change and the U.S. Military Overseas* (2008) as "the two most important recent works on the politics of military bases" but notes that they are comparatively rare given the importance of the topic.[175]

America's Overseas Garrisons: The Leasehold Empire (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) which provides an important outline for the political dimension of overseas military garrisons and advocates for seeing the entire enterprise explicitly in imperial terms while approaching the topic from a region-based perspective.

[173] Several works have approached the United States presence within the global community in the twenty-first century as explicitly imperial in nature and part of a longer historical trajectory. See, John Lindsay-Poland, *Emperors in the Jungle: The Hidden History of the U.S. in Panama* (Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Wisconsin & London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Making of an Imperial Republic* 1st ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: MacMillian, 2007); Sam Gindin and Leo Panitch, *The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire* (London: Verso, 2012); Alfred W. McCoy, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of US Global Power*. (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017); Anthony Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018); and Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *Empire in Retreat: The Past, Present, and Future of the United States* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018).

[174] Calder, *Embattled Garrisons*, and Cooley, *Base Politics*.

[175] Sebastian E. Bitar, *US Military Bases, Quasi-bases, and Domestic Politics in Latin America* (New York: Springer, 2016), 11. Bitar also notes that "Few scholars, if any, have studied the failure of the United States to open or maintain military bases in Latin America. Moreover, studies about U.S. military bases overseas have trouble dealing with the idea of quasi-bases. Some studies ignore them, because the lack of a base lease makes quasi-bases less suitable for analysis." Bitar, *US Military Bases*, 9. Calder, *Embattled Garrisons*; Cooley, *Base* Politics. Two recent publications which directly are addressing this gap in literature related to Latin America specifically, are

Though landmark contributions, Calder and Cooley's works differed fundamentally from another wave of scholarship around the 2010s which prioritized more diverse anthropological approaches to base studies, turning away from the nation-to-nation level analysis and opting to focus on the lived experiences of those in and around bases. This pivot is most effectively represented by Catherine Lutz's (ed.), *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts* (2008) and David Vine's *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* (2015).[176] These works move beyond high-level political analysis (though not ignoring it) and discuss the implications of bases as they relate to individuals and communities and they engage with topics like U.S. empire and base protest. Explicit in their titles, these works also engage in activism alongside academic analysis — a feature of many works from the 2010s onward especially in relation to environmental concerns.[177]

The final and most recent turn in the field of base studies, though by no means exclusive to the current decade, has been towards more regional area studies. Another characteristic of these works is an inversion of perspective and agency, questioning how the host nations and communities shape the U.S. global military system, rather than how U.S. bases exert influence. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi's *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases* (2020) serves as an example.[178] While there have been no more recent major works that deal with bases directly, several publications like David Vine's *The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts* (2024), Gretchen Heefner's *Sand, Snow, and Stardust: How US Military Engineers Conquered Extreme Environments* (2025) and

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Rebecca Herman, *Cooperating with the Colossus: A Social and Political History of U.S. Military Bases in World War II Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), and Andrew Buchanan and Ruth Lawlor, "Latin America, the Good Neighbor, and the Global Second World War," *Antíteses* 17, no. 34 (2024): 22–50, https://doi.org/10.5433/1984-3356.2024v17n34p022-050.

[176] Lutz, *The Bases of Empire*; Vine, *Base Nation*.

[177] More examples, especially related to law, will be discussed below, however, see Frode Fonnum, B. Paukstys, Barbara A. Zeeb, and K. J. Reimer, *Environmental Contamination and Remediation Practices at Former and Present Military Bases*, vol. 48 (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2012) and Edwin A. Martini, ed., *Proving Grounds: Militarized Landscapes, Weapons Testing, and the Environmental Impact of U.S. Bases* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015) for recent overviews.

[178] Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

Andrew N. Buchanan and Ruth Lawlor's *The Greater Second World War: Global Perspectives* (2025) all contribute fruitfully to the field.

As one moves more deeply into the literature beyond these major works and paradigm-level changes to methodological approaches and focuses of base literature, one can find a number of significant subdivisions of base research. These categories include: 1) legal literature; 2) anthropological research utilizing gender and race; 3) works focused on base protest and resistance; 4) economic approaches; and finally, 5) works on architecture, urbanism and power. Though many works focus on a single community or nation-state, the groupings selected below represent conceptual, rather than geographic, categories.

At the same time that overseas bases were still considered squarely within the category of military assets (the 1970s) a modest interest had developed in the legal aspects of bases. Though legal literature on U.S. bases was (and continues to be) considerably smaller than that of other subfields, one of the works in the discipline appeared even before Harkavy's 1982 monograph. Serge Lazareff's *The Status of Military Forces Under Current International Law* (1971) focused largely on the role of the NATO and Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) between the U.S. and host nations.[179] The legal status of U.S. troops in host nations was also the subject of John Woodliffe's *The Peacetime Use of Foreign Military Installations under International Law* (1992), finally addressing what John E. Parkerson Jr. described as "a tremendous void in international legal literature."[180] Dieter Fleck's 2001 work *The Handbook of The Law of Visiting Forces* (2001) further updated the legal literature on the issue of SOFAs in the postwar legal environment and analyzed a series of case studies not included in previous works.[181] The most recent major work on SOFAs

[179] Serge Lazareff, *The Status of Military Forces Under Current International Law* (Leiden: A.W.Sijthoff, 1971). There were a series of articles on the subject in the 1950s after the NATO SOFA was signed (1951) and then ratified (1953). It is important to note, however, that these articles were not concerned with bases themselves, per se, but rather simply the legal regime that dictated what happened to U.S. soldiers in foreign nations. See, Murray L. Schwartz, "International Law and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," *Columbia Law Review* 53, no. 8 (1953): 1091–113; Edward D. Re, "NATO Status of Forces Agreement and International Law," *Northwestern University Law Review* 50 (1955): 349–76; Theodor Meron, "Some Reflections on the Status of Forces Agreements in the Light of Customary International Law," *International & Comparative Law Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1957): 689–94; and Joseph H. Rouse and Gordon B. Baldwin, "The Exercise of Criminal Jurisdiction under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," *American Journal of International Law* 51, no. 1 (1957): 29–62.

[180] John E. Parkerson Jr., review of *The Peacetime Use of Foreign Military Installations under International Law,* by John Woodliffe, *Military Law Review* no.141 (1993): 233.

[181] Dieter Fleck, ed., *The Handbook of the Law of Visiting Forces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 469.

which primarily focuses on legal jurisdiction is Joop Voetelink's *Status of Forces: Criminal Jurisdiction over Military Personnel Abroad* (2015).[182]

Outside of major academic works on SOFAs in the field of law, two recent dissertations, Nicole Patricia Reiz's "An Exploration in International Comparative Legal Geography: Military Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), Sexual Violence, and Jurisdiction" (2016) and Aubree Herrin's "Understanding Status of Forces Agreements: What Shapes Jurisdictional Control?" (2020) are both important contributions our understanding of jurisdictional control and international law as they relate to U.S. bases.[183]

The legal systems that dictate the status and jurisdiction of U.S. bases and troops abroad are elements important to many other aspects of research on base studies especially due to the close connection between law, power, and sovereignty.[184] Several academic articles have discussed the importance of SOFAs over time and have investigated and evaluated how they handle questions such as environmental responsibility, race, or sexual violence.[185] Finally, a branching section of

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[182] Joop Voetelink, *Status of Forces: Criminal Jurisdiction over Military Personnel Abroad*, (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2015).

[183] Nicole Patricia Reiz, *An Exploration in International Comparative Legal Geography: Military Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), Sexual Violence, and Jurisdiction* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2016); Aubree Herrin, *Understanding Status of Forces Agreements: What Shapes Jurisdictional Control* (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2020).

[184] See, Asif Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure: American Troops in Foreign Courts during the Cold War," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 1 (2022): 242–57; Steven J. Lepper, "A Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," *Air Force Law Review* 37 (1994): 169–90; R. Chuck Mason, *Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA): What Is It, and How Has It Been Utilized?*, CRS Report RL34531 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 15, 2012), https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/RL34531.pdf; Richard J. Erickson, "Status of Forces Agreements: A Sharing of Sovereign Prerogative," Air Force Law Review 37 (1994): 137–54; James S. Fraser, "Some Thoughts on Status of Forces Agreements," Connecticut Law Review 3, no. 2 (Winter 1970-1971): 335–53; Aurel Sari, "The European Union Status of Forces Agreement (EU SOFA)," *Journal of Conflict & Security Law* 13, no. 3 (2008): 353–91; David S. Gordon, "Individual Status and Individual Rights under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement and the Supplementary Agreement with Germany," Military Law Review 100 (1983): 49–98; Indira Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," KDU Law Journal 1, no. 2 (December 2021): 188–222; Aurel Sari, "The European Union Status of Forces Agreement (EU SOFA)," *Journal of Conflict & Security Law* 13, no. 3 (2008): 353–91; and Matthew Craven, "What Happened to Unequal Treaties? The Continuities of Informal Empire," *Nordic Journal of International Law* 74, no. 3–4 (2005): 335–82.

[185] Literature related to environmental law will be discussed below but in relation to race and sexual violence, see the following: Bianca Freeman, "Racial Hierarchy and Jurisdiction in U.S. Status of Forces Agreements," *Security Studies* 32, nos. 4–5 (2023): 748–74; Chalmers Johnson, "Three Rapes: The Status of Forces Agreement and Okinawa," *Asia–Pacific Journal* 1, no. 4 (April 10, 2003): e7; Ian Roberts McConnel, "A Re-Examination of the United States-Japan Status of Forces Agreement," *Boston College International & Comparative Law Review* 29 (2006): 165–98; and Rafael A. Porrata-Doria Jr., "The Philippine Bases and Status of Forces Agreement: Lessons for the Future," *Military Law Review* 137 (1992): 67–98.

academic research, primarily centered on U.S. military contracting, emerged in the early 2000s after the U.S. invasions in the Middle East. These works discuss the ambiguous legal status of contractors operating within and around U.S. bases abroad.[186] There is ample room in the field of base studies to further investigate the role of law in these power structures and Chapter V in this dissertation, on the case of Italy and the NATO SOFA, illustrates how such legal analysis can be utilized in an interdisciplinary approach.

In the same year as the publication of Harkavy's second work, *Bases Abroad*, in 1989, the feminist historian and political scientist Cynthia Enloe made another groundbreaking contribution to the study of bases with her work *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989).[187] This work foregrounded gender in the discussion of international politics and importantly, in the functioning of U.S. bases as well. Since Enloe's publication, many academic works, primarily in the field of anthropology and sociology, have expanded on Enloe's arguments. The subject of gender, prostitution, and sexual violence tied to U.S. bases has garnered a large corpus of research across different geographies and in particular, postwar Europe and southeast Asia.[188]

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[186] The literature on the topic has grown substantially since the early 2000s. Articles that touch on core issues include, P. W. Singer, "War, Profits, and the Vacuum of Law: Privatized Military Firms and International Law," Columbia Journal of Transnational Law 42, no. 2 (2004): 521–50; Francesco Francioni, "Private Military Contractors and International Law: An Introduction," *European Journal of International Law* 19, no. 5 (2008): 961–64; and Adam Ebrahim, "Going to War with the Army You Can Afford: The United States, International Law, and the Private Military Industry," Boston University International Law Journal 28, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 181–18. Several works outside the legal field have also discussed this phenomenon: Lair, *Armed with Abundance*; Chatterjee, *Halliburton's Army*; and James M. Carter, *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State Building, 1954–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[187] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, & Bases*. See also from Cynthia Enloe, *The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging the Persistence of Patriarchy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

[188] Though oftentimes not explicitly related to bases themselves, the intersection of gender, violence and militarism has produced an extensive range of academic literature. A limited selection of works that are most immediately relevant to base studies include: Saundra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: New Press, 1992); Katharine H. S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.–Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Suzuyo Takazato, "Report from Okinawa: Long-term US Military Presence and Violence against Women," *Canadian Woman Studies* 19, no. 4 (2000): 42–47; Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002); Maria Hohn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation*, Asia's Transformations Series (London; New York: Routledge, 2002); Na Young Lee, "The Construction of Military Prostitution in South Korea during the US Military Rule, 1945–1948," *Feminist Studies* 33, no. 3 (2007): 453–81; J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe During World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Paul A. Kramer, "The Military-Sexual Complex: Prostitution, Disease and the Boundaries of Empire during the Philippine-American War," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no. 30 (2011): e2,

The subject of race has likewise been the subject of several major works related to base studies.[189] Contributions such as Michael Cullen Green's *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire After World War II* (2010) are particularly valuable for their investigations into the complicated social hierarchies experienced by black soldiers serving on bases abroad in contrast to segregated communities in the United States.[190]

Another subset of academic literature born from the anthropological approach has been a collection of works on base protest and activism. The literature on base resistance and protest is geographically concentrated on several specific sites including (but not limited to), Okinawa, South Korea, the Philippines, Diego Garcia, Italy, and Germany.[191] Base protest literature also

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1557466011011661. Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Susan Carruthers, *The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Miriam Gebhardt, *Crimes Unspoken: The Rape of German Women at the End of the Second World War*, trans. Nick Somers (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017); Ruth Lawlor, "Contested Crimes: Race, Gender, and Nation in Histories of GI Sexual Violence, World War II," *The Journal of Military History* 84, no. 2 (2020): 541–69; and Kozue Akibayashi, "Documenting the History of Sexual Violence by the US Military in Okinawa: Feminist Theorization of 'the Island of Military Bases'," *Okinawan Journal of Island Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022): 149–57, https://doi.org/10.24564/0002017853.

[189] Like gender, the literature on race, militarism, and colonialism and extensive. The following works are a sample most relevant to base studies: Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Yasuhiro Okada, *Gendering the "Black Pacific": Race Consciousness, National Identity, and the Masculine/Feminine Empowerment among African Americans in Japan under U.S. Military Occupation, 1945–1952* (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2008); Michael Cullen Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire After World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); James Burk and Evelyn Espinoza, "Race Relations within the U.S. Military," *Annual Review of Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2012): 401–22, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145501; Kristin Roebuck, "Orphans by Design: 'Mixed-Blood' Children, Child Welfare, and Racial Nationalism in Postwar Japan," *Japanese Studies* 36, no. 2 (2016): 191–212; and Chris Dixon, *African Americans and the Pacific War, 1941–1945: Race, Nationality, and the Fight for Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[190] Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific*.

[191] The following is a selected set of works on base protests: McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest*; David Vine, *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Francesca Fois and Daniele Paragano, "'Autonomous Geographies' in the Anti-US Military Base Movements," *Peace Review* 23, no. 3 (2011): 313–19; Rebecca Herman Weber, *In Defense of Sovereignty: Labor, Crime, Sex and Nation at U.S. Military Bases in Latin America, 1940–1947* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2014); Holmes, *Social Unrest and American Military Bases in Turkey and Germany*; Jennifer M. Miller, "Fractured Alliance: Anti-Base Protests and Postwar U.S.–Japanese Relations," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 5 (2014): 953–86; Gavan McCormack and Satoko Oka Norimatsu, *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); Shinnosuke Takahashi, "Memories of Struggles: Translocal Lives in Okinawan Anti-Base Activism," *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 16, no. 1/2 (2019): 46–58; David Vine, "No Bases? Assessing the Impact of Social Movements Challenging U.S. Foreign Military Bases," *Current Anthropology* 60, no. S19 (2019): S 158–72, https://doi.org/10.1086/701042; and Charmaine N. Willis, *Right Frame, Right Time: A Study of Anti-American*

includes research on environmental damage caused by the United States military.[192] It is important to note in this regard that the academic community does not have a monopoly on the research done on negative externalities produced by U.S. bases abroad. Much of the work done by local, grassroots movements, such as "Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence," in protest of U.S. military presence has been instrumental in anti-base activism.[193]

Often one of the desired outcomes of anti-base movements is the closure of existing U.S. bases, and the economic consequences of base closures on local communities have also generated a number of scholarly works. The scholarship on this issue is largely divided into two camps. The first camp agrees with popular sentiment and concludes that base closures indeed harm the local economy. Andy Hultquist and Tricia L. Petras conclude that "military base employment" does "have a statistically significant impact on local nonbase employment" and that "additional enlisted military personnel are linked to a positive economic impact resulting in job creation extending

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Military Base Protests in East Asia (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Albany, 2023), https://doi.org/10.54014/83NN-513N. The political scientist Andrew Yeo has been particularly influential in the academic literature on base protest: Andrew Yeo, "Not in Anyone's Backyard: The Emergence and Identity of a Transnational Anti-Base Network," *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2009): 571–94; Andrew Yeo, "Ideas and Institutions in Contentious Politics: Anti-US Base Movements in Ecuador and Italy," *Comparative Politics* 42, no. 4 (2010): 435–55; Andrew Yeo, *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-US Base Protests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Andrew I. Yeo, "Realism, Critical Theory, and the Politics of Peace and Security: Lessons from Anti-Base Protests on Jeju Island," *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 2 (2018): 235–55.

[192] Several examples include Yusun Woo, "Environmental Problems on the U.S. Military Bases in the Republic of Korea: Who Is Responsible for the Cleanup Expenses and Whose Environmental Standards Will Apply," *Southeastern Environmental Law Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 577–61; Sarah E. Light, "The Military-Environmental Complex," *Boston College Law Review* 55, no. 3 (May 2014): 879–946; Alan Ramo, "U.S. Military Accountability for Extraterritorial Environmental Impacts: An Examination of Okinawa, Environmental Justice, and Judicial Militarism," *Tulane Environmental Law Journal* 28, no. 1 (2014): 53–94; Isabelle Cutting and Dinah Shelton, "If You Break It, Do You Own It?: Legal Consequences of Environmental Harm from Military Activities," *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies* 6, no. 2 (August 2015): 201–46, https://doi.org/10.1163/18781527-00602002; Isabelle Cutting and Jennifer Ann Neuhauser, "U.S. Military Responsibility for Environmental Cleanup in Contingency Environments," *Environmental Law* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 129–80; John W. Hamilton, "Contamination at U.S. Military Bases: Profiles and Responses," *Stanford Environmental Law Journal* 35, no. 2 (2016): 223–50; Claudia J. Kim, "Bases That Leave: Consequences of U.S. Base Closures and Realignments in South Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 48, no. 2 (2018): 339–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2017.1397728; Jon Mitchell, *Poisoning the Pacific: The U.S. Military's Secret Dumping of Plutonium, Chemical Weapons, and Agent Orange* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020); Keisuke Mori, "Domestic Environmental Policy and Status of Forces Agreement: U.S. Military Presence and New Water Pollution Risk in Germany," in *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases*, ed. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi (London; New York: Routledge, 2020), 145–68; and Sonia Lei, "Pacific Islands and the U.S. Military: The Legal Borderlands of the Environmental Movement," *Seattle University Law Review* 47, no. 4 (Spring 2024): 1547–72.

[193] *Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence*, Women for Genuine Security, accessed July 18, 2025, http://www.genuinesecurity.org/partners/okinawa.html.

beyond their own position, and this economic impact also has a positive and significant, if somewhat smaller spillover effect on employment in neighboring counties."[194] By contrast, others, like Alfredo R. Paloyo, Colin Vance, and Matthias Vorell, argue that based on their study of 298 communities in Germany, "base closures hardly made a dent on the local economy."[195] The general consensus among economic studies appears to side with the latter opinion.[196]

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[194] Angela Hultquist and Theodore L. Petras, "An Examination of the Local Economic Impacts of Military Base Closures," *Economic Development Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (May 2012): 158.

[195] They conclude that base closures "have only a marginal impact on the local community in which the bases are located." Alfredo R. Paloyo, Colin Vance, and Matthias Vorell, "The Regional Economic Effects of Military Base Realignments and Closures in Germany," *Defence and Peace Economics* 21, nos. 5–6 (2010): 578, https://doi.org/10.1080/10242694.2010.524778.

[196] For example, a 1996 RAND publication noted that despite the conclusion that base closures, over time, serve as a marginal or even positive impact on local economies, "This finding does not deny the very real costs of job loss borne by displaced workers and their families or the revenue losses suffered by local businesses" and that "the burden of defense cuts falls on the individual worker or firm rather than the community." They conclude by noting that "While some of the communities did indeed suffer, the effects were not catastrophic [and] not nearly as severe as forecasted." Michael Dardia, Kevin F. McCarthy, Jesse D. Malkin, and Georges Vernez, *The Effects of Military Base Closures on Local Communities: A Short-Term Perspective* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1996), xii, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR667.html. A Congressional Research Study echoed similar results, noting that "The loss of related jobs, and efforts to replace them and to implement a viable base reuse plan, can pose significant challenges for affected communities" and that "For rural areas, however, the impacts can be greater and the economic recovery slower." But despite these challenges, "while base closures and realignments often create socioeconomic distress in communities initially, research has shown that they generally have not had the dire effects that many communities expected." Tadlock Cowan, *Military Base Closures: Socioeconomic Impacts* (CRS Report No. RS22147) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 7, 2012), ii, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22147.pdf. Regarding base closures in Sweden, Andersson, Johan Lundberg & Magnus Sjöström have noted that "Our main finding is that a closure of a military base has not had any significant impact on the subsequent average income growth rate nor the net migration rate in the affected municipalities." Linda Andersson, Johan Lundberg, and Magnus Sjöström, "Regional Effects of Military Base Closures: The Case of Sweden," *Defence and Peace Economics* 18, no. 1 (2007): 87, https://doi.org/10.1080/10242690600924638. More generally, Mark A. Hooker and Michael M Knetter note that "per capita income is little affected by closures on average" and another Congressional Research Study on base closures from 1988-1995 noted that "Many, but by no means all, communities appeared to be succeeding in local efforts to replace defense jobs and find new uses for former military lands and buildings." Mark A. Hooker and Michael M. Knetter, "Measuring the Economic Effects of Military Base Closures," *Economic Inquiry* 39, no. 4 (October 2001): 583; David E. Lockwood and George Siehl, *Military Base Closures: A Historical Review from 1988 to 1995* (CRS Report for Congress, updated October 18, 2004), Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, ii. Finally, Mário J. A. Fortuna, João C. A. Teixeira and Francisco J. F. Silva, studying the effects of a substantial base reduction on the Portuguese island of Terceira, indicated that the negative effects of base closures or reductions can be significantly reduced through the use of "specific mitigation policies" by local governments that can be implemented analogously to base closures indicating that even in smaller communities which are irrevocably tied to "base economies" can still survive despite reductions or closures. Mário J. A. Fortuna, João C. A. Teixeira, and Francisco J. F. Silva, "Gone with the Winds of Peace: The Regional Economic Effects of Military Base Downsizings and Closures," *Defence and Peace Economics* 33, no. 7 (2022): 818–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/10242694.2021.1921463.

An additional subset of literature that does not deal directly with base studies itself but is significant both the case studies of South Korea and Saudi Arabia contained in this research, is architecture and urbanism. The field of architecture, despite sharing many of the conceptual categories and relationships between space, power, meaning, and built environment, has not frequently been as a methodological approach in base studies. Architect and academic Mark Gillem, author of *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (2007), however, has illustrated the power and relevance of this approach to the study of military basing.[197] Inha Jung, discussing architecture in the context of South Korea highlights the importance of layered historical meaning inherent in physical construction — a key element of U.S. bases abroad: "Cityscapes, street networks, and even city boundaries change in accordance with the periods when they were planned. The urban spaces of the 1930s, 1970s, and 2000s were all conceived in distinctive ways and are endowed with the signifying systems of the practices and structured fields they at once embody."[198]

In particular the interplay between architecture, urbanism, and military bases are utilized in this work with regard to the case study of South Korea. Alan Harding & Talja Blokland note in *Urban Theory: A Critical Introduction to Power, Cities and Urbanism in the 21st Century* (2012), that "we might describe urban theory as 'a body of ideas explaining one or more aspects of reality within, or of, towns and cities.'"[199] Though this definition is overly general, triangulating it by including architecture as part of the interplay between foreign U.S. military bases and their local environments supports the case for using an interdisciplinary method that allows approaches in

[197] Gillem, *America Town*. Scholars of base studies have used several of these conceptual categories to great effect, though none so explicitly and thoroughly as Gillem.

[198] Inha Jung, *Architecture and Urbanism in Modern Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), xii. The language of "signifying systems" is rooted in anthropology and historical anthropology which revolve around the understanding of actions, individuals, communities, and social relations in highly contextual terms. The concern related to "insider" and "outsider" (emic/etic) perspectives to social relations within communities means a greater concern for what Clifford Geertz, in his now famous article of the same name, termed "thick description." Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Cultural Geography Reader*, ed. Timothy Oakes and Patricia L. Price (London: Routledge, 2008), 41–51. For another famous example of a work utilizing the concepts of symbolic action, thick description, and signifying systems, see Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

[199] Alan Harding and Talja Blokland, *Urban Theory: A Critical Introduction to Power, Cities and Urbanism in the 21st Century* (London: Sage, 2014), 19.

economics, law, gender, politics, and architecture to work in tandem. Other works within the fields of architecture as well as urbanism strengthen this analysis.[200]

Across these varied subfields there are occasionally more specialized or specific debates among specialists, but there are two that have permeated the discipline. The first is related to the question of "empire by invitation," a term popularized by Geir Lundestad, in his 1986 article, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952."[201] The debate about agency with regard to U.S. military bases is an active and evolving one. On one side, overprioritizing the "imperial" and imposed role of the United States in its desire to gain military access around the world actively downplays the very real agency of host nations to leverage their positions in order to extract benefits either economic, political, or militaristic, from the United States.[202] Likewise, too far in the opposite direction exposes one to criticism of being an apologist for U.S. intervention and military control. The reality — as is often the case — lies somewhere in the middle. The best solution to threading the needle of this debate is to adopt an approach

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[200] M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); Anthony King, *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Kim Dovey, *Becoming Places: Urbanism, Architecture/Identity/Power* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Dan Lockton, "Architecture, Urbanism, Design and Behaviour: A Brief Review," *Architectures* (blog), September 12, 2011, http://architectures.danlockton.co.uk/2011/09/12/architecture-urbanism-design-and-behaviour-a-brief-review/; and Michele Lancione and Colin McFarlane, eds., *Global Urbanism: Power, and the City* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

[200] Jung, *Architecture and Urbanism in Modern Korea*; Hans-Dieter Evers and Rüdiger Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism: The Meaning and Power of Social Space*, vol. 7 (Berlin: LIT Verlag Münster, 2000); Ryan Bishop, John Phillips, and Wei-Wei Yeo, eds., *Postcolonial Urbanism: Southeast Asian Cities and Global Processes* (Sussex: Psychology Press, 2003); Jinhee Park and John Hong, *Convergent Flux: Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism in Korea* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); Hyun Bang Shin, "Asian Urbanism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Urban and Regional Studies*, ed. Anthony M. Orum (New York: Wiley, 2019); and Kyoung Seok Jang and Hyung Min Kim, "Hamhung, the Second-Largest North Korean City: Dynasty Urbanism, Colonial Urbanism and Socialist Urbanism," *Cities* 114 (July 2021): art. 103191, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103191.

[201] Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (1986): 263–77. See also Geir's book-length work expanding on the subject, Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Geir's article has had a substantial amount of scholarly engagement since publication. See, as recent examples, Michel Gobat, *Empire by Invitation: William Walker and Manifest Destiny in Central America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018) and Giacomo Chiozza and Lena Khalifa, "The Harsh Face of the Empire by Invitation: Coups in the US World Order," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 41, no. 2 (2024): 110–31.

[202] For example, as Cooley highlights, nearly all host nations were able to exert influence – in varying degrees – in their basing relationship with the United States. For example, he notes that in Kyrgyzstan, "The small size of the Kyrgyz economy and its patronage networks made the Kyrgyz regime particularly eager to leverage U.S. base access for its private economic benefit, something it managed with great success." Cooley, *Base Politics*, 223.

presented here, by being conscious of global U.S. foreign policy, while at the same time having enough regional and national context to not blindly apply it when the historical record is in disagreement.

The second debate is often linked to the first: Are U.S. foreign military bases good or bad? The question may seem reductive, but the question of basing is not exclusively within the purview of academia and has legitimate real-world implications. A 2024 Congressional Research Service report on overseas basing referred to an earlier 2013 RAND study which identified both positives of overseas basing, "contingency responsiveness, deterrence and assurance, and security cooperation," and negatives, "political risks, operational risks, and violent extremism risks."[203] The general consensus among academics, NGOs, and government research organizations appear to endorse the policy of, at the very least, reducing the U.S. foreign footprint. It is important to note, however, that both historically and contemporarily, there *are* benefits to overseas U.S. basing, the most obvious being military security. To ignore this reality in favor of a position prioritizing activism or political advocacy which would attempt to paint overseas bases as exclusively negative, distorts the political realities of both the Cold War and the current geopolitical moment. Just as politicians in South Korea desperately wanted the U.S. military to remain on the peninsula in the early years of the Cold War after 1953, central and Eastern European countries are increasingly interested in hosting U.S. bases as a deterrent to further Russian aggression on the continent. An awareness of both of these conceptual arguments is vital to a more comprehensive academic discourse on bases.

Case Study Selection Rationale

In order to analyze the ways in which these foreign military bases reflect the discourse of power across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, three different national-level case studies for this research — South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy — will be considered. Each of these countries has had a long history of U.S. diplomatic relations throughout the twentieth century and each has been highly significant in terms of regional historical events and developments. Considered

[203] Luke A. Nicastro and Andrew Tilghman, *U.S. Overseas Basing: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report R48123 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 10, 2024), https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48123.

together, they represent three different yet profound ideological (and occasionally literal) battlegrounds of the Cold War. For each area, we will use a different meteorological lens to examine the impacts of these bases: for South Korea, we will consider physical architecture and urbanism, for Saudi Arabia, infrastructure, and for Italy, international law.

The diversity of experiences during the Cold War were varied by geographic location and context. From the daily lives of hidden FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) troops in the jungles of the northern Amazon, to taxi drivers protesting for democracy in the streets of Gwangju in South Korea, people across the globe have experienced decades of revolutionary struggle, decolonization, and world-making within the Cold War context. Yet, the Cold War cast a similar pallor over everything that occurred during these decades in this post–World War II era. At the very same time that conflicts, both militaristic or ideological, were the products of local grievances, desires, and motivations, they were simultaneously part of the larger conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Westad argues that "the late twentieth century saw many important historical developments that were neither created by the Cold War, not determined by it," but also that "The Cold War did not decide everything, but it influenced most things."[204]

[204] Westad, *The Cold War*, 2. The historiographical debate on the nature of the Cold War as bipolar conflict has generated an enormous amount of scholarship. At present, it is enough to mention that there have been, and still are, varied opinions regarding how one conceptualizes the decades after the Second World War. Westad, quoted above, strikes a neutral chord, while others like Paul Thomas Chamberlin, vehemently insist that "The Cold War international order, then, was never truly bipolar. By 1947, when President Harry Truman announced the doctrine that was to bear his name and initiate a decades-long policy of anti-Soviet containment, Mao's Communist forces were only months away from overturning the regional order in Asia and remaking China as a third Great Power. Over the next four decades, Beijing played a critical role in shaping world affairs. Similar bid for power – some successful, some failed – arose from such distant capitals as Cairo, Algiers, Havana, Hanoi, Baghdad, and Tehran." He further argues in his work, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (2018), that "To characterize the post–1945 era as bipolar or even tripolar is to gloss over the reality that, as historian John Lewis Gaddis explains, 'the diversification of power did more to shape the course of the Cold War than did the balance of power.'" Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper Books, 2018), 16–17. Outside of traditionalist accounts that present the Cold War as a bipolar conflict, there are also arguments about what necessarily drove the continuation of the conflict with camps criticizing either the Soviets or the Americans exacerbating existing tensions. For example, Melvyn P. Leffler, in his works *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992) or *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Macmillan, 2007), place criticism at the feet of U.S. administrations. Reviewing Leffler's *For the Soul of Mankind,* Robert P. Hager Jr. notes that Leffler is "relentless in his condemnation of American anticommunism." Robert P. Hager Jr., review of *For the Soul of Mankind*, by Melvyn P. Leffler, *Democracy and Security* 6, no. 2 (2010): 209. Though this research is concerned with Cold War periodization, an extensive discussion of the historiographical debates in Cold War history are not the focus of this work. For an expanded look at different discussions within the field, see the bibliographical essay by Ingo Trauschweizer, "Toward a Military History for the Cold War: A Bibliographic Essay," *EUI MWP*, no. 2009/29 (2009), http://hdl.handle.net/1814/12178.

The connecting thread among these countries and their conflicts, thousands of miles apart, was certainly this influence of the Cold War by the Soviet Union and the United States, and a critical factor in this global struggle was the presence of U.S. foreign military bases. A key aspect of the bases in these countries is the level of national agency inside this wider system that local individuals and groups within these countries exerted on the changing nature of their countries. From Seoul to Riyadh to Rome, vastly different historical, economic, and cultural contexts, along with different U.S. priorities in these different parts of the world, have come together to form a complex discourse about power and subsequently, about Cold War periodization. In looking at these different case studies from across the globe, we are able to ask questions related to basing policy, access, diplomacy, and effects of that presence holistically. South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy provide fertile ground to discuss unique effects of the presence of U.S. bases and soldiers that combined, yield a much clearer and comprehensive picture of the impact of these bases than global or purely nation-level works.

Taken together, these case studies offer the opportunity to reflect on some of the wider arguments within the scholarly community that relate the Cold War itself. Was the Cold War a bipolar conflict? Can a bipolar lens capture such a diversity of experiences across so many regions and cultures? When did the Cold War start and how impactful was it for different parts of the world? Is the time period that we describe as the Cold War, roughly half a century, accurate to describe developments in parts of the world such as Latin America and Southeast Asia? And finally, should we even really be using the term "Cold War" if "for millions of people throughout the postcolonial world, the post–1945 era was marked by brutal warfare?"[205] Indeed, the very first "hot" conflict of the period, the Korean war between 1950 and 1953, left over three and half million Koreans killed or wounded and over ten million dependent on foreign food aid.[206] Even the ways that we refer to the chronology of the "post–1945" world pose potential problems for our understanding of longer-term processes or developments that do not fit neatly into a Eurocentric model of conceptualizing the mid-twentieth century. Andrew Buchanan reminds us that "Even the widely accepted title 'World War II' [is] itself a carefully crafted product, fashioned by American

[205] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing* Fields, 2.

[206] Westad*, The Cold War*, 182.

leaders keen to impose their own narrative in the context of claiming global leadership in the postwar world."[207]

Paul Thomas Chamberlin characterized the Cold War as "a complex, interconnected web of regional systems stretching around the world and connected to the global latticework of U.S. and Soviet power."[208] These case studies, from such a wide geographic range, help us avoid the risk of downplaying global effects of the conflict and evaluating area studies that "place their subjects in a sort of regional vacuum."[209] The study of foreign military bases must be considered regionally, but also must be considered globally. The network of U.S. foreign military bases serves as a unique "ground-zero" for exploring these power dynamics with respect to their local and regional contexts, while at the same time, not losing sight of global developments and processes.

Case Study #1: Korea

Korea has historically been described as "a shrimp among whales" in reference to its geographic position squarely between the three major powers of Japan, Russia, and China. If this moniker is no longer as accurate due to its economic rise after the Korean War, in the study of military bases in the Asia-Pacific, it is still apt. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi echo this assessment in their introduction to *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the*

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[207] Andrew N Buchanan, *World War II in Global Perspective, 1931-1953: A Short History* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), 3. Buchanan expands on issues of widely accepted temporality and periodization his article, "Globalizing the Second World War." He notes that "Once the barrier of 1939 has been breached, however, other plausible start dates for the series of regional wars surrounding the central paroxysm suggest themselves" and that "It is even more convincing to locate the opening guns of the long Second World War in the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, an event that ended the short interbellum (1923–31) and prefigured other expansionist imperial responses to the Great Depression. The adoption of a start date of 1931 does not imply the outbreak of continuous warfare (Sino Japanese hostilities were interrupted by the tenuous Tanggu Truce of 1934–7) but it does allow us to view a series of key events, including the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Italian occupation of Albania, the Spanish Civil War, the Japan– Soviet border wars and the Soviet–Finnish Winter War, as constitutive elements in an unfolding process of global conflict rather than simply preludes to world war." Andrew Buchanan, "Globalizing the Second World War," *Past & Present* 258, no. 1 (February 2023): 251. Debates around periodization of the Second World War have salience for this work insofar as Cold War historians must also grapple with commonly accepted notions about when the outbreak of the conflict began (if we don't see the Second World War ending in 1945, then when did the Cold War really begin?), but also its relevance for other parts of the "Third World."

[208] Buchanan similarly notes that "globalizing the Second World War thus reinforces the globalization of the 'post-war' in ways that disrupt the assumption that it can all be squashed into the framework of a reified bipolar Cold War." Buchanan, "Globalizing the Second World War," 251.

[209] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, 4.

Network of U.S. Overseas Bases (2020). In reference to U.S. foreign military bases in South Korea (among several others, two of which are other case studies in this research, Italy and Saudi Arabia), they note that "there has been hardly any empirical research."[210] The study of U.S. foreign military bases in the Asian Pacific region has been dominated by research of U.S. military involvement and the establishment of bases in countries such as Japan, Okinawa (which is considered separately from Japan in the consideration of U.S. base research by many scholars), the Philippines, and Pacific island nations such as Diego Garcia or Guam.[211]

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[210] Kawana and Takahashi, *Exploring Base Politics*, 3.

[211] Cooley, in *Base Politics* (2008), states "One noteworthy difference between this study and other accounts of the politics of U.S. bases in Japan is the deliberate separation of the politics of the basing issue on the Japanese mainland from that of Okinawa" and that "Whereas the issue of U.S. bases reached the peak of contestation on the Japanese mainland in 1960 and has since dissipated with the consolidation and bureaucratization of the Japanese political system, the issue remains highly charged on the island prefecture precisely because the basing question remains embedded in island mainland disputes about Okinawa's marginal status as prefecture and its unequal economic development. Moreover, many Okinawans believe that the Japanese mainland government colludes with the U.S. military to foist the greater part of the heavy U.S. military presence in Japan on the small island prefecture." Cooley, *Base Politics*, 55. For works related to Okinawa and Japan, see: Pajon, "Understanding the issue of US military bases in Okinawa"; Johnson, *Night in the American Village*; *Hideaki Tobe, "Military Bases and Modernity," Transforming Anthropology* 14, no. 1 (2006): 89–94; and Takako Hikotani, Yusaku Horiuchi, and Atsushi Tago, "Revisiting Negative Externalities of US Military Bases: The Case of Okinawa," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 23, no. 2 (May 2023): 325–49, https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcac002. For works on island of Diego Garcia, see: David Vine, "War and Forced Migration in the Indian Ocean: The US Military Base at Diego Garcia," *International Migration* 42, no. 3 (2004): 111–43; David Vine, *Empire's Footprint: Expulsion and the United States Military Base on Diego Garcia* (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2006); David Vine, *Island of Shame*; David Vine, "What If You Can't Protest the Base? The Chagossian Exile, the Struggle for Democracy, and the Military Base on Diego Garcia," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 4 (2012): 847–56; Peter Sand, *United States and Britain in Diego Garcia: The Future of a Controversial Base* (New York: Springer, 2009); and Samuel Matthews Bashfield, "Mauritian Sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago? Strategic Implications for Diego Garcia from a UK-US Perspective," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 16, no. 2 (2020): 166–81. For works on the Philippines, see in particular: A. James Gregor and Virgilio Aganon, *The Key Role of US Bases in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Asian Studies Center; Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1987); Rolando C. San Juan, *Closure of US Military Bases in the Philippines: Impact and Implications* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1993); M. Victoria Bayoneto, "The Former U.S. Bases in the Philippines: An Argument for the Application of U.S. Environmental Standards to Overseas Military Bases," *Fordham Environmental Law Review* 6 (2011): 111–55, https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/elr/vol6/iss1/1; Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mariz Mandocdoc and Carlos Primo David, "Dieldrin Contamination of the Groundwater in a Former US Military Base (Clark Air Base, Philippines)," *CLEAN – Soil, Air, Water* 36, no. 10–11 (2008): 870–74; Andrew Yeo, "Challenging US Military Presence in the Philippines," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 4 (2012): 857–64; and Victoria Reyes, "Global Borderlands: Fantasy, Violence, and Empire in Subic Bay, Philippines," *Social Forces* 99, no. 1 (September 2020): e14, https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaa016. On Guam, see: LisaLinda Natividad and Gwyn Kirk, "Fortress Guam: Resistance to US Military Mega-Buildup," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 8, no. 19 (2010): e1; Catherine Lutz, "US Military Bases on Guam in Global Perspective," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 8, no. 30 (2010): e3; and Gon Namkung and Sulhyung Lee, "US Power Penetration through the Military Bases in Guam," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 19, no. 1 (2012): 29–46.

However, South Korea is a compelling case study for this research for a variety of reasons both historical and methodological: 1) Korea was the site of the first major conflict of the Cold War (1950–1953); 2) Since the stalemate of the conflict, the United States has had a widespread, embedded, and persistent presence on the peninsula in form of a several different military installations; 3) South Korea is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, but at the same time, the United States military maintains ownership of large tracts of land near urban centers — a characteristic not present in many other postwar environments; and 4) There is a potential to explore instances of layered coloniality by analyzing sites of former Japanese occupation followed by U.S. control directly afterwards. This allows one to de-center Cold War periodization by connecting U.S. stewardship and military control of the peninsula further back to Japanese colonization in 1910. Likewise, the enduring presence of U.S. forces and bases in South Korea to this day means that through the lens of base studies, we can analyze the impacts of this U.S. military presence beyond the end of the Cold War and into the twenty-first century. Taken in conjunction, all of these factors make South Korea a compelling and relevant subject for analysis both historically and contemporarily.

The United States government dealt extensively with the dictatorial regimes of South Korean leaders from the end of the Second World War to the 1990s when widespread democracy protests engulfed the country. During this time period, South Korean regimes worked extensively with U.S. administrations on a range of issues both military economic, ranging from furnishing South Korean women for prostitution, to the securing of land rights.[212] La Grange, Adrienne, and Hee Nam Jung note that "In spite of private land ownership, the state has had a major impact on the processes by which land has become commodified, using extensive land expropriation and land-use planning powers."[213] A case study focused on bases in South Korea offers the opportunity to touch on a significant, yet rarely considered, aspect to the U.S. foreign military presence in South Korea *after* the commonly referenced flashpoint of the Korean War within wider Cold War

[212] Lee, "The Construction of Military Prostitution"; Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Anouk Eigenraam, "Korea's 'Patriotic Prostitutes' for US Soldiers Get Justice at Last," *Asia Times*, March 3, 2018, https://asiatimes.com/2018/03/koreas-patriotic-prostitutes-us-soldiers-get-justice-last/; and Liam Thomas Edwards, "A Case of Sexual Misconduct: Gender Dynamics, Cultural Hegemony, and the United States Military in the Pacific 1945–Present" (master's thesis, University of Vermont, 2021), https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/graddis/1397.

[213] Adrienne La Grange and Hee Nam Jung, "The Commodification of Land and Housing: The Case of South Korea," *Housing Studies* 19, no. 4 (2004): 557–80.

histories. Simultaneously, it offers the opportunity to connect the discussion of a discourse of U.S. power to other discussions within the fields of interdisciplinary architecture.

The histories of the Koreas (both North and South) have played a profound role in shaping the geopolitical and economic landscape of Southeast Asia. But in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Korea was little more than a footnote to the larger issues on the minds of Truman and MacArthur who were deeply concerned about what to do with a defeated Japan and how to proceed in regards to Chiang Kai-Shek's rapidly faltering nationalist forces in the Chinese mainland.[214] This mode of thinking rapidly changed in the late 1940s when Mao finally succeeded in the war against his long time enemy Chiang, and the increased concern voiced by those within the Truman administration related to the growing specter of communist power. Nowhere is this more famously captured than in George Kennan's "Long Telegram" of 1946 which outlined what would eventually become the "containment strategy" related to Soviet expansion. Kennan warned about of the spread of communism, noting that the "Problem of how to cope with this force in [is] undoubtedly [the] greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably greatest it will ever have to face."[215] Korea, like Berlin, was to become one of the flashpoints of that strategy.

The importance of Korea within the wider scope of Southeast Asian geopolitics went from being marginal in the early half of the twentieth century as a colony of Japan, to being the site of the first largescale diplomatic and military crisis of the Cold War. Westad notes that "Having a leadership in southern Korea linked to the United States… became more and more significant for both U.S. military and civilian planners in the late 1940s."[216] Korea became absolutely vital for U.S. interests in the region and across the globe in its first real test to oppose the spread of communism, which Kennan had described as a "malignant parasite."[217]

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[214] It bears noting that the Chinese Civil War, between the nationalist and communist forces under Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao, continued to devastate large swaths of the continent.

[215] George F. Kennan, "The Long Telegram," February 22, 1946, U.S. Embassy Moscow, reprinted by the National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm.

[216] Westad, *The Cold War*, 165.

[217] Kennan was not reserved in his opinions of the Soviet regime. He further commented, "In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every single ethical value in their methods and tactics. Today they cannot dispense with it. It is fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security of their internally weak regimes." Kennan, "The Long Telegram."

Despite its preeminence at the time for the Soviets, Chinese, Koreans, and the United States, the Korean War has earned the title of "The Forgotten War" in the United States, having become overshadowed by the longer and more controversial war in Vietnam just years later. But in 1950, Truman went so far as to pass an executive order declaring a "National Emergency" in light of the conflict that would require that "the military, the naval, air, and civilian defences in this country be strengthened as speedily as possible to the end that we may repel any and all threats against our national security."[218] Before Eisenhower ever spoke of a "military-industrial-complex," Truman, in the same order, declared, "I summon our farmers, our workers in industry, and our businessmen to make a mighty production effort to meet the defense requirements of this nation" and that "I summon all State and local leaders and officials to cooperate fully with the military and civilian defense agencies of the United States in the national defense program."[219]

From 1950 onwards, South Korea has remained in a state of constant and unyielding geopolitical tension stemming from the still-open wound of the three-year conflict nearly three quarters of a century old. One of the most preeminent historians of Korea, Bruce Cumings, has noted that "the peninsula is a museum of that world-ranging conflict."[220] If attention was drawn away from the Land of the Morning Calm by the United States and the Soviet Union to other battlefields across the globe, the Korean peninsula still bears a profound legacy of the conflict. Cumings notes that "the Northeast Asian region remains locked in a 1940s settlement that easily outlived the end of American-Soviet rivalry" and that this geography is perhaps "best evidenced by the 100,000 American troops that continue to occupy Japan and South Korea."[221] As a result, Cumings noted about the region when he was describing the 1940s situation in Southeast Asia may be even *more* appropriate now: "The Pacific had become an American lake."[222]

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[218] Harry S. Truman, *Presidential Proclamation 2914*, December 16, 1950, in *Presidential Proclamations 02911–02930*, *Presidential Proclamations, 1791–2016*, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives Building, Washington, DC, accessed February 17, 2023, https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/presidential-proclamation-2914.

[219] Truman, *Presidential Proclamation 2914*.

[220] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, updated ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 470.

[221] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 470-71. Cumings also obviously notes the 38th parallel.

[222] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 472.

The Sino-Soviet split, changing administrative priorities by the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and both Korean governments, all ebbed and flowed in the following decades after the war. At times, there were moments where it seemed as though diplomatic dialogues between all parties were moving in positive directions toward either a thawing of relations, or even the prospect of reunification, especially during the Carter administration (1977–1981). Yet, tensions rooted in the Cold War have yet to yield and the United States continues to keep military bases in Korea at the ready for any "unforeseen contingency."

Despite these changes, however, one can make two definitive statements about Korean history from 1950 to the present day. The first, is that since the Korean war, there has been a persistent and significant number of U.S. soldiers living in South Korea. The other, asserted by the then acting United States Defense Secretary in 1983, Casper Weinberger, is that Korea is "a vital interest for the United States."[223] These two constants were underscored by George G.W. Bush in his 2002 State of the Union address when he labelled North Korea as one of the three states comprising the "Axis of Evil" that were "threatening the peace of the world."[224] Since that time, the U.S. presence has only grown. Almost as a foreshadowing of military budgets to come, Bush also remarked that "My budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in two decades, because while the price of freedom and security is high, *it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay*."[225] The United States and its allies certainly have paid, and they are still paying today.

The case of South Korea in this study provides insights in to how we understand the projection of U.S. power in the world both historically and today, especially given the Obama-era realignment policy towards further presence in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the U.S. military's website for their South Korean base, Camp Humphreys, the base is "the largest power projection platform in the Pacific."[226] As part of a "land-swap" program with the South Korean

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[223] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 472.

[224] George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address," January 29, 2002, transcript, *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm.

[225]Bush, "State of the Union Address," January 29, 2002. Emphasis added; the two other countries Bush identified were Iran and Iraq.

[226] U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys, "History," *USAG Humphreys – Army Garrisons*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://home.army.mil/humphreys/about/history.

government to relocate the base to a more amenable geographic area, "Humphreys has tripled in size to nearly 3,500 acres, making it the largest U.S. overseas military base."[227]

U.S. bases overseas are contested spaces. Across the world and over the period of the Cold War, different countries have engaged in a discourse about U.S. power and the presence of U.S. troops. Communities have protested bases in places like Honduras, Italy, Okinawa, and the Philippines. However, a recent poll conducted by the *Diplomat* asked their opinions regarding the presence of U.S. military bases and concluded that "a majority of respondents state that they somewhat or strongly support the presence (55.83 percent) compared to only 10.84 percent stating they somewhat or strongly oppose, rates that suggest the public generally sees the presence as an effective and perhaps cost-effective deterrent to North Korean aggression."[228]

Equally important to investigating the negative effects or the staunchly negative perceptions and options of the United States military in different parts of the world, it is just as vital to investigate contrasting narratives for what they can reveal. In addition to exploring the relationship of Koreans to the presence of United States military both during and after the Korean War, homing in on South Korea offers the opportunity to explore a dimension of overseas U.S. military basing that oftentimes inaccessible because of geography. Few foreign U.S. military bases are so physically close and occupy such valuable real estate as those of U.S. military facilities in South Korea. South Korea stands as the 27th most densely populated country in the world, with a total area of approximately 100,200 km² (38,740 mi²) — largely equivalent to the state of Kentucky in the United States, or the nation of Portugal in Europe — yet has a population of over 51 million inhabitants. By contrast, the state of Kentucky has less than 5 million and Portugal just over 10 million.[229]

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[227] USAG Humphreys, "History."

[228] Timothy S. Rich, Maggie Fields, Kierigan McEvoy, and Joe Black, "How Much Are South Koreans Willing to Pay Toward the U.S. Alliance?" *The Diplomat*, April 16, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/how-much-are-south-koreans-willing-to-pay-toward-the-us-alliance/. The perception of U.S. forces in Korea has undergone several changes over time. See in particular: Gi-Wook Shin, "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996): 787–803 and Chung-in Moon, "Changing South Korean Perception of the United States Since September 11," *アジア研究* 50, no. 2 (2004): 45–57.

[229] Statista, "Population Density in the Federal States of the U.S.," accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.statista.com/statistics/183588/population-density-in-the-federal-states-of-the-us/; World Population Review, "Countries by Density," accessed July 21, 2025, https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-by-density.

In 2010, the U.S. Army announced that overseas posting (generally serving 1–2 years) for soldiers in South Korea would no longer be in the category of "remote" or "hardship" assignments, meaning that soldiers previously unaccompanied by their families, would be transitioning into a "tour normalization" process, meaning that soldiers would now be able to serve three-year tours, but with their families. Architect and author Mark Gillem notes that "Making room for families… consumes vast quantities of land" which has been the case with the 2010 policy change to Camp Humphreys. The camp website notes that "With this new policy, additional infrastructure has been built to accommodate more families."[230]

Leslie Kanes Weisman insists that "The appropriation and use of space are political acts" and that "The kinds of spaces we have, don't have, or are denied access to can empower us or render us powerless. Spaces can enhance or restrict, nurture or impoverish."[231] By considering the U.S. military's presence in South Korea and quite literally the "architecture of power" that they have constructed on the peninsula during the Cold War period, and continue to construct today, one gains more valuable and comprehensive understandings of the region, the Cold War, and U.S.-Republic Of Korea (ROK) relations. As Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden note, "Architecture is a subject which demands to be understood in context: that is, within the context of its production (society, economics, politics, culture) and the context of its consumption, representation and interpretation (different academic disciplines, interest groups, institutions, users)."[232] By "historicizing" the land use of the United States military in Korea, we are better able to understand how the United States military has shaped, as Taejin Hwang notes, "the natural and built environments as well as the expressions of cultural values and social behaviours" in Korea after the war from 1950–1953.[233] Though the war has devolved into a tense armistice for decades since that point, the impacts of that conflict and the Cold War have literally been inscribed into the physical landscape of the capital city of Seoul.

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[230] Gillem, *America Town*, 49; USAG Humphreys, "History."

[231] Iain Borden, Barbara Penner, and Jane Rendell, eds., *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

[232] Borden, Penner, and Rendell, *Gender Space Architecture*, 4.

[233] Taejin Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan: From Japanese Imperial to Little Americas in Early Cold War Korea," *Korea Journal* 58, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 124.

Case Study #2: Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia witnessed a period of profound transformation during the Cold War decades beginning with the definition of the modern nation state. Robert Lacy begins his book *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia* (2009), by stating that "In theory, Saudi Arabia should not exist — its survival defies the laws of logic and history."[234] Madawi al-Rasheed, in *A History of Saudi Arabia* (2010), notes that "The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a state imposed on people without a historical memory of unity or national heritage which would justify their inclusion in a single entity"[235] and that "The idea of a Saudi state was a late development, certainly not associated with Ibn Saud's early conquests."[236] The consolidation of the peoples and the lands in what is now referred to as "Saudi Arabia," as well the massive transformations that occurred during the breakup of the Ottoman empire, coupled with the discovery of oil within its borders, helped to drive significant and profound changes for the country and the region. The history of Saudi Arabia in the twentieth century is one of a series of continuities and ruptures. However, unlike many of the countries that underwent decolonization, state-building, and nationalization in the twentieth century, few have had such a significant impact on global affairs.

Like the inclusion of South Korea, the case of Saudi Arabia in this research is relevant both historically and contemporarily for a number of reasons: 1) Saudi Arabia's relevance economically and politically in regional and global affairs in the twenty-first century is profound; 2) The origins of the U.S.-Saudi relationship were explicitly linked to U.S. base access; 3) Contemporary historiography on the U.S.-Saudi Arabian diplomatic relationship severely underplays the importance of the role of U.S. bases in forging diplomatic and economic ties between the two states 4) U.S. bases, and in particular, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played a profound role in shaping the modern Saudi Arabian state.

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[234] Robert Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia* (New York: Random House, 2009), 1.

[235] Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

[236] Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia,* 4.

Alexi Vassiliev notes in *The History of Saudi Arabia* (2013), that "Saudi Arabia … has acquired far greater influence in the contemporary world than might initially be thought."[237] Valerie Anischchenkova in *Modern Saudi Arabia* (2020) notes that "During the past century, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has experienced an extraordinary transformation, accompanied by a clash between tradition and modernization to a much greater degree than most other countries."[238] Josh Pollack states that "The U.S.-Saudi relationship is one of America's most important, enduring, and complex bilateral connections in the Middle East."[239] Wayne H. Bowen, in *The History of Saudi Arabia* (2008) best captures the importance of the nation in global affairs during the twentieth century:

> With the largest share of the world's proven petroleum reserves, a dominant role in OPEC, key political and geographic terrain in the Middle East, the international prominence that comes with controlling the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and a major role in promoting fundamentalist Wahhabi Islam, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is arguably more significant and relevant to the broader world than at any time in its history, at least since the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad during the sixth and seventh centuries.[240]

The country of Saudi Arabia is obviously an incredibly significant county in the regional politics of the Middle East. At the same time, it has been viewed by U.S. administrations throughout the Cold War and beyond as one of the two "pillars" of stability in the Middle East, alongside Iran, until the Iranian Revolution (1979) upended this Middle East grand strategy. In 1957, after a meeting with President Eisenhower and King Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz Al-Saud (known more commonly as Ibn Saud), a joint statement released by the White House declared that the two leaders had "reached full agreement" on a series of issues of common interest. The Eisenhower administration emphasized the importance of Saudi Arabia as a key player in the new Cold War power balance in the Middle East declaring that "Saudi Arabia, by virtue of its spiritual,

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[237] Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi, 2013), 14.

[238] Valerie Anishchenkova, *Modern Saudi Arabia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2020), xiii.

[239] Josh Pollack, "Saudi Arabia and the United States 1931–2002," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 3 (September 2002): 77.

[240] Wayne H. Bowen, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 1–2.

geographical, and economic position, is of vital importance in the Middle East."[241] The statement noted that "It is in the interests of world peace that this Kingdom be strengthened for the maintenance of its own stability and the safeguarding and progressive development of its institutions."[242]

By 1950, the United States presence in Saudi Arabia was firmly established, linked to the increasing involvement by U.S. interests in the Saudi oil industry after its exclusion from other areas in the Middle East connected to British and French petroleum interests. The American-owned company ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Co.) became intimately intertwined in Saudi society as the development of its oil infrastructure eventually "extended beyond the construction of roads, pipelines, ports and airports in the oil regions and elsewhere to providing schools, hospitals and quasi-state administration."[243] Madawi Al-Rasheed notes that the company (which eventually began sharing profits with the state after threats by Ibn Saud to nationalize Saudi petrol) "filled a gap where public services, education and health facilities were underdeveloped and in some parts of the country virtually non-existent" and that "In the absence of a state apparatus, ARAMCO was the state subcontractor."[244]

However, as is often the case, economic interests are often secured through military force. The year 1945 marked the beginning of a decades-long relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia that was irrevocably linked to the presence of oil, but which also drove the construction of U.S. military bases and U.S. military presence in the country that continues to this day. The enduring presence of U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia is what Valerie Anischchenkova describes as an example of one of the many "great nuances, contradictions, and cultural complexities" that defines the modern Saudi state.[245] For a country whose existence is predicated on, and in large part defined by, a devotion to the particularly anti-imperialist and purist

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[241] Dwight D. Eisenhower, Joint Statement Following Discussions With King Saud of Saudi Arabia, February 8, 1957, transcript, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/joint-statement-following-discussions-with-king-saud-saudi-arabia.

[242] Eisenhower, *Joint Statement with King Saud*, February 8, 1957.

[243] Al-Rasheed, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, 92.

[244] Al-Rasheed, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, 92.

[245] Anishchenkova, *Modern Saudi Arabia*, xiii.

interpretation of Wahabi Islam, the physical presence of U.S. military forces constructing military bases represent, in the eyes of many, an insult to both religion and sovereignty.[246]

The United States' military presence in Saudi Arabia has developed in a uniquely unorthodox way within the wider U.S. military basing strategy. Alexander Cooley, in *Base Politics* (2008), notes that "the manner in which base-related issues are managed (or mismanaged) can symbolize the broader relationship between the base host and the United States."[247] Along general contours, when the host country is in a relatively "weak" position vis-à-vis U.S. bargaining power, host countries are more likely to agree to less favorable terms to military access for U.S. bases.[248] Conversely, when the host countries are in positions of relative power vis-à-vis the U.S. positions, host countries are more likely to negotiate "better" terms for base access.[249] In the case of Saudi Arabia, after the expiration of the lease for Dhahran Air Base (1962) and the cessation of access to U.S. troops, the American thirst for Saudi oil during the decades of the Cold War and beyond

[246] There are a wide range of different branches of Islam. The most obvious delineation to the casual observer being the difference between "Shia" and "Sunni" which can be traced back to arguments over succession after the death of the prophet Muhammad. Different subsects of these two (and more outside of them) exist within the Islamic community, but in the context of Saudi Arabia in particular, the subsect of Islam named "Wahhabism" was instrumental and foundational in the beginning and legitimating of the modern Saudi state and remains one of the defining characteristics of the country in the region. Significantly, many followers of Wahhabism outright reject the notion that it is in fact a "subsect" or an interpretation of Islam in any sense and vehemently insist that it is the only "true" Islam that even exists. For more on Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, see, David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005); Mohammed Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009); and Carol E. B. Choksy and Jamsheed K. Choksy, "The Saudi Connection: Wahhabism and Global Jihad," *World Affairs* (2015): 23–34. In regard to the pushback of locals to U.S. military presence, Robert Lacy notes that in 1944, Abdul Aziz Bin Baz, a blind holy man, went to Riyadh to complain about the "activities of American agricultural engineers in Al-Kharj, a town in the central region of Nejd." Lacey recounts that "Bin Baz protested that the king was surrendering Muslim land to infidels in contradiction of his duties as a Muslim ruler." Lacy, *Inside the Kingdom*, 9. For a more detailed account of this particular interaction, see the article by Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-Utaybi Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39 (2007): 97–116.

[247] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 4.

[248] The central point of contention is generally that of legal jurisdiction. "Weaker" countries are generally more likely to negotiate terms that allow for full immunity of U.S. soldiers, staff, and their dependents.

[249] Cooley notes that "Elites in otherwise weak states may be the best situated, as a result of their domestic political volatility, to challenge the United States on base rights, whereas stronger allies, usually consolidated democracies, are the most constrained in their capacity to contest base issues, even as they question the actual content of U.S. security policy." Cooley, *Base Politics*, 9.

put the Saudi state in a uniquely powerful position to negotiate base access on favorable terms rarely replicated elsewhere in the world during the Cold War.[250]

Saudi Arabia would be a valuable case study to explore the dynamics of power differentials between countries and how the that power is manifested if only just for the vital role that the presence of U.S troops and bases have played in spurring the attacks of 9/11.[251] The focus on U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia and the connection to anti-American sentiment, Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and the attacks of September 11, however, frequently take the spotlight away from more diffuse expressions of U.S. influence on Saudi Arabian society. Prior to 9/11, the United States Army Corps of Engineers operated within the Kingdom employed by the Saud monarchy for multi-billion-dollar military — but also civilian — construction efforts for decades. Forming a nexus of private U.S. business interests in petroleum, U.S. government desires for an ally in the region, and Saudi desires for military security, U.S. foreign military bases in Saudi Arabia represent complex and important objects of study.

This shift of focus away from questions of terrorism to other less readily apparent impacts of U.S. base presence on Saudi society afford us the opportunity to explore questions previously not considered or fully understood in this relationship. How has the presence of the United States military and its bases affected domestic and civilian Saudi society? Has this led to legal changes?

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[250] Point 6 in the joint declaration by Eisenhower and Ibn Saud in the 50s read as follows: "With respect to the military defense of Saudi Arabia, including the Dhahran Airfield, President Eisenhower assured His Majesty King Saud of the willingness of the United States to provide assistance for the strengthening of the Saudi Arabian armed forces within the constitutional processes of the United States. To this end, plans are being made by representatives of both countries for the supply of military equipment, services and training, for the purposes of defense and the maintenance of internal security in the Kingdom. In the same spirit, His Majesty King Saud assured President Eisenhower of His Majesty's intention that the United States continue for another five years to use the facilities accorded to it at the Dhahran Airfield under conditions provided for in the Agreement concluded between the two countries on June 18, 1951. The United States agreed to consider the provision of economic facilities that would serve to augment the combined aims and interests of the two countries." The lease for the land and the base facilities would eventually expire due to tensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States over issues with Egypt and the Nassar regime. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Joint Statement Following Discussions With King Saud of Saudi Arabia*, February 8, 1957, transcript, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/joint-statement-following-discussions-with-king-saud-saudi-arabia.

[251] Osama Bin Laden declared in 1998 that "for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples. If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the Americans' continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that end, but they are helpless." World Islamic Front (Usama bin Ladin et al.), "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," 23 February 1998, English translation, Federation of American Scientists, https://irp.fas.org/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm.

In places like South Korea or Germany, the presence of camp town cultures surrounding U.S. bases has led to a steady diffusion of U.S. culture and interchange between base residents and those of the local populations. Has the same occurred in Saudi Arabia in cities like Khobar as well? If so, how did this affect the growth and development of the modern Saudi state in cultural and militaristic terms?

In this study, Saudi Arabia offers opportunities to discuss the role of U.S. military bases within the context of regional Middle Eastern Cold War history, but also to explore some of the more country-specific lines of inquiry which have yet to be addressed in the existing literature regarding military bases in the Gulf. Utilizing a case study from the Middle East, much like the case studies from South Korea or Italy, affords the ability to look at the role of U.S. foreign military bases in a wider Cold War context. At the same time, it allows us to ask questions from an entirely different methodological perspective, employing a different lens of analysis to the ways in which U.S. bases have a diffused, albeit highly significant, influence in different parts of the world.

Case Study #3: Italy

In a speech at the University of Virginia, in 1940, FDR commented on the decision of Italy to enter the Second World War and invade a nearly prostrate France. He stated that,

> The Government of Italy has now chosen to preserve what it terms its 'freedom of action' and to fulfill what it states are its promises to Germany. In so doing it has manifested disregard for the rights and security of other nations, disregard for the lives of the peoples of those nations which are directly threatened by this spread of the war; and has evidenced its unwillingness to find the means through pacific negotiations for the satisfaction of what it believes are its legitimate aspirations.[252]

He then ended with a rhetorical flourish by declaring that "On this tenth day of June, nineteen hundred and forty, the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor."[253] Italy serves as the final case study for this research for three reasons: 1) its vital role in U.S. grand strategy both during the Second World War and in the postwar period; 2) the extensive network of

[252] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Stab in the Back Speech," June 10, 1940, transcript, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/roosevelt-s-stab-in-the-back-speech.

[253] Roosevelt, "Stab in the Back Speech."

US/NATO military installations embedded across the country which still function today; and, 3) what the legal framework of the NATO SOFA can tell us about the role of U.S. power within and outside of Europe.

The Mediterranean Front during the Second World War, while not as strongly cemented into U.S. popular memory as the bloody and protracted series of conflicts on Eastern Front, the shocking surprise attack of Pearl Harbor, or the D-Day invasions of France, was nevertheless one of the most significant theatres of the war in Europe. For reasons political, logistic, diplomatic, and related to global grand strategy, the invasion of Northern Africa in 1942 and then the subsequent invasions of Sicily and mainland Italy, were pursued by the Allies prior to the invasion of mainland Europe in 1944.[254] As Thomas G. Mahnken notes in the *Cambridge History of the Second World War: Volume I: Fighting the War* (2015), "US troops played a decisive role in both the Atlantic and Pacific theatres, ultimately providing the United States with the opportunity to play a leading role in founding and leading the post-war world."[255] But it was not just that the United States was in a position to "play a decisive role in creating a new global order," as Mahnken notes. The U.S. involvement in the Mediterranean during the Second World War set the stage for one of the most integrated military basing operations of the war that has endured to this day. Andrew Buchanan notes that Roosevelt "was sympathetic to a 'Mediterranean strategy,' not least because he saw the possibility of laying the groundwork for America's postwar predominance in the region."[256] FDR himself remarked in one of his famous "Fireside Chats" to the American people, right after the fall of Rome to Allied forces on June 5th, 1944, that, "Rome is of course more than a military objective."[257]

Indeed, the occupation and rebuilding of a country is rarely exclusively a military objective. If one considers the language of Roosevelt in this speech, it is difficult to disentangle the lines between military objectives and state-building. He noted that "I think the American people as a

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[254] Thomas G. Mahnken, "US Grand Strategy 1939–1945," in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War, Volume I: Fighting the War*, ed. John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 189–212.

[255] Mahnken, "US Grand Strategy 1939–1945," 189.

[256] Buchanan, *World War II in Global Perspective*, 103.

[257] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 29: On the Fall of Rome," June 5, 1944, transcript, *Miller Center*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/june-5-1944-fireside-chat-29-fall-rome.

whole approve the salvage of these human beings, who are only now learning to walk in a new atmosphere of freedom," though he admitted "Some of us may let our thoughts run to the financial cost of it."[258] But even in 1944, Roosevelt, like others such as the architect of the Marshall plan for the reconstruction of Europe, John Marshall, saw such financial costs as long-term investments: "we hope that this relief will be an investment for the future — an investment that will pay dividends by eliminating Fascism, (and) by ending any Italian desires to start another war of aggression in the future. And that means that they are dividends which justify such an investment, because they are additional supports for world peace."[259] This very same investment, though under the auspices of preserving "world peace" in the future, would be used to construct a set of "enduring communities" in Italy that would later be used by the United States to wage their own later wars in the Middle East and Asia to this very day.[260] Roosevelt's very own words at the end his speech might apply just as much today as they did in 1944 if one replaces the country of "Italy" with "The United States:" Italy cannot grow in stature by seeking to build up a great militaristic empire. Italians have been overcrowded within their own territories, but they do not need to try to conquer the lands of other peoples in order to find the breath of life. Other peoples may not want to be conquered.[261]

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[258] Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 29."

[259] Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 29."

[260] U.S. bases in Italy were used to illegally house nuclear weapons during the Cold War, transport munitions for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan outside of their "NATO purpose," and most recently, were used to conduct clandestine and illegal drone strikes in North Africa. The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights that "European countries have played a key role in the US drone program for quite some time, and in so doing, they risk making themselves complicit in violations of international law." They note that in particular, "Italy has granted the US increasingly frequent access to the Naval Air Station Sigonella for drone strikes. While the presence of armed drones was initially authorized only on a temporary basis, U.S. armed drones have allegedly been stationed continuously in Sicily since at least 2016." They note that in 2022 the organization "filed a criminal complaint in Italy against Sigonella's commander, for his alleged role in the 2018 drone strike, which killed eleven innocent members of the Tuareg community in Ubari, Libya." European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, "The U.S. Airbase Sigonella in Sicily – Freedom of Information Litigation on Italy's Involvement in U.S. Drone Program," accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/sicily-air-base-freedom-of-information-litigation-on-italys-involvement-in-us-drone-program/.

[261] Roosevelt also had interesting insights into the economic infrastructure required to maintain this overseas presence: "But we have already begun to save the lives of the men, women and children of Rome. This, I think, is an example of the efficiency of your machinery of war. The magnificent ability and energy of the American people in growing the crops, building the merchant ships, in making and collecting the cargoes, in getting the supplies over thousands of miles of water, and thinking ahead to meet emergencies - all this spells, I think, an amazing efficiency on the part of our armed forces, all the various agencies working with them, and American industry and labor as a whole." Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 29."

Italy was vital to the Allied grand military strategy during the war itself, but it was also a keystone piece of Roosevelt's idea for a stable and democratic postwar global order. Future U.S. administrations would maintain this belief as well, and so much so that the very first "inaugural" activity of the newly formed "Central Intelligence Agency" (CIA), was to make absolutely certain that the coalition of the Italian Communist party (PCI) and the militant Italian Socialist party (PSI) did not win general elections in Italy. James E. Miller describes the extreme measures that were brought to bear to meet this goal:

> Millions of dollars secretly were funneled to the Christian Democratic and right-wing Socialist parties. A massive propaganda campaign mobilized Italian voters against the Communist Socialist coalition. The United States laid contingency plans for a major military involvement in case of an Italian civil war and sent military advisers and equipment to Italy's internal security forces. Economic assistance and the promise of prosperity through the Marshall Plan became a bludgeon, which the United States held against the Left.[262]

The continued interest in securing Italy from communist influence was an enduring theme of the postwar period which demonstrates how the diplomatic and military relationships between the two countries have developed in the postwar period in reference to U.S. basing policy. However, most important for its inclusion as a case study here is the significance of U.S. military bases and troops stationed in Italy given the context of the ongoing relevance and significance of the clandestine Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement of 1954 (BIA) and the NATO SOFA.[263]

A recently declassified Wikileaks cable between the Italian and U.S. governments recommended against the declassification of the BIA agreement on the grounds that if certain sections of the agreement were indeed made public it "could also cloud public discussion regarding U.S. basing in Italy… It could also restrict our freedom of action with regard to forces currently

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[262] James E. Miller, "Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Elections of 1948," *Diplomatic History* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 35–56. Similar efforts were conducted in France to ensure that Christian Democratic parties were elected there as well. For further reading on the CIA's role in the post-war period, see William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

[263] Matteo Dian notes that "beyond collective defense, the BIA seems to limit the activities carried out in and from the bases to UN- approved military interventions. The Italian government has chosen to interpret this norm very loosely, however, also allowing the use of the bases for interventions not legitimized by a UN mandate." Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 50.

based in Italy."[264] The BIA, widely suspected by Italian Constitutional scholars of still being held secret due to its illegality in the context of certain provisions of the Italian Constitution, is entirely unique within Europe as it delineates significant legal aspects of U.S. military presence in the country such as base locations.

The second document, the NATO SOFA, applies only to NATO countries which host U.S. foreign military bases. SOFAs exist in many different countries all over the world that host U.S. foreign military bases and outline legal jurisdictions for soldiers, access to facilitates, and how individuals and soldiers are treated in national legal contexts.[265] NATO SOFAs function in similar ways, but add a varied aspect to how troops and bases are understood and treated legally in countries such as Italy as a result.[266]

Other countries within the NATO SOFA framework, while not considered here, remain a promising vein of research for future publications. Perhaps the most obvious choice as a case study, West Germany, was omitted due to the complexity and depth of US involvement. As Cooley notes, "The massive size of U.S. forces in Germany (over 200,000 during the Cold War) and their significant penetration of entire regions and towns make this case the most complex and difficult to comprehensively examine."[267] France is not considered due to the expulsion of U.S. forces in 1966 by Charles de Gaulle, nor is the UK considered due to the unique types of agreements made between the United States and the British governments regarding base access.[268] Likewise, the

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[264] WikiLeaks, "Italian Request to Declassify Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement," cable, September 24, 2008, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08ROME1322_a.html.

[265] For more on SOFAs see both R. Chuck Mason, *Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA): What Is It, and How Has It Been Utilized?* (CRS Report RL34531; Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, March 15, 2012) and Erickson, "Status of Forces Agreements."

[266] For more on the nature of NATO SOFAs, see: Murray L. Schwartz, "International Law and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," *Columbia Law Review* 53, no. 8 (1953): 1091–113, https://doi.org/10.2307/1119004. Edward D. Re, "NATO Status of Forces Agreement and International Law," Northwestern University Law Review 50, no. 3 (1955-1956): 349–94; Edwin G. Schuck, "Concurrent Jurisdiction under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," Columbia Law Review 57, no. 3 (March 1957): 355–71; and Andreas Gronimus, "Allied Security Services in Germany: The NATO SOFA and Supplementary Agreement Seen from a German Perspective," Military Law Review 136 (1992): 43–68.

[267] Cooley, *Base Politics,* 52.

[268] Interestingly, there are parallels between the case of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom in regard to the "informality" of U.S. base presence. However, the UK operates within a fundamentally different geopolitical relationship than that of Saudi Arabia in this context. See Simon Duke's works, *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom: A Matter for Joint Decision?* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1986) and *United States Military Forces and Installations in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

regimes of Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal would be fruitful case studies with which to consider authoritarian dimensions to base access, but they lack the scale and enduring presence of facilitates that have been constructed in Italy.[269]

The military bases present in Italy today remain relevant and vital in the wider scope of U.S. global security strategies and defense posture. Just as they were essential in the postwar period, they remain essential to the United States' shifting priorities related to combating terrorism and the projection of power in different parts of the world. Matteo Dian notes that "In the post–Cold War period, their function considerably evolved, turning the country into a fundamental hub for power projection toward North Africa and the Middle East."[270]

The inclusion of Italy in this study offers the opportunity to explore the role of U.S. foreign military bases during the Cold War in Europe, especially regarding the legal dimensions to base access during and after the Cold War. Their continued existence, and even expansion — if one recalls the $373 million family housing facility for U.S. soldiers that broke ground in Vicenza just two years ago — reflects, as Dian concludes, that "Overall, the presence of U.S. and NATO bases in Italy has been largely accepted by Italian policy makers and by the wider public opinion."[271] However, acquiescence does not mean that many of the issues that stem from these installations disappear: "This coexistence is not entirely devoid of legal, logistical and social problems."[272] These problems have deep roots stretching into the early days of the Cold War, and have much to do with the delicate balance struck within the legal and political relationships between Washington and Rome that ultimately ensures that U.S. troops are largely shielded from legal culpability for crimes, even among ostensibly "equal" states.

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[269] Cooley considers both Italy, Portugal, and Spain in his study *Base Politics*. See also Simon Duke's case studies on Spain and Portugal in Duke, *United States Military Forces*.

[270] Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 39.

[271] Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 39.

[272] Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 52.

Conclusion

In a study of this kind, directed and contextual analyses of specific cases helps explain power relationships between host countries and the United States and at the same time, challenge previously accepted periodization of the Cold War. In their recent publication, *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases* (2020), Shinji Kawana and Minori note that by approaching the topic with a mind toward area studies, one is able to more accurately and appropriately delve into significant elements of cultural and historical context in different regions of the world that shape these relationships. This has been a key element of what has been missing, according to Kawana and Takahashi, from previous studies of U.S. basing policies: "there is a theoretical issue that could not be sufficiently resolved in this volume. We are referring to the problem of how to treat historical, chronological factors, which can be regarded as playing an important role in generating the diversity in base politics."[273] David Vine has noted that the profligacy by the United States military in the production of these overseas bases has meant that, "The establishment of overseas bases has created entire social worlds, with thousands of people and corporations that have become economically, socially, bureaucratically, psychologically, and … even spiritually dependant on the continued operation of those worlds."[274]

Attempting to understand these "social worlds," means looking at different parts of those worlds, in different places, within the wider network of overseas U.S. bases. Just as we seek to understand the more local and contextualized aspects and impacts of these bases, their operation is unequivocally supported and buttressed by expressions of power that are at times more or less explicit depending on the considerations and contexts in which these "social worlds" operate. Graham Cairns, the editor of *Design for a Complex World: Challenges in Practice and Education* (2014), sees the essays contained in that volume as seeking "to illustrate how these general global forces have manifested themselves in different and distinct ways depending on specific regional contexts."[275] In the case of this research, one "global force," that of the United States military, will

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[273] Toshihiro Kawana and Satoshi Takahashi, "Conclusion," in *Exploring Base Politics: Sovereignty, Resistance and Negotiation*, ed. Toshihiro Kawana and Satoshi Takahashi (London: Routledge, 2020), 183.

[274] Vine, *Base Nation*, 331.

[275] Graham Cairns, ed., *Design for a Complex World: Challenges in Practice and Education* (Oxfordshire, UK: Libri Publishing Ltd., 2014), xi.

be considered for the very same type of analysis. These three cases — South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy — and three approaches — architectural, infrastructural, and legal — allow us to examine a global phenomenon and network, seeing the whole as a more than a complex sum of its parts. From Burlington, Vermont, to Pyeongtaek, South Korea, the rise of new "little Philadelphias" across the globe, each unique, yet bound by and rooted in a similar pattern of influence and power expression by the United States, signify the continued relevance for the study of these military bases and their influences on the United States and the world and into the twenty-first century.

Chapter III: Korea

a military force … able to conduct military operations of any kind anywhere
—*New York Times* Article "Lessons from Korea," July 27, 1953.

Introduction

According to Korean legend, the mythical lord of the heavens, Hwanin (桓因), was petitioned by his son, Hwanung (桓雄) to "descend from Heaven and to possess the world of men."[1] His wish was granted and he "supervised agriculture, the preservation of life, the curing of disease, punishments, the difference between right and wrong, in all some three hundred and sixty kinds of work for mankind."[2] During this time, he was approached by a tiger and a bear:

> At that time, there was a bear and a tiger which lived together in a cave. They constantly petitioned Hwanung. They wanted to be transformed into men. Then the god gave them a piece of Sacred Mugwort and twenty pieces of garlic saying, 'If you eat this and do not see daylight for one hundred days, you will receive a human form.' The bear and the tiger took the plants and ate. They fasted for three times seven days. The bear received a woman's body. The tiger was not able to fast and did not receive a human body. As there was no one with whom the Bear Woman could marry, she went daily to the base of the tree by the altar to pray for a child. Hwanung changed his form and married her. She became pregnant and had a son. He was called Tan'gun wang'gŏm (檀君王儉, King Tan'gun). In the fiftieth year of the Emperor Yao . . . he established a city at P'yŏngyang and called the nation Chosŏn.[3]

The foundation myth of Korea, that of the mythological first king, Tangun, has been instrumental for the creation of the modern Korean state. Historian Kim Soo-ja notes that within

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[1] Hanson W. Baldwin, "The Lessons of Korea: World Struggle Between Communism and Democracy Influenced by War Now Halted," *The New York Times*, July 27, 1953, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1953/07/27/96497190.html?pageNumber=8; James H. Grayson, "Tan'gun and Chumong: The Politics of Korean Foundation Myths," *Folklore* 126, no. 3 (2015): 254.

[2] Grayson, "Tan'gun and Chumong," 254.

[3] Grayson, "Tan'gun and Chumong," 255.

the context of the formation of Korean nationalism in the twentieth century, "the historical figure Tan'gun was actively used as a tool for creating a sense of unity and community among Koreans."[4] He points out, however, that "at the beginning of Korean history, Tan'gun was *not* used in this way. According to varying historical situations, there were different historical memories and meanings attached to Tan'gun."[5]

The malleable nature of foundation myths is part of what makes them so valuable as tools of control and state formation. In the twentieth century, the role of Tangun was resurrected by Korean intellectuals and elites and repurposed in order to support their vision for Korean nationhood. Vital to any nationalist project is a sense of shared history, often in the form of myth, struggle, or a deeply connected link to a physical geography. Wen-hsin Yeh notes that before such a nationalist construction could be successful in Korea, such a goal had to be "predicated upon the construction of a shared heritage of a people who trace their common ancestry to the mythical Tangun."[6]

Indeed, as other scholars have highlighted, ethnonationalism and racial homogenization — regardless of the veracity of such a claim — have been unique characteristics of the mythologization of the Korean people's own history and vital to the construction of a national identity.[7] But equally vital to the project of nationalism is land, similar to the example of the Jewish people, for whom even despite the global diaspora, the link to a physical space was instrumental in the success of establishing a modern nation-state in the twentieth century.[8] Yeh further notes

[4] Soo-ja Kim, "The Modern Korean Nation, Tan'gun, and Historical Memory in Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century Korea," *International Journal of Korean History* 19, no. 2 (2014): 213.

[5] Soo-ja Kim, "The Modern Korean Nation," 213.

[6] Wen-hsin Yeh, *Mobile Subjects: Boundaries and Identities in the Modern Korean Diaspora*, Korea Research Monograph 36 (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2013), 3.

[7] This is part of the reason why when American soldiers committed sexual offences it was perceived in several different layers, not just a violation of sovereignty, but also one of miscegenation. Tied in with Confucian ideals and the recent trauma of the Japanese colonization, sexual crimes were perceived especially heinous on the peninsula in the postwar period; see, Young-Hee Shim, "Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes," *Human Studies* 24, no. 1–2 (2001): 133–48.

[8] Andrea Mubi Brighenti, for example, notes that "no politically organized group ever existed without creating and managing their territorial forms." Andrea Mubi Brighenti, "On Territorology: Towards a General Science of Territory," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, no. 1 (2010): 54.

that, in the context of Korea, "One of the most powerful driving forces in modern Korean history concerns the construction of a unified nation centered upon the Korean peninsula."[9]

Central to the discourse of inter*national* relations, or even supra*national* relations, like those of the European Union (EU; of which the constituent parts are still nations themselves), is the defining characteristic of conceptions of property, land, space, and territory both at the individual and state level. These perceptions dictate the intercourse between states and individuals, but also the formation of the rule of law which provides the undergirding for much of the types of discourse possible at the nation-to-nation level. Land — physical space, geography, architectural urbanism — is absolutely vital to the understanding of Korea today.

This chapter will focus on land and space in the development of the modern Korean state and how the United States military base of the Yongsang garrison has reflected this trajectory. Architectural analysis and urbanism approaches will be used to explore these phenomena. In doing so, we are also in a better position to address the historiographical gap outlined by Gabrielle Hecht in "*Entangled geographies: Empire and technopolitics in the global Cold War*" (2011) and Brooke L. Blower in "Nation of Outposts: Forts, Factories, Bases, and the Making of American Power," (2017).[10] These authors demonstrate how an investigation of U.S. military bases can, in Hecht's words, "explain why Cold War historiography exhibits both a persistent difficulty of grasping the territorial basis of America's global power and a recurrent self-definition of the U.S. as an exceptional world power."[11]

The liminal and porous space of military installations such as the Yongsang garrison within the very heart of Seoul, though, function differently from physical, geographically isolated islands which are the focus of Hecht's work. Instead, bases like Yongsan can be understood as "borderlands to denote their multiple geographies — as physical sites delineating territorial boundaries as well as militarized socio-economic and border-cultural spaces."[12] Just as island bases can obfuscate the view of U.S. territoriality, borderlands function in similar ways. As Blower

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[9] Yeh, *Mobile Subjects*, 3.

[10] Gabrielle Hecht, ed., *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 33; Brooke L. Blower, "Nation of Outposts: Forts, Factories, Bases, and the Making of American Power," *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 3 (June 2017): 439–59, https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhx034.

[11] Hecht, *Entangled Geographies*, 33.

[12] W. Taejin Hwang, "An Indispensable Edge: American Military Camptowns in Postwar Korea," in *Mobile Subjects: Boundaries and Identities in the Modern Korean Diaspora*, Korea Research Monograph 36 (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2013), 88.

highlights, the military has often "lurked in lots of places not often noticed by historians" and interactions between the inhabitants of host nations and soldiers have occurred in urbanized environments as well: "boundaries between civilian and military infrastructure have been more blurred than usually depicted."[13] By looking at the physical geography of these urbanized spaces, and the interactions that have occurred around them, we serve dual purposes both methodologically and historiographically of expanding on the specific "Korean" aspects of these bases in the broader context of U.S. military installations overseas.

As a militarized, dynamic, controversial, and economically valuable space at the heart of Korea's largest and most influential city, Seoul, the United States military base Yongsan Garrison has much to tell us about Korean history as well as the United States' role in that story. Focusing on this site offers an opportunity to "historicize" the space and to explore several key developments in Korean history. Taejin Hwang presents an excellent example of this approach in his article, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan: From Japanese Imperial to Little Americas in Early Cold War Korea."[14] The purpose of this chapter will be to move beyond Hwang's endpoint of the late 1960s, and to further contextualize and historicize the Yongsan Garrison into the present day.

This chapter consists of five sections. Section I will establish the role of Korea within the wider context of U.S. power and global Cold War strategy, as well as briefly discuss historiographical issues of Cold War temporality. The next three sections will discuss the case of Korea specifically and will proceed temporally. Section II will address the historical context of the initial Japanese occupation of the site of Yongsan Garrison, from 1904 to 1945. Section III will range from the beginning of the U.S. occupation of Korea in 1945 up to 2004. Section IV will address the site and its role in Korean society from the early 2004 to the present day. Section V will then situate the specific example of Korea in the global context of the international projection of U.S. power.

Each of the sections II–IV will address different key points of Korean history and international events through the lens of the physical space of Yongsan. Derek S. Deman notes that the space of Yongsan is especially relevant for this purpose because "Fortification has come to occupy, both conceptually and materially, the interstices of war and policing and global and local

[13] Blower, "Nation of Outposts," 459.

[14] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan."

space."[15] Through this type of analysis we can see that the Yongsan Garrison, "a forbidden space," as Kim Chun-soo describes, is perhaps closer to how Andrea Mubi Brighenti describes territory, not necessarily as exclusion, but rather as the "creation of ordered social relations, which are, in many cases, relations of dominance" between U.S. soldiers and Korean people.[16] Where U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia, for example, functioned in far more clandestine and support roles, the personnel on U.S. bases in Korea were (and are) as much a part of the urban Korean landscape as Koreans themselves. In consequence, other social and racial relations were even more pronounced in these cases, especially given the decades of Japanese colonialism which imparted similar racial and social prejudices against the Korean population.

Section I: Korea and Cold War

In a speech transcribed and printed by *The New York Times* on September 2, 1950, three months after North Korean troops had crossed the demarcated 38th parallel between the Soviet-controlled North and U.S.-controlled South on the peninsula, President Harry S. Truman did his best to reinforce a new vision of "ordered social relations" encompassing a global dominance of the United States and an integrated world order. He stated, "If the history of the Nineteen Thirties has taught us anything, it is that appeasement of dictators is a sure road to World War. If aggression were allowed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere."[17] Kennan's Long Telegram had already been relayed to the White House four years prior, warning of the dangers of communism, and those warnings had been heeded and extrapolated.

The Korean War brought into focus two significant and profound realities that would color the following decades of the Cold War. First, it militarized the conflict. Contemporary militarization in the United States — the parading of marines on baseball fields before matches or military discounts in stores or restaurants — are the relatively recent manifestations of this

[15] Derek S. Denman, "On Fortification: Military Architecture, Geometric Power, and Defensive Design," *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 2–3 (2020): 235.

[16] Brighenti, "On Territorology," 68.

[17] Harry S. Truman, "Report to Nation on Korea War," *The New York Times*, September 2, 1950, 4, accessed July 21, 2025, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1950/09/02/94272160.html?pageNumber=4.

phenomenon. But in the 1940s, militarization included the construction and expansion of facilities, logistic and military bases, political connections, and military infrastructure and production facilities that could facilitate conflict in far-flung locales across the globe simultaneously. Most explicitly, it meant that U.S. soldiers were fighting and dying in another international conflict thousands of miles away from home. This conflict, like many that followed it, were framed in a similar light to the justifications of fighting against the Nazis or the Japanese during the Second World War. Truman pointed out in his speech: "It is your liberty and mine which is involved. What is at stake is the free way of life — the right to worship as we please, the right to express opinions, the right to raise our children in our own way, the right to choose our own jobs, the right to plan our own future, and the right to live without fear. *All these are bound up in the present action of the United Nations to put down aggression in North Korea*."[18]

The demobilizing of the U.S. presence that was on the peninsula in the years between the cessation of hostilities with Japan in 1945 and the beginning of the Korean war in 1950, was immediately reversed. Troops poured off of ships and out of airplanes to preserve the right for U.S. citizens to choose their own jobs and to raise their children the way they pleased — at least according to Truman. In a way, the widening of this ideological conflict that drove the Cold War, and the Korean War, and has justified an unprecedented expansion of U.S. military presence across the globe, continues to this day.

In a speech in Detroit in 1996, forty-six years after Truman's comments, President Bill Clinton echoed the same theme: "Our security as individuals, communities, and a nation depends upon our policies to fight terrorism, crime and drugs at home and abroad. *We reduce the threats to people here in America by reducing the threats beyond our borders*."[19] Despite such statements fitting squarely within a Cold War security paradigm, Clinton, in the same speech ironically urged Russia to "put aside the Cold War prism,"[20] but the U.S. embrace of this Cold War view is seen in frequent references to the threat of "radical" or "terrorist Islam" abroad, preventing an "American way of life" from flourishing at home. President Bush continued in the same vein, noting in 2001 right before the invasion of Afghanistan, "Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is

[18] Truman, "Report to Nation on Korea War," 4. Emphasis added.

[19] William J. Clinton, speech, Detroit, October 2, 1996, NATO, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1996/s961022a.htm. Emphasis added.

[20] Clinton, Detroit speech, October 2, 1996.

broader. Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground," and in 2004 before the invasion of Iraq, "at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people *and to defend the world* from grave danger."[21] Under the auspices of a global and ideological threat, militarization expanded exponentially during the Cold War decades, especially in the form of military bases.

Though the United States has undergone a significant series of overseas base closures under the Bush (Sr.) and Clinton administrations after 1991, the scope and level of engagement of the United States military on the global stage is still a priority.[22] A RAND publication on the "U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783–2011," notes that "both administrations [Clinton and Bush Jr.] concluded that the United States needed to maintain a significant forward presence to deter aggression and preserve regional stability."[23] The report highlights that as a means to do achieve these goals, the U.S. shifted "focus from global to regional threats and from forward defense to forward presence" which "involved reducing the U.S. permanent overseas presence but also bolstering it with occasional rotational deployments of U.S. troops abroad."[24] In this way, we can say that the *strategies* related to military readiness and militarization have undergone changes since the Cold War era, but the underlying tendency to conflate "global" wellbeing of states abroad with domestic security within the United States, has continued to further intensify.

The second significant impact of the Korean War, which authors such as Westad are keen to emphasize, is the global nature of the war within the wider lens of Cold War ideological thought. This point has merit on its own, but it must also be considered in tandem with the increased

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[21] George W. Bush, speech, Washington, D.C., October 7, 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html; and "Remarks on the Start of the Iraq War," March 19, 2003, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/news/20030319-17.html. Emphasis added.

[22] Rounds of BRAC procedures occurred in 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005. A 2019 CRS report on BRAC noted that despite the 2005 round being referred to by some as "the mother of all BRACs," savings estimates for the process were "overvalued by as much as 67%." Since then, they have also noted that "Congressional authorizers and appropriators have regularly inserted language into annual defense legislation that would disallow the use of funds for the purpose of a new BRAC round" and that "No BRAC legislation has so far been proposed in the 116th Congress" in the year 2019. Christopher T. Mann, *Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, April 25, 2019), 11–15, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/trecms/pdf/AD1170034.pdf.

[23] Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783–2011* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), 84, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1244.html.

[24] Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 84.

militarization of the United States and its global military strategy that has produced such as wide network of physical bases. As Westad notes, "The change in US thinking about Korea was not just a passive reflection of the Cold War. It was influenced by strategic concerns about the position of the Korean peninsula with regard to both China and Japan."[25] The RAND report comes to a similar conclusion pointing to the Korean War as a defining point in the global U.S. military posture: "The Korean War was the catalyst that helped remove the obstacles to establishing a large peacetime U.S. military presence in Europe and in Asia."[26]

The Korean war has correctly been identified as a turning point for the change in global opinion and U.S. perception of Soviet aggression at the beginning of the Cold War and for further militarizing the conflict with Chinese, Soviet, and U.S. forces for conflicts on the ground. However, it should *also* be understood as a watermark for understanding a sharp increase in the use of U.S. basing strategy which ultimately opened the door for countries such as Italy and Saudi Arabia to accept U.S. soldiers and facilities on their territories for decades to come.[27]

Just as regional and global developments affected more localized conflicts such as the Korean War — the rebuffing of Soviet endeavors to encircle Berlin through the airlift between 1948–1949, the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, and Japanese fears of Soviet aggression as a fledgling country just four years after the end of the Second World War — all played into the developing situation on the Korean peninsula. Consequently, these seemingly "domestic" phenomena directly affected the types of military and political strategies chosen by these countries themselves, as well as by the U.S. and Soviet-backed military forces. As early as 1946, those on the Soviet side, such as the ambassador to the United States, Nikolai Novikov, saw a series of regional military actions directed by the White House as part of a larger global grand strategy of what he called "world domination."[28] The presence, access, leveraging, or refusal of

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[25] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 164.

[26] Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 61.

[27] For example, as Pettyjohn notes, "the United States and the UK reached an agreement in early 1951 that provided U.S. forces with access to 26 new bases. Similarly, in June 1951, Saudi Arabia permitted the United States to dramatically expand its presence at Dhahran, which hosted nearly 1,000 U.S. military personnel by 1953." Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 61.

[28] Nikolai Novikov, "Telegram from Nikolai Novikov, Soviet Ambassador to the US, to the Soviet Leadership," *Wilson Center Digital Archive*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/telegram-nikolai-novikov-soviet-ambassador-us-soviet-leadership.

bases into countries like Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy, must all be considered in such contexts as well.

In his telegram in 1946, Novikov made specific reference to the construction of U.S. foreign military bases across the globe as evidence of the United States pursuing a strategy of "global dominion" a year before Truman announced his doctrine of mutual economic and militaristic defense in 1947. Novikov concluded that "The increase in peacetime military potential and the organization of a large number of naval and air bases both in the US and beyond its borders are clear indicators of the US desire to establish world domination."[29] He pointed specifically to foreign bases as concrete evidence of the "aggressive" nature of U.S. foreign policy after 1945:

> These enormous budget sums are being spent along with the maintenance of a large Army, Navy, and Air Force and also the creation of a vast system of naval and air bases in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans…. the following bases exist or are to be built on islands in the Atlantic Ocean: Newfoundland, Iceland, Cuba, Trinidad, Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Azores, and many others; in the Pacific: former Japanese mandated possessions - the Marianas, and the Caroline and Marshall Islands, Bonin, Ryukyu, the Philippines, the Galapagos Islands … The situating of American bases on islands often 10–12,000 kilometers from US territory and located on the other side of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans clearly shows the aggressive nature of the strategic designs of the US Army and Navy.[30]

The international contest of U.S. military expansion had immediate and direct domestic impacts in Korea. Cooley describes that in South Korea, "the repressive regimes of Park Chung Hee (1961–79) and Chun Doo Hwan (1980–88) depended heavily on the substantial U.S. military presence to provide security and deter North Korea, but these autocrats also viewed the U.S. military presence as critical to their domestic legitimacy and as an underlying social contract that guaranteed security to South Korean society."[31] The global and domestic dimensions of the Cold War in Korea were equally significant. Swinging the pendulum between the global and the local one can easily argue that the cessation of hostilities in 1953 in Korea had less to do with Korean military strategies or politics and far more to do with global concerns of the Soviets and the Americans elsewhere. The revolution in Egypt in 1952 — which put in place one of the most

[29] Novikov, "Telegram from Nikolai Novikov."

[30] Novikov, "Telegram from Nikolai Novikov." Emphasis in the original.

[31] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 96.

influential Middle Eastern leaders for decades, Abdel Nassar — was a significant concern for both parties, as well as the ratcheting up of the conflict between nationalist forces and Mao's troops on the straits of Taiwan. What loomed largest, however, was likely the death of Stalin in 1953 and its implications for Soviet actions thereafter.

From the global to the local, the most significant and defining moment of the Korean War for *this* research, can be neatly summed up in a newspaper article on "The Lessons of Korea" published on the day of the Armistice between the North and the South in *The New York Times* on July 27, 1953. The writer noted several different lessons learned from the conflict ranging from the importance of a "Closer liaison between military and foreign policy" to developing a need for "a clearer politico-military understanding of Asiatic-psychology."[32] But the most telling "lesson" is the final one contained in the list: "18. Emphasis upon creating a military force married to strategically flexible plans and able to conduct military operations *of any kind anywhere* — not merely ready to fight an all-out atomic World War III."[33]

Viewed in this way, one sees a challenge in the tacitly accepted temporal ranges within Cold War studies of 1945 to 1991. For much of the world, the year 1945 did not mean the cession of war, death, or starvation. Within the context of U.S. foreign military bases and their role in Korean society, the date of 1991 did not mean that the threat of North Korean invasion came tumbling down with the Berlin Wall. While important as the year of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the nominal "end" to the Cold War, the date of 1991 is only a *global* turning point if one takes a highly regional and Eurocentric view of the conflict.[34] If one's gaze is fixed on Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, the Balkans, or the central Asian Republics, the signing of the Belavezha

[32] Hanson W. Baldwin, "The Lessons of Korea: World Struggle Between Communism and Democracy Influenced by War Now Halted," *New York Times*, July 27, 1953, 8, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1953/07/27/96497190.html?pageNumber=8.

[33] Baldwin, "The Lessons of Korea," 8.

[34] In a similar debate, Andrew Buchanan notes that an investigation of this kind of periodization of the Second World War simultaneously engages in the debate about Cold War periodization: "globalizing the Second World War thus reinforces the globalization of the 'post-war' in ways that disrupt the assumption that it can all be squashed into the framework of a reified bipolar Cold War." Buchanan, "Globalizing the Second World War," 280. Likewise, authors Andrew Denning and Heidi J.S. Tworek note that "By complementing polycentric conceptions of global space with polytemporal frameworks of global time, perilous and limiting periodizations become promising avenues to blur any neat boundaries of historical eras." Andrew Denning and Heidi J. S. Tworek, "The Promises and Perils of Periodization in Global History: Lessons from the Inter-War Era," *Past & Present* (2025): 20, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtaf002. The study of military bases and layered coloniality in Korea stretch both ends of Cold War periodization and illustrate the relevance of this study to active historiographical debates on twentieth century periodization and global history.

Accords in 1991 which formally dissolved the Soviet Union might stand in for the "end" of the Cold War. But even then, many of the processes related to the formal dissolution had begun with the liberalizing policies of Gorbachev years prior.[35]

If one expands the view, to include the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, or Southeast Asia, many processes were already in motion that were bringing regional hostilities to a close, or at least a transformation. In Latin America, for example, the La Década Perdida (The Lost Decade; roughly the 1980s) of economic stagnation was fundamental in toppling several different dictatorial regimes. Regarding events in South Africa, Chris Saunders argues that "It would be wrong to over-emphasize the impact of the end of the Cold War and the extent to which it marked a dramatic break from the past" and that it is now generally understood by historians that it was internal resistance, rather than Cold War "great power" maneuvering, that brought an end to apartheid.[36] In the Middle East, religious fundamentalism began to supersede Cold War ideologies as a driver for conflict. Paul Thomas Chamberlin argues that wars in Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan contained the germ of a new type of conflict that eventually "eclipsed the Cold War paradigm."[37] In East Asia, China was already sowing the seeds for an economic transformation and the "little tigers" of Asia — Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea — were already players on the global economic stage.[38] It can be difficult to find sufficient room under the Cold War umbrella

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[35] The most wide-ranging and well known being the policies of "Glasnost" and "Perestroika" from the 1980s and instituted by Soviet Premier Mikal Gorbachev. See Howard Schuman and Amy D. Corning, "Collective Knowledge of Public Events: The Soviet Era from the Great Purge to Glasnost," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 4 (2000): 913–56 and Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina Vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost: Gorbachev's Reformers Speak* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989).

[36] Chris Saunders, "The Ending of the Cold War and Southern Africa," in *The End of the Cold War and the Third World*, ed. Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko (London: Routledge, 2011), 273, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203816745.

[37] Chamberlin continues, "Fuled by ethnic strife, tribal politics, and religious disputes rather than clashes between Marxism and liberal capitalism, these new wars were low-intensity conflicts, fought by insurgents, paramilitaries, international peacekeepers, guerrillas, and conventional armies." Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, 368.

[38] Alfred McCoy similarly notes that these changes continued throughout the two decades *after* 1991 as well, highlighting the role of technology and globalization in the process: "globalization fostered a multipolar system of rising powers in Beijing, New Delhi, Moscow, Ankara, and Brasilia, even as a denationalized system of corporate power reduced the dependency of developing economies on any single state." Alfred W. McCoy, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), 73.

for all these developments, especially given that many can be critically investigated in ways that challenge nation-centric readings of Cold War periodization.

But most significantly for this research, the United States and its perspective on global affairs, remained comparatively stagnant. Odd Arne Westad notes in the conclusion to his most recent work on the Cold War, that despite the changes of 1991, "the ideological Cold War … only disappeared in part."[39] On the U.S. side, "not so much changed on that day in December 1991. American foreign policy rolled on, unperturbed by any significant adjustments in strategic vision or political aims."[40]

In regard to Korea specifically, the situation had been stagnant for even longer. A spokesperson for the Army remarked in an article from 2010 that, "Basically, after the Korean war, we just settled where we were. So, we were all over the place, mainly along what were the former main supply routes."[41] Of course policies, administrations, and "strategic defense reviews" changed year to year, but the ideological underpinnings that informed these changes did not.[42] The academic Samir Amin identifies this perspective as a unique "American ideology" whereby an enemy is continuously identified, thereby "enabling the 'mobilization' of every means destined to eliminate it."[43]

After 1945, wartime mobilization and domestic production were redirected towards fighting the Cold War. And after 1991, it was redirected further. Amin contends that "Yesterday it was communism … Today it is 'terrorism.'"[44] In consequence, the entire military industry that had been rapidly expanded during the Reagan administration in an effort to not just fight, but *win* the Cold War, remained in place. And nowhere are these expensive and integrated relics of the Cold

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[39] Westad, *The Cold War*, 617.

[40] Westad, *The Cold War*, 617.

[41] U.S. Forces Korea, "U.S. Forces Korea Transformation Update," *Army.mil*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.army.mil/article/32794/u_s_forces_korea_transformation_update.

[42] While U.S. adherence to the ideals of the Cold War system remained, McCoy highlights that "Washington faced ideological competition from Islamic fundamentalism, European regulatory regimes, Chinese state capitalism, and Latin American economic nationalism." McCoy, *In the Shadow of the American Century*, 73.

[43] Samir Amin, *The Liberal Virus: Permanent War and the Americanization of the World*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 74.

[44] Amin, *The Liberal Virus*, 74.

War more visible than those defensive structures stretching across the 38th parallel of the Korean peninsula.

Vital to the maintenance of that military-industrial production system was the series of military bases across the world that afforded the ability of the United States to retain the hard-fought status quo that was won by 1991. In the years following, the "peace dividend" was never achieved in the U.S. and a holding pattern remained until new enemies could be found in global terrorism and drug trafficking.[45] In the process, the majority of United States military bases across the globe were not closed wholesale or abandoned but rather renegotiated and re-equipped.[46] Westad insists that "the 1990s and 2000s were as if the United States had lost a global purpose — the Cold War — and not yet found a new one. In the meantime, old habits and ways of thinking remained in place, more or less unchanged."[47]

While the materials, methods, and locations of war changed, the *philosophy* of global military security did not end on that snowy December day in Belarus in 1991. If this were the case, the conclusion of an analysis of the impacts of these military installations on different countries across the world with a prescribed endpoint of the "end" of the Cold War, would downplay the very real and tangible continuation of their effects into the twenty-first century.[48] In Korea, the

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[45] The expansion of the use of military forces both to quell domestic unrest in cities *within* the United States, as well as the deployment of U.S. forces to the U.S.-Mexican border, and the political and legal rhetoric by the most recent U.S. administration, all point to another paradigm shift in global defense policy. Among many others on grand strategy and the Trump administrations, see Peter Dombrowski, "Trump, Project 2025 and American Grand Strategy," *Survival* 66, no. 6 (2024): 17–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2024.2432191.

[46] Despite changes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the elimination of infrastructure has nearly always dovetailed with construction of *additional* infrastructure at the same time. A 2019 CRS report on BRAC noted that "During a news briefing on the FY2019 defense budget, Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) David L. Norquist noted that the Department had declined to propose a BRAC round that year, stating that it would work instead to focus on internal reforms while preparing for a financial audit." The DoD has yet to implement another round of BRAC nor has it passed an audit to date. Mann, *Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC)*, 11. Another 2025 CRS report on BRAC notes that the DoD has reported that "the Army simultaneously has extra space, and additional needs, but the extra space is not located in the right place to meet those needs. Across all facility categories and the entire service, the active component Army has about 2 million square feet of excess space and about 2 million square feet in deficits." In other words, the DoD simultaneously has too much infrastructure, and not enough. Andrew Tilghman, *Excess Military Infrastructure and the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Process*, CRS Report No. R48547 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 27, 2025), 4, https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48547.

[47] Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, 619.

[48] For example, there is a growing subset of base literature on the importance of military basing and presence (not just by U.S. forces) in central Asia in the twenty-first century. For example, see Zdzislaw Lachowski, *Foreign Military Bases in Eurasia* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2007) and Kent E. Calder, *Super Continent: The Logic of Eurasian Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

United States has maintained significant military force on the peninsula to current day. By continuing to look at the effects of spaces like Yongsan Garrison *after* these bookended historical dates of 1945 and 1991, we can more clearly see that continuity, rather than rupture, is the theme that typified U.S. foreign military installations beyond the commonly accepted 1991 Cold War threshold.[49]

Despite more common historiographical interventions that present the conflict in Korea as a singular exemplar within a wider context of a global narrative of *the* Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States military's presence in Korea is simultaneously an object of attention wrapped up in the development of the modern Korean state itself.[50] It is something that intersects with urbanization and economic development, the importance of national identity and pride, legacies of colonialism, and international tensions precipitated by negative externalities posed by U.S. bases. Inextricably linked to the Korea that we see today — a nation of enormous economic power — is the vital contribution of exclusive U.S. military contracts given to Korean conglomerates or, "*chaebol*"s, during the Vietnam War. In this regard, Jim Glassman & Young-jin Choi argue that "conceptually and methodologically it is useless to partition the economic performance of states like South Korea from geopolitics and transnational class issues."[51] Elisabeth Schober notes that "the continued presence of US troops in the South is of huge symbolic significance, pointing to the vast breadth and depth of US political, economic, and military engagement in Korea since the 1950s."[52] In this way, the United States

[49] In Security Studies this perspective of continuity has significant traction, especially in relative contrast to Cold War historians. In his widely cited article on U.S. foreign policy, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment," Patrick Porter opens his article asking "Why has U.S. grand strategy persisted since the end of the Cold War?" and eventually concludes that "Having been a superpower for decades is a condition that leaves the United States averse to revising fundamental assumptions and to considering alternatives" and that "Successive presidents have been predisposed toward the status quo with little critical evaluation. Alternative strategies based on the retrenchment of commitments are effectively taken off the table." Patrick Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the US Foreign Policy Establishment," *International Security* 42, no. 4 (2018): 11, 46.

[50] For more on several different contemporary historiographical discussions on questions regarding the Cold War, issues of temporality, and the concept of the Cold War as a category of historical analysis, see Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell, eds., *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[51] Jim Glassman and Young-jin Choi, "The Chaebol and the US Military–Industrial Complex: Cold War Geopolitical Economy and South Korean Industrialization," *Environment and Planning A* 46, no. 5 (2014): 1177.

[52] Elisabeth Schober, *Base Encounters: The US Armed Forces in South Korea* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), 6.

military's presence is similar to other case studies in this research in that in each of these contexts, there is an interwoven role of the institution within the various aspects of domestic nation-building. Without forgetting the higher-level international and political dimensions to these bases and the military's presence, the bases and their inhabitants interact with and influence local behaviors in different areas in the world in asynchronous ways. Schober understands the bases in much the same way, noting that "US bases in South Korea do not stand in isolation, but function as vital spatial nodes of geopolitics and US empire-making in the way they are connected to other US military installations worldwide."[53] In this regard, we cannot separate the discussion of U.S. military bases in Korea from the pre–Cold War, and hence pre–World War II contexts.

For Korean people themselves, U.S. foreign military bases, and Yongsan Garrison in particular, remain complicated symbols of U.S. colonial attitudes, safety from an ever-present North Korean threat, economic opportunity for some, and an affront to national sovereignty to others. The Korean people's relationship to land in the twentieth century and its importance to the construction of a Korean state in the aftermath of the Second World War was even more pronounced, however, because of its long-term and deeply felt dispossession of that land and identity during the Japanese colonial period.

Wen-hsin Yeh describes how this dispossession of land extended beyond just territorial dispossession, but into all other spheres of life as well: "Central to Korea's colonial experience was the dispossession of the Koreans— culturally, socially, economically, and politically— in their homeland. It is inherent in the nature of colonial rule that colonial subjects became estranged from their home country without ever leaving it. Tension between placement and dispossession, resistance and receptiveness, coercion and persuasion not only marked the everyday experiences of the Koreans on the peninsula; it also spurred postcolonial controversies over colonial legacies."[54] Partially due to this experience of colonialism, the ownership of land and territory in the peninsula, occurring so close to the inauguration of the South Korean state just years later, has meant that "Korean nationalist discourse has consistently insisted upon the spatial centrality of the Korean peninsula."[55]

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[53] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 6.

[54] Yeh, *Mobile Subjects*, 6.

[55] Yeh, *Mobile Subjects*, 6.

In light of the Japanese colonial context of dispossession, the immediate confiscation of land and the establishment of a military government by the United States in the South in 1945 (the Soviets assumed similar protectorate powers in the North), brought both relief, but also contention. The joint statement produced by the 1943 Cairo-Tehran Conferences between FDR, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Churchill promised liberation — but it was far from unconditional. They noted that they were "mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea" and asserted that "Korea shall become free and independent."[56] However, these words were undercut by the ambiguous and imprecise preceding phrase: "in due course."[57]

Jung-Ho Park and Man-Hee Han note that both the Soviet Union and the United States readily became involved in the development of state formation in the "postwar" period on the peninsula, but that this process was also intimately intertwined with concerns about land and physical space. Both the U.S. and the Soviets "influenced land reform policies such as the principles of confiscation with compensation and distribution with compensation, or free forfeiture and distribution."[58] For many, not just in Korea, but in other places in East-Asia such as Japan and China, the issues of land reform were at the very center of Cold War violence.[59] In Korea, La Grange and Jung remark that "peasant and worker uprisings forced the American occupation authorities to implement land reform measures" in the years immediately following U.S. occupation prior to the outbreak of the war in 1950.[60]

However, the security represented by American soldiers and the military on the ground also came at a cost. The United States military readily inhabited Yongsang garrison in the center of the

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[56] *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, vol. 6, ed. Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), 450.

[57] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. 6, 450.

[58] Jung-Ho Park and Man-Hee Han, "Modern State Formation and Land Management in South Korea: 1945–1960," *Land Use Policy* 78 (2018): 665.

[59] For further reading on land redistribution in China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, see the following: P. C. C. Huang, "Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution: Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution," *Modern China* 21, no. 1 (1995): 105–43, https://doi.org/10.1177/009770049502100105; Inhan Kim, "Land Reform in South Korea under the U.S. Military Occupation, 1945–1948," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 97–129, https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS_a_00639; and Talan B. İşcan, "Redistributive Land Reform and Structural Change in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 100, no. 3 (2018): 732–61.

[60] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 575.

city of Seoul as its military headquarters — a military base larger than the size of Hyde Park in the middle of London — and a military base at the very heart of the largest and most significant Korean city of the twentieth century. Yeh notes that ceding such land for military bases, not just in Seoul, but all across the southern portion of the peninsula, was not an easy pill to swallow for Koreans who had endured decades of Japanese colonialization. Rather, "It was a hard calculation to balance for the South Korean government: whether to endure a sense of national humiliation or to deny the country a major source of much needed capital."[61] In the end, economic and military security trumped national pride, but that did not make the dispossession of such valuable and significant land any easier. The issues posed by the presence of U.S. military bases, and especially Yongsan garrison, in the very middle of a rapidly industrializing megacity, did not disappear after the end of the Korean war but continue to fester to this day.

South Koreans, more so than citizens of many other nation-states, are intimately connected to this physical space, not just for reasons of national origin or state-making, but also because of its scarcity. In contrast to the millions of square kilometers of unpopulated land in the United States, South Korea is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.[62] More than half of the population of country lives in greater metropolitan area around its capital, Seoul, where the population density is four times as much as Berlin, and eight times that of Rome.[63] Ik Ki Kim, in his article "Socioeconomic concentration in the Seoul metropolitan area and its implications in the urbanization process of Korea," argues that the process of rural to urban migration in the latter half of the twentieth century — mostly by young people of childbearing age — has resulted in massive population growth. He concludes that it has resulted in "over-urbanization" which in consequence, has exacerbated a myriad of issues within the country such as "population congestion, housing shortage[s], unemployment, and urban poverty in the Seoul Metropolitan Area" as well as water and air pollution.[64]

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[61] Yeh, *Mobile Subjects*, 12.

[62] "South Korea Population 2025," *World Population Review*, accessed July 21, 2025, https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/south-korea.

[63] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 12, 15.

[64] Ik Ki Kim, "Socioeconomic Concentration in the Seoul Metropolitan Area and Its Implications in the Urbanization Process of Korea," *한국사회학* (Korean Journal of Sociology) 44, no. 3 (2010): 124.

Just as the American military bases in Korea can be understood as part of a wider network of power exertion, there are also unique elements of their presence due to their location in a highly urbanized environment. La Grange and Jung note that "While less than 40 per cent of the [Korean] population was urbanised in 1960, this had increased to nearly 90 per cent by 2000."[65] Therefore, the interactions between individuals within U.S. military bases and Koreans have taken on a uniquely urban dimension, bases like those in Saudi Arabia. Schober concludes that violent interactions between U.S. soldiers and local Koreans have "an unmistakable urban component that was largely missing from similar cases elsewhere."[66] Indeed, the activists of the *Yongsan Legacy Project*, whose mission is to "capture … personal memories, stories, life experiences from those GI's and civilians who served and lived on Yongsan [Garrison]" through crowdsourced materials, insist that such preservation is necessary because "The magnitude of Yongsan Garrison's influence on the development of modern South Korea is remarkable and deserves to be recognized."[67]

The intense urbanization of the Korean peninsula in the latter half of the twentieth century requires us to utilize methods and frameworks that acknowledge urbanism's centrality in our understanding of modern Korean society and its growth from the 1950s. Understanding how and why such urbanization occurred and in what contexts, are vital because as Kim emphasizes, "Urbanization is a spatial representation of modernization" but also because it "comes with various socio physical phenomena."[68] The best way to understand the role and effects of these military installations on Korean history and society is through a methodological approach that appreciates the uniquely urban dimension to U.S. military bases in Korea. In that regard, looking to architects concerned with urbanism, architecture, and physical space such as Gary Boyd and David Linehan, allows us to understand dimensions of U.S. foreign military bases that are not initially apparent when approaching them from purely historical or political perspectives. They assert that within this type of research, a syncretic and dynamic approach must be used: "research in urbanism must

[65] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 562.

[66] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 6.

[67] They continue, perfectly capturing the polyvalent nature of the space, concluding that "from fashion to K-pop, from friendships to families, from history to love stories, Yongsan Garrison offers a unique perspective in understanding Korea today." "Yongsan Legacy: A Virtual Memorial," *Yongsan Legacy*, accessed July 21, 2025, http://yongsanlegacy.org/yongsan-legacy-a-virtual-memorial/.

[68] Ik Ki Kim, "Socioeconomic Concentration in the Seoul Metropolitan Area," 112.

depart from a reading of the sovereignty of buildings, and attend to their wider contexts, relationships and performances"[69]

The "wider contexts" of Cold War historiography that must be considered within the case study of South Korea range from the global to the local, from the U.S.-Soviet context to considerations of specific and unique elements of the Korean experience of colonialization and economic development within the twentieth century. Approaching the topic of U.S. foreign military bases in South Korea, and in particular that of Yongsan Garrison in Seoul, sheds light on the role of U.S. foreign military bases as part of a wider network of U.S. power during the twentieth century. At the same time, the case of South Korea emphasize that local contexts fundamentally reshape and influence what the expression of that power looks like on the ground.

Section II: Japan in Korea: 1904 – 1945

Despite many academic narratives that heavily prioritize analysis of U.S. imperialism or presence on the Korean peninsula after 1945, the United States was not the first country to assert imperial power over the peninsula in the twentieth century. On February 23, 1904, the Korean and Japanese empires signed a bilateral treaty ostensibly for the "the purpose of maintaining a permanent and solid friendship between Korea and Japan and firmly establishing peace in the Far East."[70] Among the six short articles included in this treaty, the third asserted that "The Imperial Government of Japan shall definitively guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire."[71] However, the fourth article appeared to run roughshod over any notion of "territorial integrity" by ensuring that, "In case the welfare of the Imperial House of Korea or the territorial integrity of Korea is endangered by aggression of a third power or internal disturbances, the Imperial Government of Japan shall immediately take such necessary measures as circumstances requires, and in such case the Imperial Government of Korea shall give full facilities to promote the action of the Imperial Japanese Government. The Imperial Government of Japan

[69] Gary A. Boyd and Denis Linehan, "Becoming Atomic: The Bunker, Modernity, and the City," *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2018): 243.

[70] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, "Dokdo: Territorial Sovereignty," accessed July 21, 2025, https://dokdo.mofa.go.kr/m/eng/pds/pomflet_01.jsp.

[71] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Dokdo: Territorial Sovereignty."

may for the attainment of the abovementioned object occupy when the circumstances require such places as be necessary from strategic points of view."[72]

Close to three weeks prior to the signing of the agreement, the Japanese had conducted a surprise attack on the Russian garrison at Port Arthur, several hours before a formal declaration of war. This conflict, referred to now as the second Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), was a highly significant event for global geopolitics given the fact that it was first time that a non-white nation had, in the words of Bruce Cumings, "[subdued] one of the 'great powers.'"[73] Though Korean society still retained a close cultural and historical relationship to China, at the cusp of the twentieth century, it was Russia and Japan who exerted "more direct power in Korean affairs … than any of the other powers."[74] This direct influence in Korean affairs was further cemented by the landing of Japanese troops at Incheon on the same day of the attack of Port Arthur. The Japanese forces quickly made their way to the capital, Seoul, and presided over the signing of the first of several "coerced agreements," like the one of February 23 referenced above.[75]

The success of the Japanese in the war against Russia was shocking for the other great powers and resulted in a peace treaty that assured Japan's exclusive autonomy in Korean affairs. With the aid of the United States through the Taft-Katsura Agreement (1905), the U.S. administration promised to recognize Japanese sovereignty in the Korean peninsula and in return, the Japanese would be silent regarding the United States' colonialism in the Philippines.[76] Ultimately, with the strongly coerced signing of the Eulsa Treaty (1905) between Japan and Korea, sometimes referred to as the "Eulsa Unwilling Treaty," the Japanese dealt a deathblow to Korean sovereignty.

With Korea established as a Japanese protectorate in 1905, Japanese authorities took control of Korean diplomacy, placed Japanese police officers in the streets, and even began running

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[72] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Dokdo: Territorial Sovereignty."

[73] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 133.

[74] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 133.

[75] Gabriel Podoler and Michael Robinson, "On the Confluence of History and Memory: The Significance of the War for Korea," in *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, ed. by Rotem Kowner, (London: Routledge, 2007), 185.

[76] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 133.

the telegraph systems.[77] A now-famous Korean editorial published on November 20, 1905, right after the signing of the treaty and entitled "I Wail Bitterly Today," expressed the public sentiment of the agreement: "the Ministers of our Government, who are worse than pigs or dogs, coveting honours and advantages for themselves, and frightened by empty threats, were trembling in every limb, and were willing to become traitors to their country and betray to Japan the integrity of a nation which has stood for 4,000 years, the foundation and honour of a dynasty 500 years old, and the rights and freedom of twenty million people"[78] The article lamented that "Is it worth while for any of us to live any longer? Our people have become the slaves of others, and the spirit of a nation which has stood for 4,000 years, since the days of Tun Kun [Tangun] has perished in a single night."[79] An American publication four years later, on May 4, 1909, described the situation through metaphor: "How would you like to be a bone everlastingly fought over by hungry dogs? This has been the position of Korea in the past, and it will probably be so in the future."[80] They concluded, "The Chinese dog is still too weak to more than snarl at it, and Russia, for the time has been driven back by the iron teeth of Japan. The sweet morsel lies in the paws of the latter and she is wondering if whether she dare eat it or not."[81]

One year later, Japan was ready to resolve any uncertainty. Any pretense of even feigned sovereignty in Korea was extinguished on August 22, 1910, when Korean prime minister Yi Wan-yong signed a formal treaty of annexation with the Japanese, officially making the country a colony of Japan. Cumings captured the gravity of the event when the Korean Emperor Sunjong abdicated the throne a week later: "August 29 would become the darkest day of any subsequent year for Koreans, and Yi Wang-yong the darkest name in Korean history."[82]

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[77] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 134.

[78] "Siilya Bangseong Daegok (I Wail Bitterly on This Day)," *Hwangseong Shinmun*, November 20, 1905, accessed July 21, 2025, https://dokdo.mofa.go.kr/eng/pds/part01_view03.jsp.

[79] "Siilya Bangseong Daegok," *Hwangseong Shinmun*.

[80] Frank G. Carpenter, "Korea in 1909," *The Farmer and Mechanic* (Raleigh, N.C.), May 4, 1909, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, accessed July 21, 2025, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99061556/1909-05-04/ed-1/seq-13/.

[81] Carpenter, "Korea in 1909."

[82] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 137.

Despite the *The New York Times'* prediction on August 21 of the same year that "The vast majority of the people of Korea realize that conditions in their country will be improved by annexation, and it will be impossible for the malcontents to arouse sufficient feeling to create uprisings," tens of thousands resisted the takeover, many in autonomous "righteous armies" (*úibyóng*), which have since taken a central place in the collective memory of the period as symbols against Japanese colonialism.[83] Ten days later, the *Times* relayed that the Russian publication, *Novoye Vremya*, likened Korea to an "oyster, about to be swallowed."[84] The *Vremya* noted that Russia's interests on the peninsula were insignificant, but that for the Americans and the British, the situation was more grave given the exclusive sphere of influence that the Japanese insisted upon. In a statement that could not be uttered decades later in 1950, they concluded that "as war would be the only means of annulling this accomplished fact [annexation] the situation will be accepted, for assuredly, 'nobody would go to war for Korea.'"[85]

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 marked the beginning of a process of annexation and colonialization in Korea that would last for decades until the Japanese defeat in the Second World War in 1945. Even then, the legacies of the colonial period, and the war that precipitated it in 1904, cast looming shadows over Korean history and society that ultimately would have repercussions for the U.S. in its later role on the peninsula. Podoler and Robinson note that "The war deeply influenced Korea and Koreans of the early twentieth century, and these repercussions have kept resonating throughout the postcolonial divided peninsula."[86] They conclude that, from the perspective of collective memory:

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[83] "Korea as a Nation to End This Week: Its Emperor Agrees to a Convention Giving Absolute Control to Japan," *New York Times*, August 22, 1910, 3, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1910/08/22/104948529.html?pageNumber=3.There are a limited number of publications on the subject in English. See: Gilsang Song, "Activities of 'Seonyusa' in the Chungcheong Region during the Jeongmi Righteous Army Period," *Journal of Chungcheong Studies and Chungcheong Culture* 37 (2024): 447–79 and Timothy L. Savage, "The American Response to the Korean Independence Movement, 1910–1945," *Korean Studies* 20, no. 1 (1996): 189–231.

[84] "Calls Japan Shameless: Novoe Vremya Bitter and Sarcastic Over the Annexation of Korea," *New York Times*, August 31, 1910, 5, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1910/08/31/102046677.html?pageNumber=5.

[85] "Calls Japan Shameless," *New York Times*.

[86] Podoler and Robinson, "On the Confluence of History and Memory," 185. It is also important to note that there were many in Korea who approached the annexation of the country positively. Just as there were many who resisted the colonialization of the country, many were willing collaborators, notably individuals and entire social classes within the business sector that readily bought into the annexation and Japanese takeover. Many collaborators

> For Koreans this period signifies the dark dawn of colonial rule—a problematic historical link that binds the crumbling of the Chosón dynasty in the late nineteenth century with the 35-year oppression of colonial rule. At the same time it is recollected as a meaningful piece of the past in which the 'spirit of the nation'—defined in terms of a heroic struggle—has not died and must be maintained as an important mainstay of collective memory.[87]

But the Japanese did not just leave behind amorphous memories of the period. They also left physical and tangible pieces of material history that have enshrined this contested past. The conveniently forgotten collaborationist history of *chaebols* such as Samsung or Hyundai is one example, but one of the others, the Yongsan Garrison, sits prominently in the center of Seoul.

Nam Sang-so notes that the Japanese troops that had landed on the peninsula at the same time as the surprise attacks on Port Arthur in 1904 also set to the task of establishing a new military headquarters.[88] After arriving in Seoul, "the Japanese military had started construction of the military camp in Yongsan, or Dragon Hill, then an outskirt of Kyeongseong (Seoul) and the first part of the construction was completed in March 1904."[89] From 1904 onwards, the Japanese utilized the space in the center of Seoul, Yongsan, as an area for centralized military control. Hwang notes that beginning in April 1906, between 1200–1500 Korean residents were forcibly relocated to accommodate the needs of the Japanese military force, thus marking "the rupture and

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made a fortune during the colonial period, but retrospectively, have been downplayed within contemporary Korean memory for political reasons. Furthermore, the public opinion among Western powers at the time saw the annexation of the peninsula in highly racialized and civilizational terms, welcoming the Japanese colonization as a general good for the people of Korea as well as for the Japanese. See: Koen De Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* (2001): 207–42; Jeong-Chul Kim and Gary A. Fine, "Collaborators and National Memory: The Creation of the Encyclopedia of Pro-Japanese Collaborators in Korea," *Memory Studies* 6, no. 2 (2013): 130–45; and Jeong-Chul Kim, "On Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Korean 'Collaborators' of Japanese Colonialism," in *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, ed. Eric Tak-Wing Yu and Hyun Kyung Kim, 159–72 (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[87] Podoler and Robinson, "On the Confluence of History and Memory," 196.

[88] Denning and Tworek note that some have "provocatively" described the wider conflict, the second Ruso-Japanese War (1904–1905), as "World War Zero." Andrew Denning and Heidi J. S. Tworek, "The Promises and Perils of Periodization in Global History: Lessons from the Inter-War Era," *Past & Present*, 2025, gtaf002, 4, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtaf002.

[89] "Yongsan Garrison (진산기지), February 23, 1904–November 2, 2018," *Yongsan Legacy*, accessed July 21, 2025, http://yongsanlegacy.org/yongsan-garrison-%ef%a7%84%e5%b1%b1%e5%9f%ba%e5%9c%b0-february-23-1904-november-2-2018/.

dislocation of Yongsan as a Joseon space and in its place, the transplantation of Japanese militarism."[90]

From 1907–1910 there was widespread resistance to the pseudo-colonialism that the Japanese would formalize with the 1910 annexation treaty. Korean irregular forces and resisters gathered in the countryside while Japanese forces consolidated control over urban areas and arrested thousands. Cumings notes that in 1918 alone, over 140,000 were arrested and 105 people were brought to court in a single trial on accusations of "trying to assassinate the governor-general."[91]

After 1910, Japanese forces began a widespread program of civil and military construction with the goal "to consolidate its political and military control over the country."[92] One of the key processes during this consolidation was to designate and expand the existing military facilities at Yongsan as the military headquarters for the Imperial Japanese Army in Korea.[93] Other initiatives included widening, standardizing and "sanitizing" roads throughout the capital to better facilitate trade and commerce, converting former imperial palaces into parks and civic monuments or destroying them completely, and the transformation of local religious spaces into Shinto shrines.[94] The Washington newspaper *The Evening Star* reported on August 29, 1910, that according to the Japanese, "religious freedom will be recognized," that "thousands of people will be employed in public works," and that "the interests of the Japanese and Korean people are identical and that they

[90] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 128.

[91] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 138. Cumings even likens the large number of suicides that Korean resistors resorted to as similar to "Islamic jihad."

[92] *Yongsan Legacy*, "Yongsan Garrison (진산기지)."

[93] *Yongsan Legacy*, "Yongsan Garrison (진산기지)."

[94] Timothy R. Tangherlini and Sallie Yea, eds., *Sitings: Critical Approaches to Korean Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 17, 22, 25.

are now amalgamated."[95] All of these measures were taken with the intention to incorporate Koreans under the wider Japanese imperial umbrella and to modernize the Korean state.[96]

Despite *The Star* reporting in a large subheading of their article on the annexation, "KOREANS APPEAR SATISFIED," this transformation was not immediate, popular, or uncontested.[97] Tangherlini and Yea note that "despite painstaking efforts to control and direct Koreans, the colonial officials of this decade achieved only limited success in transforming the microspaces of Korean city life, whose rhythms did not always synchronize with the new logic of Japanese colonial rule."[98] At the same time, Japanese efforts to "civilize" Koreans were received positively by much of the Western white world. Count Okuma, the President of the Japan Peace society, captured the positive tone when he described what he saw in his trip to Korea one year after the annexation, in 1911:

> It is in Korea, perhaps, that Japanese thoroughness is most in evidence … Neither the United States, England, nor any Continental power could have done better … When Japan took possession Korea was corrupt through and through. Bribery, graft, and gross incompetence and general dishonesty were present everywhere… Until Japan took possession the Korean shop-keeper couldn't keep more goods than enough to about cover an ordinary dining table … Now all this is changed. Not only is it possible to develop big business enterprises, but they are being developed.[99]

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[95] "Korea Is No More: Hermit Kingdom, Now Chosen, a Province of Japan," *Washington Evening Star*, August 19, 1910, 4, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, accessed July 21, 2025, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1910-08-29/ed-1/seq-4/.

[96] Jung-Ho Park and Man-Hee Han note that "Land management seems to be related with not only ancient but also modern state formation in terms of economy, as well as politics, society, and international relations." Park and Han, "Modern State Formation," 664.

[97] "Korea Is No More," *Washington Evening Star*, August 19, 1910. Indeed, American newspapers appear more concerned about any changes that may come to the situation regarding imports, exports, and trade with Korea as several different publications make particular note of — the Evening Star included. In contrast, *The Deseret News* from Salt Lake City, Utah, reported on the same day that "There is not the slightest evidence here of jubilation over the annexation" and also included a subsection related to the "Rights of Foreigners" in Korea after the annexation. "Terms of Korean-Japanese Treaty: Hermit Kingdom is Completely Annexed Under the Name of Cho Sen," *Deseret Evening News* (Great Salt Lake City, Utah), August 29, 1910, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, accessed July 21, 2025, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045555/1910-08-29/ed-1/seq-7/.

[98] Tangherlini and Yea, *Sitings*, 17.

[99] "Hamilton Holt Says Japan Seeks Peace with World: Forced Into War with China and Russia, She Accomplished What She Wanted and Now All She Desires Is to be Let Alone, According to the Well Known Publicist, Who Has Returned from That Country," *New York Times*, December 31, 1911, 53, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1911/12/31/100343678.html?pageNumber=53.

He concluded, however, by noting that "Korea is still hundreds of years behind Japan."[100]

Part of the reason for this contestation was that the process of bringing Korea into the Japanese imperial fold involved transformations at different levels within Korean society. These changes ranged from the social and cultural to the physical and architectural and were embraced or decried by different groups for different reasons. Younghan Cho identifies the historiographical debate regarding this period as one of the most contentious for Japanese and Korean scholars. Cho highlights the two major arguments encompassed by the "exploitation theory" and the "modernization theory" within the literature. Proponents of the former insist on the negative effects of colonialism in the trajectory of the Korean state and actively downplay the very real embrace by a number of highly significant Koreans in collaborating and benefitting from the Japanese colonial period. In contrast, the latter argument is seen as an apologist perspective by exploitation theorists for its emphasis on the similarly very real and tangible infrastructural developments that the Japanese installed on the peninsula during this time period.[101] The reality is found somewhere in between these positions.[102]

There are two significant points that should be highlighted as they relate back to the physical space of Yongsan Garrison. The first is that though Yongsan was initially constructed in 1904 with an explicitly military purpose, it underwent a transformation both in Korean and Japanese perspectives during the colonial period. After 1910, it was no longer *just* a military fortification. It also became the headquarters for the Imperial Japanese Army for the colonial government on the peninsula. Fifty-six red-brick buildings were constructed to house both the Japanese soldiers stationed there and to carry out military functions within the base.[103] Taken individually, its role within the city did not change from 1904 to 1910. However, when considered

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[100] "Hamilton Holt Says Japan Seeks Peace with World," *New York Times*, December 31, 1911, 53.

[101] Younghan Cho, "Colonial Modernity Matters?," *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 5 (2012): 647.

[102] Cumings describes the contradictions of the colonial period as such: "This colonial experience was intense and bitter, and shaped postwar Korea deeply. It brought development and underdevelopment, agrarian growth and deepened tenancy, industrialization and extraordinary dislocation, political mobilization and deactivation; it spawned a new role for the central state, are sets of Koreans political leaders, communism and nationalism, armed resistance and treacherous collaboration; above all, it left deep fissures and conflicts that have gnawed at the Korean soul ever since." Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 139.

[103] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 128.

within the context of the wider policy of the incorporation of the Korean capital into the Japanese empire, then referred to by the Japanese as "Keijō" after 1910, it must be understood as a single pillar of several in the attempted transformation of Korean culture and society.

Tangherlini and Yea emphasize this central role for Yongsan by noting that the physical transformation of architecture within the capital carried with it a multilayered attempt to fundamentally reconfigure different spheres of Korean life. These changes worked "to reflect Japanese imperial power in its various manifestations: military (Yongsan), sacerdotal (Namsan), economic (Honmachi District), and political (Kyôngbok Palace grounds)."[104] Understood in this way, even so far back as a century ago, the role of physical space of Yongsan Garrison was, at face value, a military base, but at the same time, it represented the military arm of colonial and economic transformation of the Korean peninsula, a role that would mirror that of the U.S. after 1953.

One sees this link between military and economic functions in joint statements from American and Korean officials in the 1960s. In a joint statement by the Lyndon B. Johnson White House and the Park Chung-hee administration in Korea on November 2, 1966, Johnson reaffirmed the United States' "readiness and determination of the United States to render prompt and effective assistance to defeat an armed attack against the Republic of Korea" and promised that "the United States has no plan to reduce the present level of United States forces in Korea, and would continue to support Korean armed forces at levels adequate to ensure Korea's security."[105] The statement further emphasized the deep economic links between the countries, and Johnson further assured Park of continued access to U.S. loans and economic aid as well as the investment of private U.S. capital interests. In an interview after his visit to South Korea in the same year, Johnson stated "Korea's got the damndest kick you ever saw. Got a growth this year of 8 percent."[106] Yongsan, and by extension all U.S. bases in South Korea, had military functions but served as political and economic entities at the same time.

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[104] Tangherlini and Yea, *Sitings*, 25.

[105] White House, "Joint Statement Following Discussions with President Park, Korea," November 2, 1966, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/joint-statement-following-discussions-with-president-park-korea.

[106] Interview between House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills and President Lyndon B. Johnson, November 1966, Miller Center, University of Virginia, accessed July 21, 2025, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/lyndon-johnson-and-wilbur-mills-on-south-korea-and-australia.

The second point that can be made about Yongsan, which endures as a common theme regarding the owners of that physical space — either Japanese or American — is the notion of conflict related to architecture, physical location, and geography. Tangherlini and Yea note that "contestations over the use of city space on the part of colonized Koreans and Japanese settlers, not to mention financial restrictions, forestalled the radical spatial transformation of early colonial Seoul."[107] What is remarkable about this point is precisely the lack of ability by the Japanese in such a closely and directly administered and annexed country to assert complete control over the social and physical landscape of Seoul. Despite the robust military capabilities of the Japanese army and colonial administration, Koreans continually thwarted efforts to enforce conformity. Cumings' description of the relationship is particularly descriptive: "Japan held Korea tightly, watched it closely, and pursued an organized, architectonic colonialism in which the planner and administrator was the model"[108] Even in the midst of the colonial reshuffling of the urban landscape, however, Koreans "did not respond passively to the impositions of the new colonial state; rather, they actively sought to protect their individual and collective interests, not all of which the [Japanese] Government-General could effectively redirect." [109] This resistance to colonial oversight would continue even after U.S. forces began to consolidate their own position after 1953.

When American forces landed in Korea in 1945, the country was "a poor agrarian society" that had been squeezed dry by the Japanese war effort.[110] The period of urban development and economic success in Korea that grew during the first World War — only made possible by Japan's decision to sit on the sidelines and reap the benefits of global wartime trade demands — was never comprehensive. The attempted paternalistic reforms by the Japanese had stalled when other priorities such as the war with China began in earnest in 1937 followed by the conflicts in the Pacific during the Second World War. During the 1930s, the Japanese invested heavily in industrialization enterprises but located them in their colonies such as Korea. The result was a

[107] Tangherlini and Yea, *Sitings*, 28.

[108] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 133.

[109] Tangherlini and Yea, *Sitings*, 28.

[110] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 562.

process of overdevelopment in particular regions of the peninsula while the majority of the peninsula remained *under*developed.[111]

At the same time that Japanese wartime mobilization changed the economic landscape in Korea, it changed the social and physical landscapes in the peninsula as well. Todd A. Henry notes in *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (2014), that "With the onset of the Asia-Pacific War, the spaces of Keijō [the Japanese name for Seoul during occupation] and their relationship to late colonial Korea and Japan's extending empire changed in dramatic and unprecedented ways."[112] One of the most significant ways in which these changes occurred was the incorporation of the outlying suburbs of Seoul into the city itself, tripling the size of the metropole and making it one of the seven largest cities in the Japanese empire.[113] Along with this change came the continued but much more intensified process of "imperial subjectification" that had begun with the introduction of parks and Shinto shrines into the capital decades prior. During times of war, colonial control and subjectification was of vital interest for the Japanese state — like that of any imperial polity — since the potential for dissent or rebellion on the home front could radically undermine the war effort abroad. Japanese colonial rule after 1910 was marked with concerted efforts to introduce radical and wide-ranging reforms on the peninsula even though such reforms were often precipitated by bouts of violent resistance and independence movements on the part of the Koreans.

In a publication in *The Independent* on January 31, 1920, the newly appointed Governor-General Baron Makoto Saito tried to assure international audiences that the annexation was progressing smoothly and touted the successes of Korean integration: "under the efficient government of Japan, the Korean people rapidly advanced in civilization and enjoyed the blessing resulting from the development of productive industry, as well as from the spread of education."[114] He dismissed independence movements and violence in Korea as being "grossly and unjustly

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[111] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 164.

[112] Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 168.

[113] Henry, *Assimilating Seoul*, 168.

[114] Saito Makoto, "A Message from the Imperial Japanese Government to the American People - A Home Rule in Korea?," *The Independent*, January 31, 1920, 167–69.

misrepresented," and concluded that "exaggerations and even fictitious stories have been assiduously disseminated at the expense of Japan."[115]

The process of incorporating Korean citizens into the Japanese empire included the physical, cultural, and symbolic rewriting of how physical space was understood and used. For example, Japanese religious authorities along with schoolteachers and policemen, all began to distribute tokens of Shinto religion (calendars, shrine amulets, etc.) to the general population to incorporate Shinto religious practices into the sphere of the home, beyond the clearly delineated space of religious space of the temples.[116] The incorporation and use of these materials, as well as the subtle refusal of many Koreans to utilize them in defiance of the subjectification process, reflects the tension inherent in the reconceptualization of physical space, spheres of life, and even the imposition of government or religious affairs in areas of what was perceived of as domestic life. However, these resistances and tensions felt between foreign forces and Korean people developed in different ways when U.S. forces arrived in 1945 (and never left). And Yongsan garrison would be at the center of these tensions for years to come.

Section III: The United States: 1945 – 2000

The United States military in South Korea has certainly suffered from negative public perception (due to its own actions), but its role as liberator from the Japanese and protector from the North has complicated this relationship and the politics of dissent which are manifest in delicate ways regarding the troops stationed at Yongsan. If Koreans were able to discursively affect how public spaces in Seoul were used during the Japanese colonial period by going against the "civic morality" which guided Japanese city planners by "refusing to sell one's property needed to build a new road" or "uprooting a tree from a park to use as firewood," such types of transgressions of the accepted social, urban, and colonial order did not disappear with the removal of the Japanese colonial administration.[117]

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[115] Saito Makoto, "A Message from the Imperial Japanese Government," 167–69.

[116] Henry, *Assimilating Seoul*, 192.

[117] Tangherlini and Yea, *Sitings*, 28.

The existence of strongly held resistance to Japanese colonialization is evidenced by the fact that after the fall of the Japanese empire in the Second World War, Koreans immediately commenced "with the virtual erasure of Namsan's Shinto shrines" which were understood to be "the most palpable and foreign symbol of wartime mobilization."[118] Yongsan Garrison, however, the military headquarters of the imperial Japanese military was conspicuously exempt from this remaking of the Korean landscape. Adopted by the Americans in 1945, Yongsan is, according to Cumings, "a gigantic complex smack in the middle of an enormous, sprawling, bustling city — contemporary Seoul."[119] Cumings highlights the highly troubling nature of the space today in the context of decades of Japanese colonialism where public spaces were used strategically to forcibly incorporate Koreans into Japanese subjecthood: "I can't think of another capital city quite like it, where you turn a corner and suddenly see a mammoth swatch of land given over to a foreign army."[120]

As Wing-Shing Tang and Solomon Benjamin contend in their chapter, "Land as Situated Spatio-Histories: A Dialogue with Global Urbanism," physical space, regardless of how retrofitted or reconceptualized still retains emotions, ideas, and associations with previous events. They conclude that "land cannot be rolled up and taken away but also evolves to be a deeply material space whose worn textures reflect hauntings of earlier occupancies with diverse logics."[121] In the case of Yongsan Garrison these hauntings or echoes of a violent and repressive colonial regime were not even covered or glossed over but were actively inhabited, but this time by a new international power.

With the proclamation of the establishment of the South Korean state in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, sovereignty and autonomy over land and the physical geography of the peninsula changed drastically — but the hundreds of acres that made up Yongsan Garrison remained unquestionably in the grip of the U.S. military. Spaces of liminality within the capital slowly disappeared after 1945 with the rapid industrialization of Seoul where physical space

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[118] Henry, *Assimilating Seoul*, 205.

[119] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 144.

[120] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 144.

[121] Wing-Shing Tang and Solomon Benjamin, "Land as Situated Spatio-Histories: A Dialogue with Global Urbanism," in *Global Urbanism: Knowledge, Power and the City*, ed. Michele Lancione and Colin McFarlane (London: Routledge, 2021), 284, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429259593.

became ever more important for economic development. But by 1988, Yongsan had already been set in amber — a constant and unmoving part of the landscape of the capital that was, according to the *New York Times*, "a city bursting at the seams."[122] The United States military base had become, in the words of Bill Fullerton, a spokesman for the United States Forces Korea Command, "the boulder in the middle of Seoul."[123] The legacies of colonialism in Korea are widespread and longstanding. But the establishment of the Garrison at Yongsan in 1904 and its incorporation into the U.S. sphere of influence after 1945, left an indelible physical reminder of the lack of sovereignty and national autonomy for Koreans.

If Koreans were able to reclaim sacred religious or domestic spaces after 1945, Yongsan remained in the hands of victorious liberators who shared many of the racial and hierarchical predilections of its previous tenants. A secret CIA cable from 1948 noted that "The continued presence of foreign occupation forces on Korean soil has resulted in chronic native resentment at the delay of the long-promised independence of Korea."[124] U.S. soldiers occupied the former seat of military power of the Japanese colonial regime in Korea and did so with highly cultivated Orientalist perceptions, planted through a steady stream of domestic and military propaganda from the war years.[125] Susan Carruthers notes that these perceptions did not go unnoticed by the Korean population: "American military personnel quickly engendered hostility among those they imagined themselves liberating by empowering remnants of the despised Japanese colonial police force."[126]

Japanese colonialization had, by 1945, fallen short of the optimistic predictions suggested by Western nations prior to annexation and ultimately failed to achieve economic prosperity for the Korean people. The over/under-development model on the peninsula left an uneven geographic

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[122] Susan Chira, "In Heart of Seoul, an Unwanted U.S. Presence," *New York Times*, August 14, 1988, 4, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1988/08/14/865488.html?pageNumber=4.

[123] Chira, "In Heart of Seoul, an Unwanted U.S. Presence," 4.

[124] "ORE 5/1, The Situation in Korea, January 3, 1947," Record Group 263, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, National Archives and Records Administration, National Archives Identifier 6924248, accessed July 21, 2025, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6924248.

[125] See, Ian Scott, "From Toscanini to Tennessee: Robert Riskin, the OWI and the Construction of American Propaganda in World War II," *Journal of American Studies* 40, no. 2 (2006): 347–66, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875806004007.

[126] Susan L. Carruthers, "Latrines as the Measure of Men: American Soldiers and the Politics of Disgust in Occupied Europe and Asia," *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 1 (January 2018):127, https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhx071.

legacy, with heavy industry mostly located in the North and agriculture and food production located in the South that would highly impact the trajectory of both regions for decades to come. The overall stagnation of the Korean economy meant that, as Susan Carruthers described, "When U.S. occupation troops landed in September 1945 … they reeled at Korea's primitivism and destitution."[127] The Commander of the United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), General John Reed Hodge wasted no time in taking over "all property and enterprises owned by the Japanese government south of the 38th parallel."[128] This included the military headquarters of the army at Yongsan Garrison where the former Japanese buildings that had been built decades before to accommodate the Imperial army were quickly "Americanized" through subtle changes such as raising door openings, reflooring areas of the base, and installing American-style bathrooms.[129]

However, before the "Americanization" of Yongsan Garrison began in earnest, it was altogether unclear to U.S. military leaders if U.S. forces would stay in Korea at all. Between the years of 1945 and 1950, the U.S. presence on the peninsula was in a state of flux. From a global perspective, the logistic difficulties of demobilizing a World War II army that numbered in the millions, from the streets of Paris to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, was a daunting task. Daniel Eugene Garcia described the process in his article, "Class and Brass: Demobilization, Working Class Politics, and American Foreign Policy between World War and Cold War," as "an administrative and logistical nightmare,"[130] despite the fact that as early as 1943, the United States War Shipping Administration was already developing plans for the gargantuan task of demobilization by the conclusion of the war. Truman stated in a public radio address on August 9, 1945, that in order to assure stability in the postwar era, the United States would need to "maintain the military bases necessary for the complete protection of our interests and of world peace," but there was little consensus or specifically delineated policy within the United States administration

[127] Carruthers, "Latrines as the Measure of Men," 127.

[128] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 126–7.

[129] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 129.

[130] Daniel Eugene Garcia, "Class and Brass: Demobilization, Working Class Politics, and American Foreign Policy between World War and Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 4 (2010): 681, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2010.00882.x.

for how such a system would manifest itself.[131] In fact, as an internal CIA report conducted in 1988 noted, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had already concluded in 1947 that the United States "[had] little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea."[132] Stacie L. Pettyjohn highlighted in the RAND publication *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783–2011* (2012), that between the years of 1945 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the United States was heavily engaged in a widespread and global process of military demobilization which included a rapid reduction of military infrastructure.[133] Much of this was due to pressure both within the army itself as well as families in the United States who saw no reason why demobilization should not, and could not, be completed immediately.[134]

In a publicly issued statement, Truman addressed the reasoning behind the slower-than-expected demobilization first referencing (correctly), the mammoth task of simple shipping logistics, but *also* that it was the responsibility of the United States to "assume its full share of responsibility for keeping the peace and destroying the war-making potential of hostile nations."[135] Alton Lee highlights that the "critical needs for troops overseas," as Truman described, had thus become "a major cause for the delay in the demobilization plans."[136] This air of uncertainty about precisely which forces would remain stationed abroad played itself out in Korea, when U.S. forces in Seoul in 1946 returned to the Koreans previously occupied factories and schools being used for

[131] Harry S. Truman, "Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference," August 9, 1945, Miller Center, University of Virginia, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-9-1945-radio-report-american-people-potsdam-conference.

[132] Central Intelligence Agency, *Should the United States Withdraw Its Forces from South Korea?* (Washington, DC: CIA, December 1, 1988), https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP05T02051R000200340001-1.pdf.

[133] Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 61.

[134] Alton Lee notes that "To the military man who had spent months or years in combat-and to his family-any delay in his return home was in- tolerable; soldier and family insisted that the inadequacy of shipping facilities was no excuse for their continued separation" and that some men were "almost psychopathic in their anxiety to get home." R. Alton Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," *The Journal of American History* 53, no. 3 (December 1966): 561.

[135] Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," 567.

[136] Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," 567.

temporary housing, while at the same time they began construction of semi-permanent housing facilities within Yongsan Garrison.[137]

In the context of the United States military, soldiers, some of whom had completed tours in Europe thinking they would go home, only to be resupplied and sent to jungle islands of Peleliu or Midway, were more than ready to return home. One soldier who wrote a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* on October 21, 1945, described his frustration at not being demobilized in a more timely manner: "Frankly, I've just about reached the point where the Army inefficiency forces me to feel that my enlistment in the Army in an effort to do a job as an American was futile … when World War II happens to be the topic of conversation, I'll decline any comments and say I, too, was a sucker."[138]

Operation "Magic Carpet" was the codename for the massive demobilization operation at the conclusion of the Second World War. Despite criticisms from soldiers, however, the demobilization of such as massive global combat force was, in the words of Garcia, "accomplished with stunning efficiency."[139] A military newsletter reported on October 30, 1945, that "A total of 2,225,000 Army personnel were returned to Civilian life from V-E Day through Oct. 26 … Of this number, 1,633,000 were discharged after V-J (Sept. 2)."[140] But regardless of how quickly demobilization occurred, the American vision of the post-war world appeared as a far different one from that of the previous decades. Alton Lee describes the conflict of a country poised to assume a global super-power status at the mid-century in this way: "In the post–World War II era … the nation faced the unique necessity of occupying as well as defending foreign countries. On one hand an anxious public demanded immediate demobilization, and on the other hand the United States had to honor new commitments abroad. The administration unfortunately could not resolve

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[137] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 129

[138] Charles Hurd, "The Veteran; Enlisted Man Writes to a Columnist Attacking Demobilization Methods," *New York Times*, October 21, 1945, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1945/10/21/91603283.html?pageNumber=32.

[139] Garcia, "Class and Brass," 681.

[140] Naval History and Heritage Command, *Newsletters from USS President Polk (AP-103), October 27–30, 1945, during Operation Magic Carpet*, from the Papers of James Wright, Archives Branch, Naval History and Heritage Command, published March 8, 2021, https://www.history.navy.mil/research/archives/digital-exhibits-highlights/vj-day/magic-carpet/newsletters.html.

its dilemma. Demobilization plans followed an erratic course that responded first to public pressure and then to the exigencies of international politics."[141]

The result of this conflict between soldiers who perceived their service to be concluded and ready to return home, with a United States government insisting on seizing a new mantel of global leadership, resulted in the little known Army Mutiny of 1946.[142] Thousands of soldiers publicly protested the slower pace of demobilization and in particular soldiers stationed in the Far East penned letters to the president and Congress about their dissatisfaction. Regardless, both in Europe and across the Pacific, U.S. military presence became physically and culturally cemented and integrated into foreign countries despite public protest from troops themselves.

In the immediate post–World War II era, the United State military forces in Korea remained as stewards of the Southern portion of the peninsula while Soviet forces had similarly occupied the North. Paul Thomas Anderson points out, however, that "Neither superpower had ambitious plans for what it believed was a strategically insignificant corner of the world."[143] By 1948 the new "Republic of Korea" had been announced with the former anti-colonial activist Syngman Rhee at the helm and Hwang notes that by January, 1948, the United States military had cancelled new construction plans for family housing. A year later, in 1949, in "a flurry of installation and building relinquishments," it returned the previously requisitioned buildings and properties — including the site of Yongsan Garrison.[144] Though Truman insisted in the necessity of an overseas presence as well as a highly increased role in global and international leadership in the years after 1945, *how* that global integration could have developed, could have taken many different forms.

The rapidly shifting perspectives during this short period of time between 1945 and 1950 emphasizes the point that though the United States was certainly interested in maintaining global influence and preventing further armed conflict through organs such as the United Nations, the overseas system of military bases was not necessarily predetermined. Pettyjohn highlights this point as well, noting two internal studies made by the United States during the war that suggested

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[141] Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," 569

[142] For more on the mutiny itself, see: G. D. Sharma, *Untold Story 1946 Naval Mutiny: Last War of Independence* (New Delhi: Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, 2015) and Aaron T. Peterka, *The Responsibility of Victory: Citizen-Soldiers and the Mutinies of January 1946* (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2023).

[143] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, 104.

[144] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 134.

a network of overseas air bases rather than larger sites that exist today: "the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] did not plan on establishing large garrisons with permanently stationed troops and aircraft or naval vessels."[145]

It was the outbreak of the Koran War that brought U.S. soldiers back to Yongsan Garrison just a year later. Westad and Chamberlin, among others emphasize that the Korean war marked the beginning not only of the militarization of the Korean peninsula, but in global terms, the beginning of a new standard of militarization with the United States' containment policy and thus, the Cold War itself. In the middle of the Korean War in 1952, Adlai E. Stevenson, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, captured the essence of this change noting that "The Korean engagement put the American rearmament effort into high gear."[146] Stevenson also brought attention to the fundamentally changing role of global U.S. power that ran in tandem with increasing militarization in the years after the Second World War: "Gaining perspective on American foreign policy begins with gaining a view of America's position in the world — her position as a world power …. American interests, power and responsibilities are world-wide."[147] Both of these changes — increased militarization and security strategy thinking in global terms — had direct domestic repercussions on the Korean peninsula. The space of the Korean capital was even further militarized by cementing the U.S. presence in Yongsan for decades after the Korean War.[148]

One of the most important, if not *the* most important aspect of U.S. foreign military bases has been the ownership of physical space within foreign borders from which to stage military operations. Such access rights are continually negotiated between the United States and host countries, and their eventual character has much to do with the economic, diplomatic, and militaristic relationships at the time of their ratification (or initial clandestine agreement). In the case of South Korea, by 1945, the United States held all the cards.

Immediately after the Second World War, the United States remained in control of the bulk of administrative and governmental functions in South Korea, one of the most important being the redistribution of seized land. Jung-Ho Park and Man-Hee Han note that immediately after 1945,

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[145] Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 51.

[146] Adlai E. Stevenson, "Korea in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1, 1952, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1952-04-01/korea-perspective.

[147] Stevenson, "Korea in Perspective."

[148] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, 105; Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 159.

the "United States used land reform as a multipurpose tool in terms of politics for the purposes of legitimacy, stabilization, and hegemony" which in turn reflected the "politically important role of land systems in the process of modern state formation in South Korea."[149] The U.S. role in establishing the legitimacy of the South Korean state through politically and economically expedient land redistribution choices benefitted the United States as much as it did the fledgling South Korean one.

Despite the 1945 opinion of General John R. Hodge, the highest-ranking individual in the U.S.-controlled area of Southern Korea, that the United States should "withdraw from Korea as soon as possible," the temporary stewardship of the South Korean state and the nearly permanent military protection thereafter became hallmarks of U.S. Cold War policy.[150] In South Korea, ultimately "Political stabilization and public support were secured through social and economic stabilization and support from the U.S."[151] The price of a piece of sovereignty, like that of the base of Yongsan, was minimal compared to the perceived benefit of U.S. soldiers defending the capital against an always potentially violent Northern neighbour and the economic "Miracle on the Han." However, despite a preponderance of military and economic power, the tenets of a new liberal and democratic global world order meant that the United States lacked the moral high ground to establish a long-term trusteeship of the fledgling South Korean state. South Koreans leaders deftly exploited fears of Soviet threats while at the same time emphasizing democratic rhetoric to gain some semblance of legitimacy and sovereignty of their own state.

The regimes of Syngman Rhee (1948–1960) and his successor Park-Chung-hee (1962–1979) were shadowboxing against "communist infiltrators" from the North as justifications for repressing student movements and popular protests for an increase of democratic participation, a goal that would never fully be achieved until the 1990s. Along the way, between 1953 and the early 2000s, the United States military remained comfortably housed in military bases across the peninsula, their soldiers frequently committing a myriad of different crimes ranging from property destruction, pollution, rape, and even murder, all the while engaging actively with providing

[149] Park and Han, "Modern State Formation," 666.

[150] James I. Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945–1948," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995): 25, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23719137.

[151] Matray, "Hodge Podge," 25.

essential support for a black-market economy around bases like Yongsan.[152] In return for hosting U.S. forces, the Rhee and Park Chung-hee regimes acquired lucrative U.S. business contracts and development aid for decades. Jim Glassman and Young-jin Choi note that in particular, these contracts were essential to the growth of the "*chaebols*" in South Korea, but also the South Korean economy in general, given how tightly wound the conglomerates were to the dictatorial regimes: "South Korea emerged after World War II as the base for an especially powerful, transnationally active capitalist class, and this was the direct result of both highly militarist developmental state policies and the geopolitical processes that made these policies viable."[153]

A highly contentious court ruling involving government corruption and "chaebols" in Korea in the 1990s revealed the extent to which these conglomerates, the South Korean government, and urbanized land development, were all intertwined. The "Hanbo Scandal" (referring to the "*chaebol*" of Hanbo Steel) involved the preferential treatment of the company by government officials for the procurement of loans, which were ultimately secured through the use of bribery. Billions of dollars were involved, and it was directly related to the Asian financial crash of 1997 where several other "*chaebols*" were then implicated in a domino effect, each in turn revealing bribery and corruption within the South Korean government. David Murillo and Yun-dal Sung describe the far-reaching consequences of the event: "The Hanbo case revealed how large sums of money flowed from big businesses to politicians and top bureaucrats. Ranging from slush funds to illegal donations to presidential candidates, these cash flows were often tied to particular projects in areas such as urban planning and government procurement."[154]

The involvement of the South Korean government, "*chaebols*," and urban planning and development were laid bare by Korean courts in 1997, but their roots go much deeper. It was as far back as stewardship of General Hodge, between 1945–1948, that these relationships were cemented and ultimately made possible either through links that could not have evolved without the tacit approval by the United States government, or through active involvement. One of the key pieces of groundwork was laid by the establishment of Hodge's "Representative Democratic

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[152] Hwang, "An Indispensable Edge," 88–110.

[153] Glassman and Choi, "The Chaebol and the US Military–Industrial Complex," 1164.

[154] David Murillo and Yun-dal Sung, *Understanding Korean Capitalism: Chaebols and Their Corporate Governance*, ESADEgeo Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics Position Paper 33 (Barcelona: ESADEgeo, 2013), 7.

Council," created in 1946 ostensibly to lead the growth of the Korean state after Japanese occupation. This "democratic council" was comprised of the future strongman president Sygmun Rhee, along with several other heavily conservative former collaborationist landowners and businessmen from the Japanese colonial period. Hodge's fears of Soviet influence in the South paved the way for conservative landowners to work in tandem with U.S. support to mask their anti-democratic policy decisions and land redistribution schemes.

The decisions made by U.S. leaders and their fears of Soviet influence in postwar South Korea, contained the germ of what became a decades-long military presence well into the twenty-first century. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai was accurate in his summary on September 21, 1961, during a dialogue with British Field Marshal Montgomery: "The United States is most unwilling to accept the withdrawal of military forces stationed overseas. The United States has built military bases in over half of the world, to station its forces: if they were all to be withdrawn, it would lose control over those places."[155] Geopolitically, retaining a foothold on the peninsula, including the site of Yongsan Garrison, especially after the outbreak of the Vietnam war, remained integral to U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War period and beyond with ongoing impacts on the economic and political trajectory of the Republic of South Korea.[156]

If the collaboration between U.S. leaders and leading conservative elements on the Korean peninsula after 1945 led to the suppression of communism (perceived or real), it also led to the groundwork of securing a U.S. military foothold throughout the country that lasted through the Korean War, and beyond. The period of time between 1953 and 2000 has frequently been discussed by anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and feminist scholars related to the transgressions of the U.S. military personnel working on bases on the peninsula and in particular the neighborhood immediately adjacent to Yongsan garrison, Itaewon, or as it was colloquially referred to —

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[155] Zhou Enlai, "Transcript of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Bernard Law Montgomery," September 21, 1961, trans. Simon Schuchat, in *Zhou Enlai Waijiao wenxuan [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Zhou Enlai]* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1990), 311–15, Wilson Center Digital Archive, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/260514.

[156] A secret CIA Research Assessment on North Korean military capabilities completed in April 1978 emphasizes the continued importance of retaining troops in South Korea as part of the global U.S. defense strategy: "The argument that Kim might attack now presumes, however, that the North-South military balance is the key factor in Kim's military calculations – it is not. Kim cannot afford to assume that the US would not be involved in a major war in Korea. He must include the US as a factor in any realistic equation of the military balance. In the total picture, the US deterrent is clearly the determining factor." Central Intelligence Agency, *North Korean Strategy and Tactics: An Appraisal* (Washington, DC: CIA, April 1, 1978), declassified August 20, 2012, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP08S02113R000100120001-5.pdf.

"Hooker Hill." [157] In many instances, it is the architectural and geographic location of places like Yongsan Garrison that physically facilitate these types of behavior and the interactions between soldiers and the location populations. In this regard it is valuable to consider the nature of these interactions from the perspective of anthropological research or first-person interviews.[158] Several excellent collections (see Sturdevant and Stoltzfus and Höhn and Moon) describe the benefit of emphasizing the architectural dimension — the physical space and the land in which it sits — of a location like Yongsan in contributing to urban issues not just related to the construction of camp towns or negative externalities such as pollution, but to the growth and development of the modern South Korean state and its unique economic trajectory only made possible through its relationship with the United States military.[159] The results of this particular economic development path, especially interwoven relationships between the state, land ownership and distribution, "*chaebols*," and the United States military, have been particularly devastating for a population of people — today up to 90% of the population — who live in urban environments.

Yongsan Garrison changed hands as many times as U.S. coalition forces and North Korean/Chinese forces captured and recaptured the South Korean capital city of Seoul. As a result, Yongsan Garrison remained a contested space until the Armistice in 1953 of the aptly named "Accordion War." In 1952, U.S. forces reoccupied the site of Yongsan Garrison and then in 1953, the U.S. Eighth Army named it the location its new headquarters. Finally, with the Treaty of Mutual Defense signed in 1954 (by Sygmun Rhee as president) between the United States and South Korea, the United States Military gained formal possession of the 5 square kilometers — or 16 percent — of all the land in the Yongsan district of Seoul.[160]

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[157] See, Chapter 9: Sex for Sale in Vine, *Base Nation*, 163-181.

[158] There are studies being done on human trafficking related to the US military presence in South Korea which incorporate such anthropological methods. See: Sallie Yea, "Everyday Spaces of Human Trafficking: (In)visibility and Agency Among Trafficked Women in U.S. Military-Oriented Clubs in South Korea," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106, no. 4 (2016): 957–73; Anna Belle Hoots, "Severing the Connection between Sex Trafficking and U.S. Military Bases Overseas," *Fordham Law Review* 88, no. 2 (November 2019): 733–60; and Lawlor, "Contested Crimes."

[159] Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll* and Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon, eds., *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[160] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 134.

However, the road to the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 was not direct. In 1953, Hanson W. Baldwin, writing in *The New York Times*, noted that in Korea, "The policy of disengagement, coupled with the policy of the containment of communism, implies the exercise of U.S. military in the Far East primarily through air and sea power, with no ground troop commitments to the continent of Asia."[161] The solidification of Yongsan as a key foothold of U.S. power projection and security in the Pacific runs absolutely counter to what was suggested by those such as Baldwin in their vision for U.S. global strategy after 1953: "The exact role of a post-armistice Korea in future American strategy in the Pacific will depend chiefly upon events, of which we are no longer master. … if, at worst, a state of armed on-guard continues, after a truce, South Korea will become of gradually reduced importance as a base for American power."[162] In his view, the Korean Army would take over stewardship of the peninsula while U.S. forces continued to remain in key locations in Japan and the Philippines, "Our strategy — unless Dr. Rhee interrupts it by more unilateral actions — will take the form of building up the South Korean Army… to defend itself."[163]

In most summaries of "significant" developments of the Cold War period after 1953 and the armistice in Korea, events on the Korean peninsula are often relegated to regional specialists or historians interested in domestic Korean affairs. The Suez Crisis in 1956, Mao's consolidation on power and the subsequent Cultural Revolution in China, the continuing violence caused by the partition of India and Pakistan — and above all else the war in Vietnam — become the focal points to trace the trajectory of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War.

Years after active U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh himself described the U.S. actions in 1967, in a letter to President Johnson, as turning South Vietnam into "a neocolony and *a military base* of the United States."[164] Indeed, South Vietnam had become one of the largest concentrations of military forces in Asia. Yet, despite the active foothold of troops, forces, munitions, vehicles, and infrastructure in Vietnam, the bases secured by the United States in South

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[161] Hanson W. Baldwin, "New Factors Will Alter U.S. Strategy in Pacific: 'Disengagement' of Troops from Asia Would Spotlight Island Bases," *New York Times*, June 21, 1953, 116, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1953/06/21/issue.html.

[162] Baldwin, "New Factors Will Alter U.S. Strategy in Pacific," 116.

[163] Baldwin, "New Factors Will Alter U.S. Strategy in Pacific," 116.

[164] Ho Chi Minh, "Letter from Ho Chi Minh to President Lyndon B. Johnson," February 1967, Digital History, University of Houston, https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3641.

Korea and in Japan were even further militarized as key logistical support centers and as part of a wider strategy of the projection of U.S. power in region.[165]

In fact, the bloody wars with their Asian neighbours in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, were absolutely instrumental in providing the defibrillating shock to Korean and Japanese economic industries after devastating wars. As Taejin Hwang notes in his chapter, "An Indispensable Edge: American Military Camptowns in Postwar Korea," the Vietnam War was integral to South Korea's economic ascendancy in that it "strengthened both pillars— national security and economic development—that helped sustain Park's regime."[166] The Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru described the war's effects on the Japanese economy in more stark terms as "a gift from the gods."[167] In terms of global U.S. strategy, both militaristic and economic, Korea's role changed yet again due to global contingencies. U.S. bases became even more important centers of economic development and military security for South Korean political regimes as the war in Vietnam progressed.

Despite uncertainty about the permanence of the United States military mission in Korea, built structures within Yongsan Garrison continued to be slowly improved and expanded. Namudoi and Goyang note that "After the Korean War, the Yongsan base of the US armed forces gradually became a barracks city. A residential area for the US military was formed in the Yongsan district, and living spaces, cultural and religious facilities, schools, and sports facilities were constructed."[168] All the while throughout these decades, South Korean dictatorial regimes enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the U.S. military, whereby "the United States and its troops on the ground played a vital role in financially, politically, and militarily sustaining the various authoritarian leaderships in Seoul," and land was steadily expropriated by the government for its own uses either economically, or to shore up the relationship with the U.S. military.[169]

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[165] Vine notes that after the conclusion of the Korean War and brief mobilization on the Korean Peninsula, "there was a further 20 percent increase in base sites during the war in Vietnam." Vine, *Base Nation*, 41. Pettyjohn notes that by 1958, there were over half a million military personnel in Vietnam. Pettyjohn, *US Global Defense Posture*, 72.

[166] Hwang, "An Indispensable Edge," 96.

[167] Hwang, "An Indispensable Edge," 96.

[168] Hyeyoung Choi and Young-Ai Seo, "The Process of Creating Yongsan Park from the Urban Resilience Perspective," *Sustainability* 11, no. 5 (2019): 6, https://doi.org/10.3390/su11051225.

[169] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 29.

La Grange and Nam Jung describe the specifics of the economic development in South Korea by noting that "In 1961 the new authoritarian government initiated and implemented a series of five-year economic development programmes that pursued the export-oriented developmental strategies of light industry, utilising cheap labour and cheap land resources" and by consequence, since the 1960s, "Korea's economic growth has been spectacular."[170] In tandem with the growth of a domestic export-oriented economy with the closely government-aligned "*chaebols*," such as Hyundai and Samsung leading the charge, the U.S. military's position in Yongsan slowly transitioned from ad-hoc and temporary to semi-permanent in the 1950s. Instead of coming to a definite answer about the longevity of the U.S. presence on the peninsula, periodic budget allocations slowly increased, but never fully committed to largescale building improvements on the base. Hwang notes that eventually in 1959 and 1960, however, funding request allocations were finally being made for "communal buildings, such as a library, chapel, 500-man consolidated mess hall, educational facilities, and a recreational playing court."[171]

At a glance, one could claim that the Korean peninsula drifted into the rearview mirror for both Kremlin and in the White House after the 1950s. But just as a more critical investigation of U.S. military activity in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s reveals its extensive role in nation-building through the constriction of military and civilian infrastructure, military bases in South Korea continued to play fundamental roles in the development of the modern Korean state for decades after the 1953 armistice. As Bridget Martin notes, "From the US occupation of Korea after liberation from Japan, through the US establishment of military bases in the 1950s, to the growth of Vietnam War-related industries in the 1970s, US militarism has shaped South Korean development landscapes for decades."[172] Military bases like Yongsan Garrison affected South Korea's economic development, contributed to a rapidly developing (and now critical) housing crisis, and helped lend legitimacy and military support to authoritarian political regimes.

Despite the highly militarized border between North and South, South Koreans quickly became concerned with more immediate domestic affairs like being able to house and feed oneself.

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[170] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 562.

[171] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan, 137.

[172] Bridget Martin, "From Camp Town to International City: US Military Base Expansion and Local Development in Pyeongtaek, South Korea," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42, no. 6 (2018): 983.

With the war at a standstill and relative peace after such a prolonged period of colonialization by the Japanese and then through an absolutely devastating war, leaders like Syngman Rhee were more than happy to allow U.S. military bases and even more importantly — economic aid — form the bedrock of a new economy. Schober notes that it "was US military assistance" that "made up the most significant section of foreign aid: between 1953 and 1960, approximately $8.7 billion were spent on enlarging the security apparatus of the country."[173] The economic "guns over rice" aid policies did not go unnoticed.[174] *The New York Times*, in an article from 1963, highlighted the discontent from some regarding the military aid: "South Korea has been dependent on outside aid, mostly from the United States, for the entire 18 years of its modern life as an independent state … Critics also charge that a part of the aid was wasted or misused by American and Korean officials. They assert the misused funds helped a handful of Korean businessmen to gain quick riches. These businessmen are accused today of evading taxes and hoarding investment funds badly needed to develop South Korea's economy."[175]

Other commentators to *The New York Times*, like Louis J. Pies from Lockport N.Y., were even less enthused by the United States' willingness to stay on the peninsula when he wrote his letter to the editor three years later. His letter, reproduced in full below, is remarkably prescient even today given the enduring tensions between the Koreas, China, and the United States:

> It is shameful and a glaring insult to the intelligence of the American people to go on with the myth that the present police action in Korea is a United Nations action, when the true facts are as follows: Some 50,000 United States troops are station in Korea, as against only 200 non-United States personnel in the United Nations command. Our country pays the entire cost $500 million annually — of maintaining the United States forces in Korea. In a magazine article several months ago Walter Lippmann pointed out that one of the major drawbacks to a peaceful settlement of the war in Vietnam was the belief by North Vietnam and other nations in Asia that the United States was determined to establish military land bases in that part of the world. Certainly our conduct in Korea, and the tremendous

[173] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 40. Cooley further notes that "massive amounts of U.S. economic assistance accompanied this security support. American military commanders actually administered these aid flows from 1951 to 1959, which amounted to nearly 100 percent of the ROK government budget." Cooley, *Base Politics*, 99.

[174] Pil Ho Kim, "Guns over Rice: The Impact of US Military Aid on South Korean Economic Reconstruction," *Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation* 9, no. 1 (April 30, 2017): 33–50, https://doi.org/10.32580/idcr.2017.9.1.33.

[175] "Effect of U.S. Aid Debated in Korea: Critics Score Industrial Lag — Defenders Cite 'Illusion'," *New York Times*, May 26, 1963, 31, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1963/05/26/356802492.html?pageNumber=31.

> expenditure of funds for airports and port facilities in Vietnam, would justify that belief. We can at this time take a great step toward the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam war if we recognize the hypocrisy of our position in Korea, and take definite action to end it. We should advise the United Nations that we are withdrawing our forces from Korea, but that we are willing to contribute our proportionate share of any peace-keeping force the United Nations decides to station there. Such action on our part, long overdue, would help convince the Asian nations that we have no interest in military land bases there. It would indicate, too, to the rest of the world, that we have finally accepted that fact that we cannot and should not try to police the world, but we will do our part, through the United Nations, to contribute to a peaceful solution of the problems in the trouble spots of the world. And it would give our negotiators in Paris vital support for their claim that we have no intention of establishing permanent military bases in Vietnam, and could help break the impasse in the peace talks there.[176]

The reality was, however, that the U.S. military did indeed intend to maintain a presence on the Korean peninsula, with important impacts that extended far beyond the geographic boundaries of Yongsan and other garrisons.

The economic programs initiated in the South during the 1960s and 1970s certainly bore economic fruit, but at the same time, the cost of rapid industrialization meant rapid urbanization. La Grange and Nam Jung emphasize that the widespread success of domestic industrialization for industries such as "steel, shipbuilding, petrochemicals, automobiles and even nuclear industries" were only possible through a tightly controlled and administered centralized government and economic model: "The Korean economy has been a mostly government-directed, government-led or government-propelled economy … made possible by state control over financial institutions and direct control of the credit allocation process."[177] This kind of overt state control over financial and economic development was only made possible by the military backing provided by U.S. bases.

The 1970s marked a period of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and to some degree, a similar thawing of relations between the Koreas occurred as well. But one major obstacle continually stood in the way of any question of reunification — the presence of U.S. troops in the South. A telegram sent on May 5, 1973, from North Korea to the United States informed the U.S. that the DRPK national assembly was set to pass a formal resolution asking the

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[176] Louis J. Pies, letter to the editor, "Korean Disengagement," *New York Times*, July 19, 1968, 34, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1968/07/19/110089696.html?pageNumber=34.

[177] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 562.

United States to "withdraw its troops from South Korea" and that "military aid for South Korea be terminated; military maneuvers, provocations and war preparations in Korea be stopped."[178] The North pointed directly to U.S. troops and the U.S. military, "the obstacles created by the United States, the maintenance of American troops in South Korea, the modernization of the South Korean armed forces, the military maneuvers and the war provocations carried out by Americans in Korea," as standing directly in the way of fruitful discussions of reunification.[179]

For the United States, still engaged in the Vietnam War, military logistical support in the Pacific formed part of a global strategy of "consolidated defense in depth" which was "characterized by hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops stationed primarily on bases in Western Europe and Asia, especially … South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines."[180] Even before discussions of détente were broached in the 1970s, the United States military's presence on the peninsula seemed by 1960 already a forgone conclusion. While South Korea struggled with a housing shortage, and potential windows to reunification were being tested by the North Koreans, investments in U.S. bases across Korea continued. In a Senate Appropriations Committee from 1960, the U.S. military requested a new water system for Yongsan Garrison to prevent a shortage caused by the new "arrival of 346 dependent families, a 15,000-man laundry, a 50-bed hospital, and the addition of two steam plants totalling 770 boiler horsepower."[181]

U.S. bases in South Korea provided security against a potential North Korean or Chinese invasion, but they also served to be instrumental in helping shape the contours of the modern Korean economic and political landscape. The United States supported a series of dictatorial regimes in South Korea by pumping U.S. dollars and U.S. soldiers into Korean cities over the course of nearly three decades after the 1953 armistice. The result was a nominally democratic system in the South, economically successful, yet highly oppressive and supported by U.S.

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[178] Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, *Matter 210, 1973, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Secret, 1st Division,* MFA, Folder no. 1496, "Note No. 01/010124/73, Regarding the Internal Situation in the DPRK (Political, Economic, Social, Cultural Matters)," August 1973, Document 20 in *DPRK Perspectives on Korean Reunification after the July 4th Joint Communiqué*, NKIDP e-Dossier No. 10, trans. Eliza Gheorghe, Wilson Center Digital Archive, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/NKIDP_eDossier_10_DPRK_Perspectives_on_Korean_Reunification_after_the_July_4th_Joint_Communique.pdf.

[179] Romanian MFA, "Note No. 01/010124/73," in *DPRK Perspectives*, Doc. 20.

[180] Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 63.

[181] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 140.

economic and military aid. As Cooley notes, "The U.S. military presence was a critical part of this internal security contract, one that Korean rulers depended on for their internal political legitimacy and survival."[182]

As early as the 1960s, it was clear to both domestic and foreign observers that urban housing was an especially pressing and significant issue for the country and here too the U.S. military footprint in the middle of Seoul loomed large. For a country destroyed so completely by the three-year-long conflict in the 50s — one journalist reported that "Not even the smallest hamlet had been spared … Villages could be recognized only as level black patches … whole towns had been moved into primitive cave shelters" — the South Korean government under Park-Chung Hee simply prioritized economic development while many of its most vulnerable languished, destitute, in the rapidly growing urban environments like Seoul.[183]

In 1966, *The New York Times* reported that "The [housing] shortage is most acute in Seoul, the fast-growing capital. There are believed to be 230,000 illegally built squatter shacks throughout the country and countless families live in makeshift hovels, tents, hillside caves and even sections of large concrete pipe" and that "Urban slum congestion and inadequate sanitation have caused what Kim Suk Joon, chief of the Construction Ministry's housing bureau, terms 'a cancerous situation.'"[184] At the very same time that urban housing was rapidly disappearing, on August 1, 1964, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution titled "An Act to authorize certain construction at military installations, and for other purposes," which included $8,509,000 ($81,729,633 when adjusted for inflation) for the further construction of "Operational facilities, maintenance facilities, supply facilities, troop housing and utilities" in Korea.[185] As urban housing in cities disappeared, the U.S. military's footprint was increasing.

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[182] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 106.

[183] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, 156–7.

[184] Emerson Chapin, "South Korea Struggles to End Housing Crisis: Seeks Capital to Combat Scarcity," *New York Times*, April 3, 1966, 220, 230, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/04/03/132976912.html?pageNumber=230.

[185] U.S. Congress, *An Act to Authorize Certain Construction at Military Installations, and for Other Purposes*, Public Law 88-390, 88th Cong., H.R. 10300, approved August 1, 1964, in *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 78 (1964): 344, https://www.congress.gov/88/statute/STATUTE-78/STATUTE-78-Pg341.pdf. Further budget allocations throughout the 1960s share a similar pattern with money being set aside for additional construction of maintenance or hospital facilities. It is important to note that all of these resolutions were passed into law but also were *additional* budget allocations adding to the existing yearly discretionary budgets: U.S. Congress, *An Act to Authorize Certain Construction at Military Installations, and for Other Purposes*, Public Law 90-110, 90th Cong.,

While economic development became the all-consuming goal for the budding South Korean government in the 1960s, concerns over land ownership were underprioritized compared to the twin pillars of industry and U.S. military protection. At the same time, other rapidly growing issues, such as urban housing, were left by the wayside. Kim Suk Joon, chief of the Construction Ministry's housing bureau clearly explained the government's priorities in 1966: "Government officials, from President Chung Hee Park down realize the need for housing, but at this stage in our economic development other industrial sectors must have priority on Government spending.[186] Situated on a large chunk of valuable real estate in South Korea's capital, Yongsan Garrison would not be immune from these developments, and in fact, actively contributed to them.

Urban development and housing, which became an increasingly significant issue for the rapidly developing South Korean economy which demanded an urban workforce, the Korean government continued to exert massive direct influence in urban housing allocation of land and land development projects, or exerted massive indirect influence over privately pursued urban housing projects.[187] Even when the government did attempt to address the issue, it never was approached comprehensively, and places like Yongsan Garrison remained exclusively in the hands of the U.S. military. La Grange and Jung emphasize that regardless of the intentions of the government, the result was ultimately the same: "The question remains whether the state deliberately reduced the availability of land to ensure rapid price rises or whether the shortage was consequence of the inability of the planning system to meet demand in a timely manner. This does not alter the import of empirical findings with regard to the profitability of urban development for

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H.R. 11722, approved October 21, 1967, in *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 81 (1967): 279–81, https://www.congress.gov/90/statute/STATUTE-81/STATUTE-81-Pg279.pdf; U.S. Congress, *An Act to Authorize Certain Construction at Military Installations, and for Other Purposes*, Public Law 90-408, 90th Cong., H.R. 16703, approved July 21, 1968, in *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 82 (1968): 367–69, https://www.congress.gov/90/statute/STATUTE-82/STATUTE-82-Pg367.pdf.

[186] Emphasis added. Kim concluded his statement to the *Times* noting that "Even if present plans materialize and housing construction spurts, low-income groups will receive little benefit." Chapin, "South Korea Struggles to End Housing Crisis," 230.

[187] They note that "In spite of state initiatives to promote house construction, particularly in the years after the Korean War, the sector has been under-financed, primarily as a consequence of state restrictions on access to credit for housebuilders, instead channelling available finance to industrial development" and that other authors have presented evidence "of significant government under-allocation of urban land to urban residential use, which is a major part of the explanation for rapid rises in land and housing prices in Seoul and other cities between 1973 and 1988." La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 562, 575–6.

the state as a consequence of its control over the land-use planning process."[188] The overt control enjoyed by South Korean dictatorial regimes over economic affairs and urban architectural planning in the 1960s and 70s was only made possible by a bedrock of U.S. military support emanating from bases like Yongsan. By consequence, land occupied by U.S. bases was rendered untouchable while the housing crisis spiraled out of control.

In 1971, *The New York Times* reported that "According to Government statistics, as many as 319,000 farmers deserted their villages in 1969 to seek jobs in the cities. The proportions of the rural people to the nation's total population dropped from 56.4 percent in 1965 to 46.8 percent in 1970."[189] While home ownership in urban areas in Korea *fell* from 62 to 46 percent between 1960 and 1995, urbanization of the country now sits at just under 90%.[190] By the 1960s, as Yongsan Garrison had begun its transformation into the "boulder in the middle of Seoul," Koreans were losing their homes. From its early origins under the Japanese occupation, Yongsan Garrison's location in central Seoul would now impact housing issues long after the "official" end of the Cold War.

Max Kim, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, published a story on April 11, 2023, about the current housing crisis in Seoul which captures the extent of the issue. One of the men interviewed, Yoon Yong-ju, is a sixty-year-old man who is a double amputee who has "just enough space to lie down" in the middle of his 3.25-square meter *jjokbang*, or "piece room" — but only if he removes his prosthetic legs first.[191] Such living arrangements are described by Kim as a "necessary evil" after the financial crisis of Asian markets in 1997. Such living arrangements are better than living on the street, but only just given the slum-like conditions in which tenants have to live with such as dealing with insects or mice and collectively sharing running water for bathing. Nicolas Rocca, writing for *Le Monde* diplomatique, noted in an article from February 2022, that "During Moon Jae-in's five-year presidency [2017–2022], prices have virtually doubled in some

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[188] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 569.

[189] "Korean Farmers Leave the Land: Seoul Population Climbs as Better Jobs Are Sought," *New York Times*, April 11, 1971, 7, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1971/04/11/82001585.html?pageNumber=7.

[190] La Grange and Jung, "Commodification of Land and Housing," 563.

[191] Max Kim, "In Seoul's 'Piece Rooms,' There's Barely Enough Space to Lie Down: Inside South Korea's Brutal Housing Crisis," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2023, https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-04-11/in-seouls-piece-rooms-theres-not-even-enough-room-to-lay-down-inside-south-koreas-brutal-housing-crisis.

parts of Seoul, proof of the failure of his housing policy and promises of social justice" and that "Prices in Seoul today range from $10,770 to $38,880 per square metre."[192] These trends are the direct result of state-owned land commodification schemes put forward during the dictatorship years following the conclusion of the war in 1953. As Jung-Ho Park and Man-Hee Han note, "The U.S. and the Soviet Union became involved in modern state formation in other countries to establish their hegemonies around the world, which influenced land reform policies such as the principles of confiscation with compensation and distribution with compensation, or free forfeiture and distribution" [193] They conclude that "land reform in South Korea was mainly carried out for reasons other than revenue generation or taxation, even though government finances might have been vulnerable."[194]

Considering that "Over two-thirds of the US military bases inside South Korea are located within or close to the Greater Seoul area," this means that the availability of land in the megacity is a zero-sum game with individuals such as Yoon Yong-ju and those like him fighting a losing battle in advocating for government-funded housing projects.[195] There appears to be very little one can do when arguing against the presence of the United States military and its need for land for the purposes of "international security," even 70 years after the armistice.

At the same time that the urban housing crisis was unfolding and after several tumultuous decades of rapid, yet authoritarian, economic development (the period of time between the 1960s to the 1990s frequently referred to as "The Miracle on the Han), the decades of the 1980s and 1990s in South Korea were typified by mass movements for democratization coupled with a sharp increase in anti-American sentiment across the peninsula. Much of this included an increased spotlight on U.S. bases and their inhabitants. Between the years of 1976 and 1991, between 1,100 and 2,300 crimes involving U.S. servicemembers were recorded per year.[196] However, it was the Gwangju Uprising of 1980 which served as a fundamental turning point for anti-Americanism in South Korea.

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[192] Nicolas Rocca, "South Korea's Housing Crisis," *Le Monde diplomatique* (English edition), February 2022, https://mondediplo.com/2022/02/04south-korea.

[193] Park and Han, "Modern State Formation," 665.

[194] Park and Han, "Modern State Formation," 666.

[195] Schober, *Base Encounters*, 13.

[196] Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), 354.

A popular student movement in the southwestern city of Gwangju escalated into a multiday battle in the streets of the city. The South Korean government eventually mobilized special forces paratroopers and military troops to quell the democracy protest, leaving hundreds dead and thousands wounded. Bruce Cumings described the event as "South Korea's Tiananmen Square crisis, deeply shaping the broad resistance to the dictatorship in the 1980s."[197] Popular support for U.S. forces in the region was deeply damaged among Koreans who assumed that the deployment of special forces paratroopers to quell the democracy protest was implemented with the knowledge of the U.S. chain of command.[198] The continued support by the United States for the military dictator Chun Doo-hwan after the event further stoked flames of anti-Americanism.

After widespread democratization movements across the entire peninsula in 1987 finally resulted in the first free and open elections in decades, U.S. military presence continued to be seen as an affront to national sovereignty as well as a roadblock to reunification with the North. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s any notion of anti-Americanism was immediately conflated with communism and dealt with severely by the government, in the 1980s and 1990s, it began to take on new associations of national sovereignty and independence. S.H. Kim, a professor of international Myongji University in Seoul, noted in 2002 that "anti-American sentiments have now spread into almost all strata of Korean society, ranging from the policymaking elite in the government and the intellectuals to members of the middle class and the younger generation."[199] A series of highly publicized and violent crimes perpetrated by U.S. soldiers across the 1990s and early 2000s further stoked the flames of this growing sentiment within the Korean population. [200]

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[197] Jai-eui Lee, *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age*, trans. Kap Su Seol and Nick Mamatas (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 17.

[198] This point is still disputed, but for an account that argues that the United States was indeed fully aware of the dispatch of special forces troops, see Tim Shorrock, "Ex-Leaders Go on Trial in Seoul," *Journal of Commerce*, February 1996, 1A, https://timshorrock.com/documents/korea-the-cherokee-files-part-one/. The officials at the meeting included, "Secretary of State Edmund Muskie; Mr. Christopher; Mr. Holbrooke; President Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski; CIA director Admiral Stansfield Turner; Donald Gregg, the NSC top intelligence official for Asia and the CIA Station Chief in Seoul in the 1970s; and U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown." Shorrock, "Ex-Leaders Go on Trial in Seoul."

[199] Seung-Hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in Korea," *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2002): 109.

[200] Both the murder of Yun Guem-i in 1992, when the then-twenty-year-old Private Kenneth Markle sexually violated and then murdered the 20-year-old Korean prostitute, and the Yangju Highway incident in 2002, when two off-duty servicemen ran over two Korean schoolgirls, contributed greatly to the already active and vocal protests to presence of U.S. military in Korea. For further reading on the two incidents, see: Schober, *Base Encounters*, 66; *GI Flashbacks*, "The 1992 Private Kenneth Markle Murder Case," *ROK Drop*, August 3, 2015, https://www.rokdrop.net/2015/08/03/gi-flashbacks-the-1992-private-kenneth-markle-murder-case/; and Don Kirk,

Several different comments by Korean individuals in a *New York Times* article from 1988 capture the public sentiment regarding attitudes towards U.S. military presence during these decades. A Korean Army captain, C.H. Kim, remarked, "'Americans probably see Korea as inferior, and it hurts our pride."[201] Another article from the same year noted that a Korean bank employee, I.B. Chung, thought much the same way, saying, "Americans don't pay us any respect… The Europeans see Korean and Oriental culture with interested eyes and the Americans don't."[202] One article from 1987 noted that young Koreans burned an effigy of Ronald Reagan and chanted the well-known refrain, "Yankee go home!"[203] A businessman interviewed in the same article remarked "Everyone thinks the U.S. stands for peace and liberty, but they just watch and keep quiet in their own interests," and a young factory worker said "I'm really upset … We used to feel friendly toward the U.S., but these days we feel hostile."[204]

Simmering resentment to the United States' military presence on the peninsula as well as the White House's involvement in Korea's international politics, boiled over with George W. Bush's now infamous "Axis of Evil" speech, given on January 29, 2002. In the midst of a domestic movement to encourage North-South reunification, Jeffery S. Robertson noted that the speech caused "vitriolic anti-America statements in internet chat-rooms, street protests in Seoul and Pusan, and even a scuffle in parliament."[205]

Several years prior to Bush's speech in 2002, the South Korean government led by President Kim Dae Jung had embarked on a unique and conciliatory platform called the "Sunshine

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"Road Accident Galvanizes the Country: Deaths in Korea Ignite Anti-American Passion," *International Herald Tribune*, July 31, 2002, reprinted in *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/31/news/road-accident-galvanizes-the-country-deaths-in-korea-ignite.html.

[201] Susan Chira, "In South Korea, Anger at U.S. Spreads," *New York Times*, June 7, 1988, 1, 12, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1988/06/07/546688.html?pageNumber=1.

[202] Susan Chira, "THE WORLD: Anti-U.S. Feelings Amid Glamor of the Games, Korea Sees Warts on an Ally," *New York Times*, October 2, 1988, 136, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1988/10/02/143788.html?pageNumber=136.

[203] Susan Chira, "South Koreans' Anger at Rulers Is Also Turned Against U.S.," *New York Times*, June 20, 1987, 4, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1987/06/20/892287.html?pageNumber=4.

[204] Chira, "South Koreans' Anger at Rulers," 4.

[205] Jeffrey S. Robertson, "Anti-Americanism in South Korea and the Future of the U.S. Presence," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 9, no. 2 (2002): 94, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43107066.

Policy."[206] The ultimate goal of both Kim Dae Jung's presidency and the policy itself was a peaceful reunification with the North. This policy was enjoying widespread success from the South Korean populace and was taken seriously at all levels of South Korean society from the public to the government.[207] Robertson emphasizes that even at the level of the South Korean military, there was optimism about the policy evidenced by the fact that in 2002, the Ministry of Defence cancelled the publication of its White Paper due to its "unwillingness to designate North Korea as a 'primary enemy.'"[208]

President Bush's decision to include North Korea into the "Axis of Evil" alongside Iran and Iraq in his 2002 speech resulted in widespread anger against the United States in South Korea as many saw it as actively undermining the largely successful progress towards reunification. Kim notes that "Many Koreans felt that Bush's new policy put South Korea's security interests at risk and poured ice water on the country's efforts to continue overtures with the North."[209] An article from the *Canadian Broadcasting Network* from February 20, 2002, reported that President Bush's comments had resulted in anger against the United States in South Korea with protestors lining the streets of Seoul for his visit that month. One protestor remarked "We are not happy with Bush … because he declared North Korea an axis of evil. We are thinking the axis of evil is the president of the United States."[210]

The confluence of a varied set of historical factors related to economic development, urban migration and housing shortages, repressive and highly controlling authoritarian regimes, and eventually popular protest and democratization, all tie back to the physical structures of U.S. bases in South Korea. One could argue that whereas the U.S.-Soviet spotlight had moved on from the Koreas at sites of Cold War conflict, the role of U.S. bases on the peninsula continued to heavily influence a wide range of domestic and regional affairs well into the twenty-first century.

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[206] See Key-young Son, *South Korean Engagement Policies and North Korea: Identities, Norms and the Sunshine Policy* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[207] Haksoon Paik, "Assessment of the Sunshine Policy: A Korean Perspective," *Asian Perspective* 26, no. 3 (2002): 13–35.

[208] Robertson, "Anti-Americanism in South Korea," 90.

[209] Seung-Hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in Korea," 110.

[210] CBC News, "Unmoved by Protests, Bush Defends 'Axis of Evil' Remarks During Seoul Visit," February 20, 2002, https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/unmoved-by-protests-bush-defends-axis-of-evil-remarks-during-seoul-visit-1.354973.

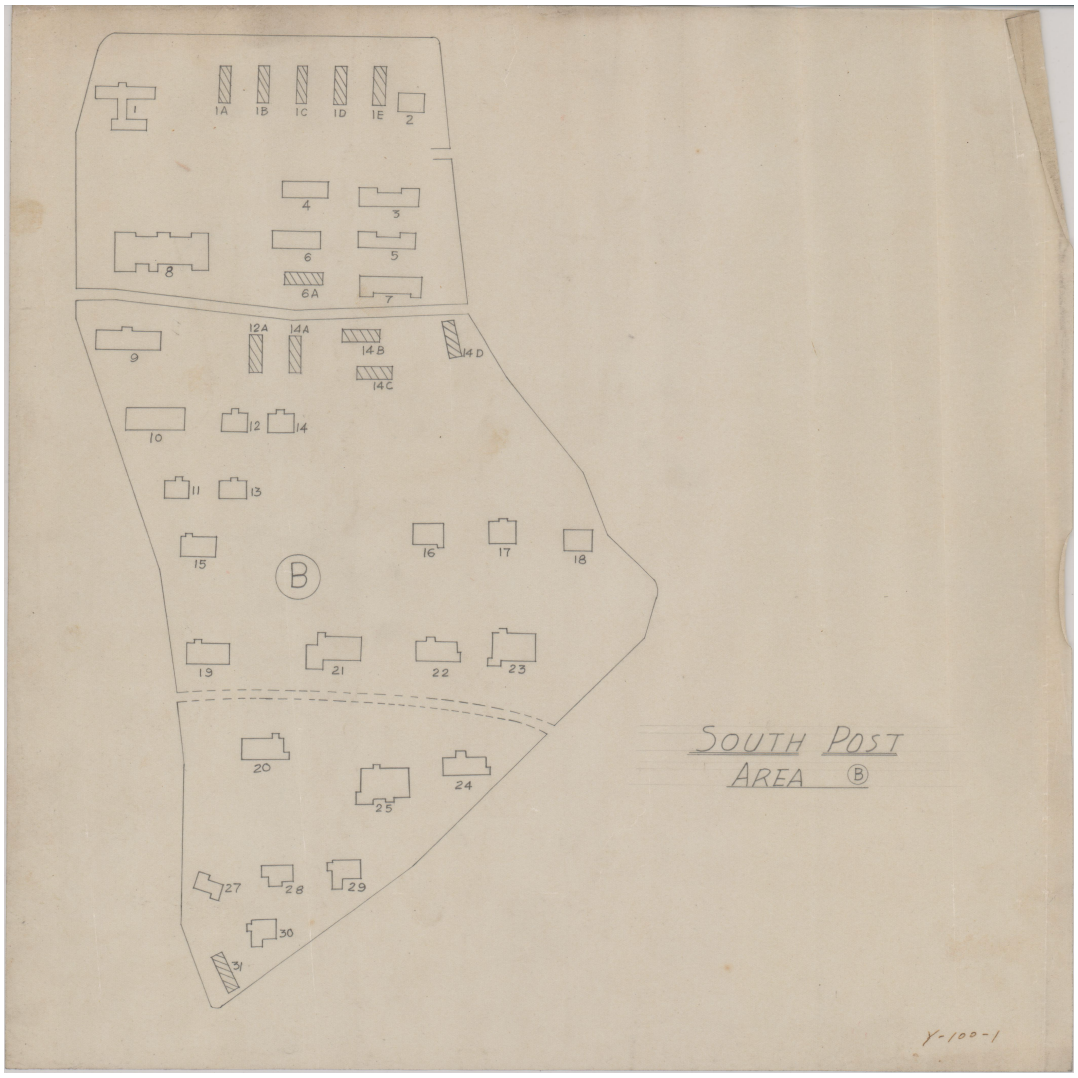

Figure 3 – Sketched plans for the South Post Area of Yongsan Garrison in the early 1950s.[211]

[211] Department of Defense, Department of the Army, 24th Engineer Construction Group, *Plans for the Yongsan Military Reservation, 1952–1953*, Architectural and Engineering Drawings, 1952–1953, RG 338: Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations (World War II and Thereafter), National Archives at College Park, MD, NAID 1253426, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1253426.

Figure 4 – Image of the South Post of Yongsan Garrison in 1969.[212]

[212] Yongsan Legacy, "Mapping Yongsan Garrison and Surroundings," photo and index by Rich Kent, accessed July 24, 2025, https://www.yongsanlegacy.org/p/mapping-yongsan-garrison-and-surroundings.

Figure 5 – Corresponding image key to Figure 4.[213]

[213] Yongsan Legacy, *"*Mapping Yongsan Garrison*."*

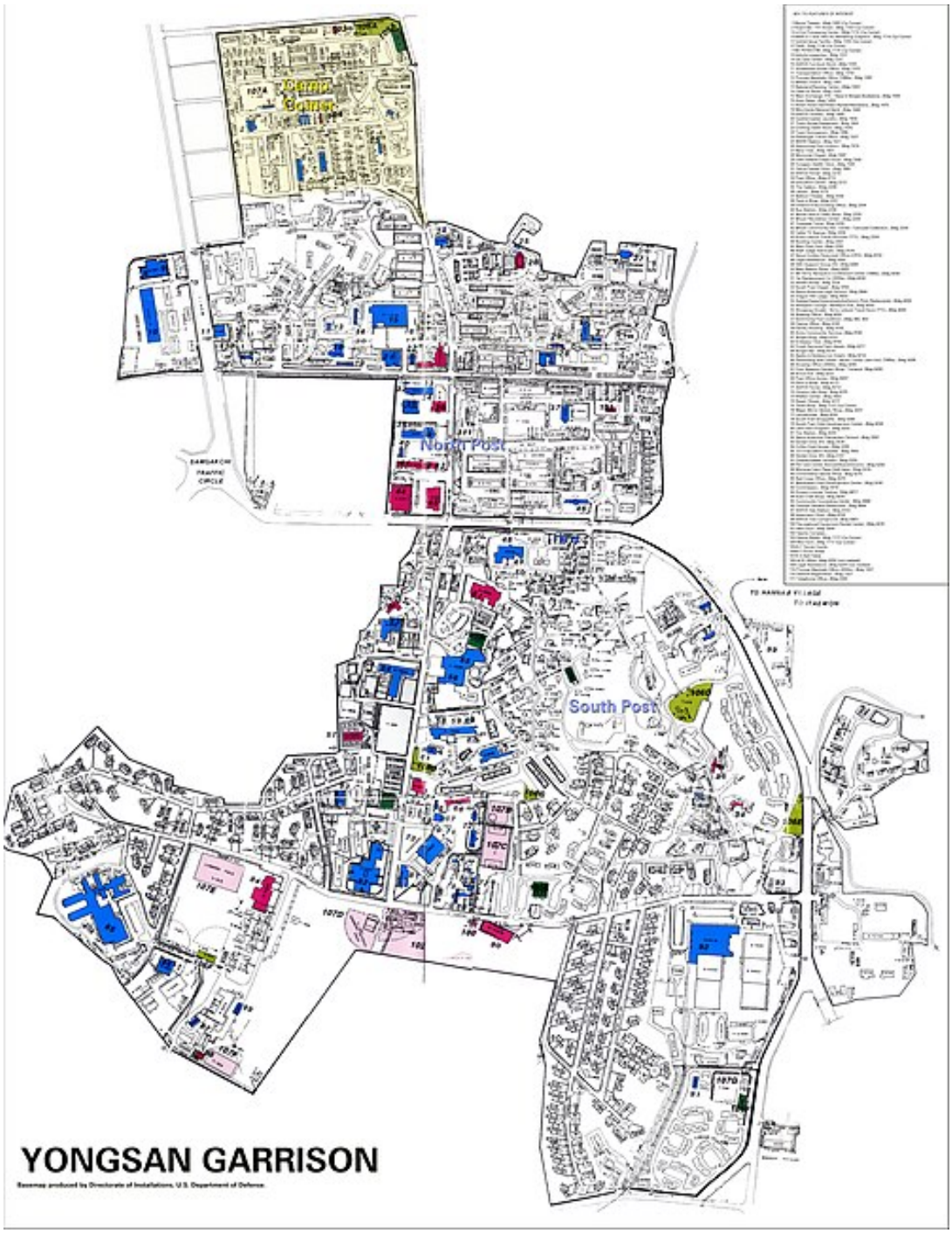

Figure 6 – Map of Yongsan Garrison from the late 1990s to early 2000s. The South Post, depicted in Figures 3 and 4 can be seen in the center. [214]

[214] U.S. Department of Defense, *Map of Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, South Korea*, basemap produced by the Directorate of Installations, public domain image, Wikimedia Commons, uploaded July 17, 2007, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yongsan.jpg.These maps reflect the significant growth of Yongsan garrison and immense urban architectural growth of the base area. For more on the intersection of geography, space,

Section IV: Mixed Ownership: 2004 – Present

In 2004, as part of the U.S. military's "Global Posture Review," the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) — to move the military forces stationed in Yongsan Garrison outside of the center of Seoul — and the Land Partnership Plan (LPP) — to consolidate and minimize U.S. forces on the peninsula — were adopted by both governments.[215] There is clear evidence that the proposed base closure was the result of a series of grievances from locals, a point of national political pride and assertion of national sovereignty, and part of U.S. global military realignment strategy.[216]

With the 2004 Land Swap deal between the United States and the Korean government, the land of Yongsan Garrison was given back to the Korean government (though in 2023 only 30% of the land has actually been handed back), and the United States military was given substantially *more* land further outside of the city. According to a report from the United States Government Accountability Office to Congressional Committees from 2021 titled *Burden Sharing: Benefits and Costs Associated with the U.S. Military Presence in Japan and South Korea* (2021), the desire to give Yongsan Garrison back to the Korean government was directly driven by considerations rooted in family and gender dynamics: "the United States also wanted to consolidate U.S. forces onto fewer and more permanent *bases to improve the quality of life for U.S. personnel stationed in South Korea*."[217] Architect Mark Gillem notes in his book *America Town: Building Outposts of*

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law, and power, see Jane Holder and Carolyn Harrison, eds., *Law and Geography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Waldo Tobler, "On the First Law of Geography: A Reply," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 2 (2004): 304–10.

[215] Tomonori Ishida argues that the realignment procedures, of which the YRP and LPP are key elements, actually resulted in a *further* integration of Korea into the U.S. global strategic military umbrella, "a broad look at the change in the U.S.–ROK relationship brought about by the alliance restructuring reveals that, due to that process, South Korea actually ended up being more deeply integrated into the U.S. global strategy." Tomonori Ishida refers specifically to the 2002 incident where two Korean schoolgirls were killed by two U.S. soldiers while they were off duty but then escaped prosecution. Tomonori Ishida, "Base Politics within the Framework of the U.S.–ROK Alliance Management Scheme," in *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of US Overseas Bases*, ed. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi (London: Routledge, 2020), 153.

[216] Claudia J. Kim, "Bases That Leave," 345. On the point of national pride, a publication from the Blue House (equivalent the United States' White House), recently stated "That a foreign army is stationed in the middle of our capital, from our point of view is, a wound to our national pride and a testimony to our painful past." Ishida, "Base Politics within the U.S.–ROK Alliance," 155.

[217] Emphasis added. U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Burden Sharing: Benefits and Costs Associated with the U.S. Military Presence in Japan and South Korea*, GAO-21-270, 28, (Washington, DC: GAO, March 17, 2021), https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-270.

Empire (2004), that "In Asia, military planners have tried to increase the number of family members that can accompany U.S. soldiers" and that in order "to achieve this goal, the United States wanted more land to build its sprawling compounds."[218]

The designation of Korea from a "hardship" assignment, where the majority of soldiers could not have their families accompanying them on their tours, was changed in 2010 through a process of "tour normalization" meaning families were now welcome. In an article in 2010, a U.S. army representative remarked, "Tour normalization is all about making Korea more like Europe and Japan … everyone who has family members and wants to bring them to Korea will be allowed to do so."[219] Gillem concluded in 2004 that "The United States apparently could not figure out how to accommodate more families without getting more land" and the evidence from the Congressional Report suggests that their solution was indeed the "Land Partnership Plan." [220]

The result is that the current installation, Camp Humphreys, located just outside of the city of Pyeongtaek and south of Seoul, "is projected to grow from approximately 10,000 personnel to more than 44,000 personnel, a whopping 390 percent increase, and will be adding 25 million square feet of facilities."[221] Though the agreement was intended to alleviate pressure from the negative spillover effects of the U.S. military stationed at Yongsan Garrison, the relocation and expansion move to Camp Humphreys has hurt Koreans elsewhere in the process.

The land needed for the "whopping 390 percent increase" in the size of the U.S. base was expropriated by the South Korean government, 2,328 acres, from Koreans living and working on farmland near the expansion site. Andrew Yeo noted that though the citizens were offered the current market value by the Korean government for their land, but the remaining residents who refused to sell were "de facto, … forced out."[222] The some hundreds of activists who declined to accept the government's offer for their land, and vehemently protested the expansion of the U.S. military base, remained barricaded on their land until May 6th, 2006, when, as *Stars and Stripes*

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[218] Mark Gillem, *America Town*, 270.

[219] R. Slade Walters, "U.S. Forces Korea Transformation Update," *U.S. Army*, January 12, 2010, https://www.army.mil/article/32794/u_s_forces_korea_transformation_update.

[220] Mark Gillem, *America Town*, 270.

[221] Walters, "U.S. Forces Korea Transformation Update."

[222] Andrew Yeo, "Local-National Dynamics and Framing in South Korean Anti-Base Movements," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 21, no. 2 (2006): 46.

reported, "Authorities ordered 10,000 blue-clad Korean National Police officers to the scene."[223] Thousands of riot police wielding water cannons stormed the barricaded school building that protestors had made their headquarters and engaged in a prolonged struggle with protestors that resulted in hundreds injured and 350 protestors arrested. After the violence concluded, they reported that "workers used backhoes to knock down trees, statuary, scaffolding, basketball backboards and other school playground items. Work gangs also hauled down a long plastic shelter the resisters had used for candlelight vigils and other meetings."[224] While the thousands of acres of land around Camp Humphreys have already been expropriated by the South Korean government and are squarely in the hands of the U.S. military, Yongsan Garrison has yet to be vacated by the United States.

Just as the previous decades of the relationship between the United States military and the South Korean government were fraught with economic, military, and geopolitical considerations and bargaining, eventually resulting in what several scholars have deemed a rising tide of "Anti-Americanism" in the peninsula, Yongsan Garrison endures. Despite global realignment procedures to consolidate the site, hand over the land to the South Korean government, and to reduce the U.S. military's footprint from the heart of the South Korean capital, plans to turn the land into a national park reminiscent of Central Park in New York or Hyde Park in London remain unfulfilled. Despite the 2004 Land Swap Deal with the South Korean government, the United States military not only massively expanded the site of Camp Humphreys, making it the largest U.S. foreign military base in the world, it also never entirely left Yongsan Garrison.

Despite the policy directives from the United States and the South Korean governments and militaries, "The argument regarding developing a park has been repeated over three decades" to no avail.[225] Serving as a sobering reminder to how U.S. foreign military bases still manage to render land unusable after their decommissioning — either due to environmental, legal, or political contingencies — the Yongsan Park Project has halted mainly due to "the incomplete transfer of the

[223] Franklin Fisher, "Dramatic Raid Ousts S. Korean Anti-Base Activists," *Stars and Stripes*, May 6, 2006, https://www.stripes.com/news/dramatic-raid-ousts-s-korean-anti-base-activists-1.48615.

[224] Fisher, "Dramatic Raid Ousts S. Korean Anti-Base Activists."

[225] Choi and Seo, "Process of Creating Yongsan Park," 7.

US military base owing to the international, military, diplomatic, and political changes between South Korea and the US."[226]

The amount of literature regarding base closures is comparatively slim when placed next to the work on the political, economic, military implications of base *presence*. There does, however, already exist a consensus that the closure of military bases (domestic and foreign) does *not* yield immediately useable land. Claudia Kim describes the effects succinctly: "the mere discontinuation of the functions of military bases as war infrastructure does not make the sites readily transformable. Despite what policymakers and local communities often hope, bases that leave do inherit characteristics and the identity of militarised landscapes, which continue to plague their future."[227] The case of Yongsan Garrison fits such a description exactly, but also remains even *further* complicated due to the entanglement of political and military objectives of defense.

Given the changing nature of warfare with increasingly sophisticated technology in the twenty-first century, the need for large Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) have begun to become obsolete. The presence of U.S. aircraft carriers in the Pacific (essentially mobile military bases), and large military bases in Guam, Pearl Harbor, and Okinawa, make the need for physical bases in areas such as Yongsan Garrison unnecessary given how quickly deployment of munitions or troops from the former sites can be operationalized. Studies from as early as the beginning of the 2000s have suggested that there is little difference between response times (either of moving troops or firing weapons) from foreign military bases to those bases within the United States itself.[228] Despite this, the YRP and LPP were delayed in 2003 because the Korean parliament passed a resolution against the move citing that it would mean the "abandonment of the U.S.F.K.'s capability to defend the capital."[229]

Running in tandem with President Moo-hyun's desire to assert national sovereignty by reclaiming the site of Yongsan Garrison, he also broached the question of a transfer of Wartime Operational Command (OPCON) to Korea from U.S. hands. The structure of military command stretched back to the Sygmun Rhee administration in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War

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[226] Choi and Seo, "Process of Creating Yongsan Park," 6.

[227] Claudia J. Kim, "Bases That Leave," 343.

[228] Vine, *Base Nation*, 300.

[229] Ishida, "Base Politics within the U.S.–ROK Alliance," 161.

and has been in a state of flux ever since. But similar to many of the issues that cloud the thinking regarding the closure or relocation of U.S. foreign military bases, the difficulties associated with the closure of U.S. bases like Yongsan are plagued by Cold War perspectives from both sides of the Pacific. Seoyeon Yoon in his article "South Korea's Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate: From an Organizational Perspective," notes that one expert within OPCON remarked in an interview that the older generation of military experts in Korea has consistently lobbied to keep the current structure because "discarding the system would mean that what they had done is wrong."[230] The issue of OPCON, formally broached by President Moo-hyun 20 years ago, has yet to be fully addressed as of 2025.

To say that the United States has, after (and before) 1945, exerted economic, political, or military power to ensure different types of access to countries across the world through the use of military bases would not be a mischaracterization when applied to South Korea. In the context of a post–Cold War framework, however, the situation is more complicated. The controversies associated with the Yongsan Garrison after democratization in the 1990s have, in large part, become a domestically Korean phenomenon. The refusal of the United States to bear the financial responsibility for cleaning up heavily polluted environments after base closure, flying in the face of legal provisions contained in the now active SOFA, are certainly exercises in imperialistic behavior.[231] Similarly, the efforts to relocate forces to Camp Humphreys and expand those facilities to project force "within and beyond the region," at the expense of local farmers and landowners in the region are also reminiscent of previous generations of unequal bargaining within international diplomacy.[232] However, in the case of Yongsan Garrison, local governments, the city of Seoul and the national government, as well as the citizens of the local area, have taken on a fuller voice in

[230] Seoyeon Yoon, "South Korea's Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate: From an Organizational Perspective," *Journal of International and Area Studies* (2015): 98.

[231] There are still many ongoing legal cases all over the globe regarding the culpability for environmental damage caused by U.S. foreign military bases and who will pay for the related cleanup. For literature regarding the situation in Korea in particular, see Alisa Won, "Environmental Subsidies under the GATT and the Polluter Pays Principle: A Case Study of the Republic of Korea," *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review* 5, no. 3 (1993): 761–82 and Yusun Woo, "Environmental Problems on the U.S. Military Bases in the Republic of Korea: Who Is Responsible for the Cleanup Expenses and Whose Environmental Standards Will Apply," *Southeastern Environmental Law Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 577–612.

[232] Yoon, "South Korea's Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate," 98.

such debates. The United States military still fundamentally affects the processes regarding military basing, but its word is not final.

One of the (many) difficulties involved in the transition of the Yongsan Garrison into Korean hands, let alone the transformation into a public park, is simply the availability of information regarding the site itself. Myungjin Shin et al. notes that "Because the project is closely related to the national defence agenda, it suffers from confidential limitations imposed on the public access information."[233] Information about the site is consistently disseminated from U.S. and ROK government agencies and militaries in a fashion that excludes both local Koreans from engagement with the construction or planning process, and further complicates long-term planning for architects.

In an interview from 2023, Ludo Dings, a landscape architect working on the Yongsan Park project for Dutch architecture firm West8, described the difficulties of working on a project with such limited information. He noted that "From a lot of Dutch projects, we have so many documents for these tiny spaces … and Yongsan Park being the heart of a big metropolis, there [are] not many documents that we have received."[234] He discussed the very real logistical difficulties in working on a project with so many different legal jurisdictions and aspects of land ownership, even though the U.S. military has supposedly "closed" the base at Yongsan: "Our client is the ministry of land, transportation, and infrastructure and the land is still currently owned by the U.S. military so a lot of the maps could not be shared even by the ministry to us because, of course, the [U.S.] military still has the rights of the area."[235] He noted that "At the beginning we were not even able to take photographs on the site."[236]

Another aspect of base closures that has received substantial attention from both academics as well as the public, has been the issue of lingering environmental damage. Domestically, U.S. bases closed under the BRAC process have generally complied with taking responsibility economically for the clean-up process necessary to convert the former base areas into useable sites.

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[233] Myungjin Shin, Jung Hyun Woo, and Hyeyoung Choi, "Designing a Public Engagement Process for Long-Term Urban Park Development Project," *PLOS ONE* 17, no. 5 (May 24, 2022): e0268804, 2, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0268804.

[234] Ludo Dings, interview by the author, June 7, 2023.

[235] Dings, interview.

[236] Dings, interview.

Overseas, the military has been less forthcoming. Claudia J. Kim notes that in Yongsan specifically, that "At least 12,235 square metres of land around the base … have been found to be contaminated due to multiple oil leaks from the base" and that "The city government, which has paid for cleaning up the contaminated areas outside the base, has routinely sued the central government to get compensation for the very high costs — and won all cases." [237] Dings also remarked on the environmental concerns, that "From our perspective, it's very uncertain … the moment when we started the project there was no information about any environmental pollution … we were also not able to even investigate this, so it was just a big red flag."[238] In the interview, he highlighted the tensions with working on a project that has so many different interested parties, from the U.S military, to the central Korean government, to the local Seoul government: "what we hear later, is that everything that is related to the environmental situation of the site is also *not* related to park development so they kind of separated them budget-wise" and furthermore, that "one of the difficulties in the project is that we as a design office kind of created the continuity of the design … there is nobody in the [client office] that has been there more than two or three years and we [have been] involved in the park for 11 or 12 years."[239]

Despite concerns voiced by different environmental groups, as recently as 2022, pilot programs have been introduced by the government to welcome citizens to the park in organized tours.[240] In May of 2023, South Korean president Yoon inaugurated the opening of a "Children's Park" on the site.[241] Despite these efforts, however, construction of the main park has yet to officially begin, nearly 15 years after the West8 had won the contract.[242]

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[237] Claudia J. Kim, "Bases That Leave," 346.

[238] Dings, interview.

[239] Dings, interview.

[240] Yoon-ju Kim and Nam Jong-young, "Carcinogens, Toxins Detected in 66% of Yongsan Park Land Returned by US Forces," *The Hankyoreh (English Edition)*, June 8, 2022, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/1046213.html.

[241] David Choi, "South Korean President Opens Children's Park on Site That Belonged to Yongsan Garrison," *Stars and Stripes*, May 5, 2023, https://www.stripes.com/branches/army/2023-05-05/yongsan-garrison-childrens-park-yoon-10018831.html.

[242] Dings, interview. The site is still only partially open though there are building developments overlooking the park. See, Halin Lee, "The Parkside Suite, the First Pre-Sale Complex for the 'The Parkside Seoul' Development Project," *Maeil Business Newspaper (MK)*, July 4, 2025, https://www.mk.co.kr/en/realestate/11359526.

The presence of the United States military in the Yongsan garrison in the center of Seoul — the most prominent example of U.S. basing in the country — has remained a significant source of tension between the Korean and U.S. governments to this day. As of July 2022, despite an agreement reached between the two governments for the return of the land where the garrison was built, "South Korea has so far received about 30% of the garrison's roughly 500 acres."[243] Despite these lags in the program, the South Korean news agency, Yonhap News, reported in June of 2022 that "The new Yoon Suk-yeol government relocated the presidential office from Cheong Wa Dae to the defence ministry compound in the Yongsan district" as a part of an effort to recast the space away from a "symbol of imperial power" and to be "closer to the people."[244] The Yongsan garrison, architecture and design planning, land use and geography, and U.S. foreign military bases in general, can all be understood as having a dynamic and fluid relationship that ties back to notions of power. Kim Dovey highlights the importance of the "nexus of place to power" commenting that "sense of place is inextricably wrapped up with questions of authority and authenticity."[245] The importance of physical spaces to meaning is complex and multilayered and it is important to remember that "places are lived and embodied; they are structured, ordered, transformed, infiltrated and negotiated; they are symbolized, packaged and marketed."[246]

The continually contested physical space represented by Yongsan garrison can and should be understood within a wider consideration of power relations among nations, but also of tensions inherent in the growth of modern nation states, as well as landscapes inhabited by individuals with their own goals, desires, and motivations, all interacting within a consciously and deliberately constructed urban environment. A key element to the construction of this urban environment is the control of historical memory and narratives about history. The leaders behind the *Yongsan Legacy Project*, as well as other activist organizations that desire a greater participatory role in the development of the Yongsan Park, understand the importance of these spaces of contested memory.

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[243] Thomas Maresca, "Former U.S. Military Base in South Korea to Become Green Park in Heart of Seoul," *UPI*, July 1, 2022, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/01/Yongsan-Garrison-Park-military-base-Seoul/9551656675158/.

[244] Oh Seok-min, "Gov't to Open Yongsan Park Site Near Presidential Office on Trial Basis," *Yonhap News Agency*, June 2, 2022, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220602003700320.

[245] Kim Dovey, "Making Sense of Place: Introduction," in *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 11.

[246] Dovey, *Becoming Places*, 11.

[247] The *Yongsan Legacy* website notes that "Most people only see in Yongsan Garrison buildings built in various periods, and this is a part of a memory, but the buildings and the places are only empty shells once USFK move out of Yongsan Garrison."[248] They are empty shells insofar as they are uninhabited, but they leave behind the opportunity for different groups of people to assert and recast different historical narratives upon the physical environment. Much like the controversial government-sponsored memorial for the Gwangju Uprising (5.18) in 1980, according to Linda Sue Lewis as "one of the most important political events in late twentieth-century Korean history," the political and symbolic use of physical space can be one of the most powerful tools in cementing or contesting historical memory.[249]

Key to understanding *all* U.S. foreign military bases across the world, but especially to understanding how the site of Yongsang Garrison has functioned, and continues to do so in Korean society, is the notion of "territorology" as highlighted by Andrea Mubi Brighenti. Brighenti insists that territory is better understood as "as an act or practice rather than an object or physical space" and that "a more attentive consideration of contemporary territorial reconfigurations inevitably leads to the recognition that in every social environment territories exist at a multiplicity of different scales and degrees of visibility, in a state of constant proliferation and transformation."[250]

Yongsan Garrison sits squarely in such a territory of liminality — a piece of land owned by the United States but not fully turned over to the Korean government — an historically contested

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[247] Choi and Seo note that "In the planning process of Yongsan Park, communication with local residents was done unilaterally and formally through public hearings. However, autonomous groups of local residents gradually increased. Citizen groups with various subjects and interests have organized, including Yongsan Parkie, a group of students interested in the park; Gate22, consisting of local artists; and Yongsan Legacy, which is focused on archiving the Yongsan base. However, they have had no opportunity to form solidarity or to participate in the planning process of the park. The Yongsan Forum, which included local politicians, professors, and experts, was spontaneously formed in 2016 but has not continued." Choi and Seo, "Process of Creating Yongsan Park," 7.

[248] Yongsan Legacy, "About," *Yongsan Legacy: A Virtual Memorial*, accessed July 2025, https://www.yongsanlegacy.org/about.

[249] For further reading on the Gwangju uprising, see: Henry Scott-Stokes and Lee Jai Eui, eds., *The Kwangju Uprising: Eyewitness Press Accounts of Korea's Tiananmen* (New York: Sharpe, 2000) Linda S. Lewis, *Laying Claim to the Memory of May: A Look Back at the 1980 Kwangju Uprising* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Sallie Yea, "Rewriting Rebellion and Mapping Memory in South Korea: The (Re)presentation of the 1980 Kwangju Uprising through Mangwol-dong Cemetery," *Urban Studies* 39, no. 9 (2002): 1551–72. Gi-Wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang, eds., *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18 Uprising in Korea's Past and Present* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); and especially, Taet'ongnyŏng Sosok, Ŭimunsa Chinsang, and Kyumyŏng Wiwŏnhoe, *A Hard Journey to Justice: First Report by the Presidential Truth Commission on Suspicious Deaths of the Republic of Korea* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2004).

[250] Brighenti, "On Territorology," 53–4.

space of memory between the Korean state and the Korean people — a former Japanese military base and South Korea's first national public park future public park. This space, as a former site of a U.S. foreign military base, holds all of the characteristics of "secuityscape" as outlined by Hugh Gusterson, but exists today in a state of flux, in what Taejin Hwang describes as "the militarized landscape and its coloniality."[251] He concludes that within the former site of Yongsan Garrison "not only the military camps as representations of official, *political* centers of a foreign military power, but also the unofficial, *vernacular* landscapes of their surroundings — are evident in the Americanism built atop the remnants of the Japanese imperial space."[252]

In 2018 at the Yongsan War Memorial, a new exhibit titled "Yongsan: The Unreachable Land" was premiered. The curator of the exhibit, historian Kim Chun-soo, remarked to *The Korea Times* that "Yongsan Garrison is still recognized as a forbidden space most Koreans cannot easily reach or visit, so the history of this space is largely unknown."[253] In the same article, author Jon Dunbar noted that "So much history has unfolded behind those high walls, and so much of Korean society has felt the influence of this secretive military installation in myriad ways, many of which historians are still working to trace." [254] Statements such as these emphasize the need to better understand that space, and its history, in the wider context of both Korean and global history, a history that remains unknown to many South Koreans, despite its centrality, physically and psychologically, to the Korean people. One anonymous Korean man even remarked at the 2018 exhibit, "To me, Yongsan Garrison is like North Korea."[255]

Section V: Conclusion

The future of the Yongsan Park project remains uncertain. At any point, different political or military contingencies could radically alter the course of the park's trajectory or end the project

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[251] Hugh Gusterson, *People of the Bomb: Portraits of America's Nuclear Complex* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 166; Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 124.

[252] Hwang, "Militarized Landscapes of Yongsan," 124.

[253] Jon Dunbar, "US Army Base Called 'Unreachable Land'," *The Korea Times*, April 9, 2018, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/lifestyle/others/20180409/us-army-base-called-unreachable-land.

[254] Dunbar, "US Army Base Called 'Unreachable Land'."

[255] Dunbar, "US Army Base Called 'Unreachable Land'."

altogether. The looming and ever-present threat of North Korea keeps U.S. soldiers on the peninsula and serves as an ever-ready justification for both governments to either increase or readjust military forces. If the park construction does continue, other questions will arise. How will the central government insist on depicting the history of the site by the Japanese and by the U.S. soldiers that occupied it? Do they want to emphasize the barbarity of the Japanese occupation while downplaying the U.S. tenancy? Chances are they will not be highlighting the role of the U.S. military, the Rhee and Park regimes, and the unprecedented growth of the "*chaebols*" that have even more domestic and global economic influence than they did decades ago at the expense of average Koreans.

In many ways, the park itself offers the opportunity not just to repurpose a physical space in the center of Seoul, ostensibly for the people who live there, but also offers an opportunity to repurpose an historical narrative about both that space and those who have occupied it. For reasons of political expediency, it is in neither the best interests for the South Korean or U.S. governments to emphasize the disastrous effects of the U.S. military's presence on the peninsula, from environmental damage and fighter-jet accidents to rapes and murders. During the period of democratization after the 1990s, the growth of anti-Americanism was a piece of leverage for Korean leaders to curry favour with their constituents and secure votes. In the 2020s, such stark opposition has slowed down but has become internationalized through the use of anti-base and solidarity movements across the globe, linking the issues of U.S military base presence across many communities. In fact, the very existence of such wide-ranging and geographically distant groups emphasizes the point that the issues presented by the presence of U.S. foreign military bases are both simultaneously local *and* global in nature.

The origins of this basing infrastructure, and thus a key element of U.S. power abroad, have important historical roots. As Samir Amin notes, "The military power of the United States has been systematically constructed since 1945, covering the entire planet which is divided into regions based on the integrated system of U.S. military commands."[256] However, to cast such bases as purely military in nature obfuscates the more malleable and contextual effects that bases have on local peoples and environments. In Seoul, the soldiers stationed in Yongsan Garrison did not have to fire a single shot to radically alter the urban landscape and South Korean housing market for millions of Koreans. Ballistic missiles did not have to be fired for U.S. soldiers to engage in the

[256] Amin, *The Liberal Virus*, 76.

black-market sale of PX foodstuffs and change Korean culinary practices, "PX and American military camp food products also influenced the local cuisine, such as the popular spicy stew, budae jjigae (literally, "army base stew")."[257]

U.S. foreign military bases operate on a horizontal level by circling the globe, embedded in over half the countries of the world, but their effects are also felt vertically, penetrating various aspects of foreign communities in different and historically contextual ways. The function and the effects of foreign bases in Korea will not the be same in Germany, or Italy, or Saudi Arabia. But understanding that each base does not affect each community in a "totalizing" way, both acknowledges the significance of localized historical trajectories which, in many cases, supersede the Cold War in the development and effect of such bases, but also emphasizes the agency of individuals and communities that live in the shadow of such relics of Cold War imperialism and the long twentieth century.

In many ways, U.S. foreign military bases are time capsules. They contain within them histories laden with international controversies, interactions between U.S. soldiers and local communities, cultural exchange and cultural imperialism, and when looked at cohesively, a global geopolitical military strategy from the Cold War to the present day. They also help us to recontextualize periodization of key developments in national and regional histories, highlighting the effects of layered colonialization which are not always acknowledged in works on Cold War history. Key to understanding the role of U.S. bases in South Korea, are issues related to land, architecture, urbanism, economics, and politics. By contrast, in Saudi Arabia, infrastructure and religion remain some of the more important lenses by which to understand both Saudi Arabian history, culture, and society. To understand Italy's growth into the twenty-first century we need to foreground the threat of Soviet communism, regional Mediterranean politics, and legal analysis.

Base studies though, like all works of history or politics, are ultimately rooted in the lives of individuals. George Breen, a young man drafted to fight in the Korean War remembered in 1958, "Children from the Orphanage were invited to the 570th (Niblo Barracks) near lunch time. In our mess hall, there were small, round tables. Two G.I.'s and two Korean children were seated at each table on Thanksgiving Day."[258] Reflecting on the moment after the war he thought, "There is a

[257] Hwang, "An Indispensable Edge," 106.

[258] "Thanksgiving in Korea, 1958," *Yongsan Legacy*, accessed July 21, 2024, http://yongsanlegacy.org/thanksgiving-in-korea-1958/.

nostalgia feeling as I remember this. Same was done for Christmas. I can't help but wonder what kind of life these kids had?"[259]

From the most intimate and individual, to the level of high politics, U.S. foreign military bases have continued to exert vast influence across the globe in varying ways. But in order to truly grasp that influence, they must be viewed both separately and individually, lest we lose the stories of individuals like Breen, as well as globally, lest we forget the profound influence that these bases continue to exert on the international community.

This network of global U.S. military bases that expanded unprecedently during the Second World War and became key points of global U.S. power projection during the Cold War, still loom large in the era of post–9/11 global security. One day after a meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on August 19, 2023 at Camp David, *The New York Times* reported that the three nations had agreed on terms for a new defense pact which included increased bilateral talks, further joint military exercises, and the establishment of a "three-way hotline for crisis communications."[260] China's President, Xi Jinping accused the United States of leading other countries in an "all around containment, encirclement and suppression of China."[261] Lu Chao, an expert on Korean Peninsula issues, concluded that "It is appropriate to say that the Camp David summit is possibly a starting shot for a new Cold War."[262]

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[259] "Thanksgiving in Korea, 1958."

[260] David Pierson and Olivia Wang, "A Defense Agreement Likely to Deepen Chinese Rancor," *The New York Times*, August 19, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/19/world/asia/china-biden-camp-david.html.

[261] The statements made by Jinping are highly reminiscent of the words of Soviet Ambassador to the US, Nikolai Novikov, in the early years of the Cold War in 1947, "The increase in peacetime military potential and the organization of a large number of naval and air bases both in the US and beyond its borders are clear indicators of the US desire to establish world domination … the tactical training of the US Army for war with the USSR as a future enemy, the situating of American strategic bases in regions from which strikes can be launched on Soviet territory, the intensified training and reinforcement of Arctic regions as tactical approaches to the USSR, and attempts to pave the way in Germany and Japan to use them in a war against the USSR testify to this." Nikolai Novikov, *Telegram from Nikolai Novikov, Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., to Soviet Leadership*, September 27, 1946, AVP SSSR, f. 06, op. 8, p. 45, p. 759, published in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* no. 11 (1990): 148–54, trans. Gary Goldberg, Wilson Center Digital Archive, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/telegram-nikolai-novikov-soviet-ambassador-us-soviet-leadership; Pierson and Wang, "A Defense Agreement Likely to Deepen Chinese Rancor."

[262] Pierson and Wang, "A Defense Agreement Likely to Deepen Chinese Rancor."

Chapter IV: Saudi Arabia

However much money, whatever the projects, people are the essential ingredient
—Bricks, Sand, and Marble U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947–1991

Introduction

In August of 1996, Roger Thomas, a U.S. Army Corps engineer stationed in the Middle East, recalled his experiences working on the Saudi Arabian National Guard and King Abdulaziz Military Academy building after being transferred from Oman. When other Corps employees asked what he had been working on, he replied, "A couple of housing packages."[1] When asked about the cost of the project, he replied, "a billion dollars." His colleagues balked at the number: "you mean a million, right?" He answered "No, I mean a billion."[2]

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, An organization signed into law by Congress in 1779 and which was "instrumental in some of the hard-fought battles of the Revolutionary War," was now building billion-dollar housing projects in Oman.[3] The Corps itself emphasizes its domestic focus, stating on its website, "As in its earliest days, the Corps of Engineers still thinks of itself as an organization ready to help build the nation's infrastructure."[4] Nevertheless, the Corps has also

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[1] Robert P. Grathwol and Donita M. Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand, and Marble: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947–1991* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History and Corps of Engineers, 2009), 626, https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll4/id/295/; Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 625.

[2] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 626.

[3] United States Army Corps of Engineers, "The U.S. Corps of Engineers: A Brief History: The Beginnings to 1815," *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters Website*, accessed February 17, 2025, https://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/Brief-History-of-the-Corps/Beginnings/.

[4] United States Army Corps of Engineers, "Brief History: The Beginnings to 1815."

been a central diplomatic force operating in the Middle East during and after the Cold War period. This chapter will focus on *that* legacy.

U.S. foreign military bases in Saudi Arabia have been conspicuously absent from mainstream academic analysis regarding foreign bases, despite U.S. military presence on the peninsula being directly and explicitly linked to the attacks of September 11th by a number of prominent Saudi clerics, Osama bin Laden included.[5] In one of the few works on military bases in Saudi Arabia, *Gulf Security and the U.S. Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (2015), Geoffrey F. Gresh notes that "Despite the historical and current global importance of foreign military bases for Great Powers such as the United States, the literature on base politics is rather sparse and barely addresses the broader Middle East region."[6]

A *New York Times* article from September 26, 1976, detailed the unprecedented scale of construction led by the United States Army Corps of Engineers on the Saudi Arabian peninsula, calling the US$144 billion development program, "the largest construction effort in peacetime history," and "the largest case of United States government employees being contracted to another nation."[7] Both the project scale and quality were impressive: a State Department official remarked that the Corps "do a job quickly. They do it with a minimum of bother to the Saudi bureaucracy. And they leave behind a tangible product. In my opinion the Corps has done a tremendous job of

[5] See, John Miller, *interview with Osama bin Laden*, "Greetings, America. My Name Is Osama Bin Laden," *Esquire*, February 1, 1999, reprinted on *FRONTLINE*, PBS, accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/miller.html.

[6] Geoffrey F. Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 11. Masaki Mizobuchi provides an historical explanation for this lack of literature in relation to the Middle East and basing politics. He notes that prior to the First Gulf War (1990), the "Twin Pillars" policy adopted by the United States in the region – to delegate "much of its security responsibilities to its allies while minimizing its engagement in the Middle East" – meant that scholars had few bases outside of those in locations such as Saudi Arabia to analyze. He continues, however, noting that it has been "relatively recent" that the United States has begun to expand its military basing presence in the Gulf and "adopted direct political and military involvement in the Middle East." The keystone event in Mizobuchi's analysis was the Gulf Crisis (1990-1991) which served as "an important watershed" for both U.S. military and basing involvement in the region, but also scholarly attention. Masaki Mizobuchi, "Strategic Asset or Political Burden?: US Military Bases and Base Politics in Saudi Arabia," in *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of US Overseas Bases*, ed. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi (London: Routledge, 2020), 111–132, 112. Since the early 1990s, there has been a greater military interest by the United States in the Gulf region made even more visceral and involved since the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). U.S. basing and military access to other Gulf countries since 1990 include a variety of different agreements between the U.S. and Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, and Oman.

[7] Tom Stevenson, "Army Engineers in Arabia: Why?," *New York Times*, September 26, 1976.

enhancing our reputation in Saudi Arabia."[8] Another government official commented, "You might have to go back to the days of the British empire to find arrangements that parallel these."[9] The benefits of these projects ran both ways, with the Corps acknowledging that "the Saudi Arabian program had also benefited the American economy."[10]

Though their involvement in these projects yielded US$335 million generated by 133 design contracts for U.S. businesses and over U.S.$1 billion in materials and equipment from the United States, the role of the Corps went beyond construction expertise. The members of the Corps did not see themselves as simply military contractors, but as invaluable actors in forging U.S.-Saudi diplomatic relations. Their history notes that "Maintaining a close working relationship with the US embassy in each country was mandatory" because in addition to "design, construction, or management," each member of the Corps of Engineers was also acting as "a representative of the United States," and thus "had to be adept in diplomacy."[11] Far from operating independently of wider military or political policy by the United States government, since the Second World War, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been "intensely involved with their employees because they had responsibility for the whole life of the staff — from housing, to education of dependents, to medical care, to recreation."[12] During the Cold War period and beyond, the construction projects of the Corps in far-flung locales such as Turkey, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia, were essential to the extension of U.S. power abroad. As with the impact of the Yongsan Garrison, the U.S. military bases constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have play a significant and influential role in both domestic Saudi politics as well as in the broader global construction of U.S. power.

Though Robert Lacy notes that "By the end of September 2003 there was not a single US soldier, tank or plane left on the soil of Saudi Arabia apart from a few long-term military trainers,"[13] the same can't be said today. David Vine points out that after 2003, the United States both kept

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[8] Stevenson, "Army Engineers in Arabia: Why?," *New York Times*, September 26, 1976.

[9] Stevenson, "Army Engineers in Arabia: Why?," *New York Times*, September 26, 1976.

[10] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 581.

[11] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 622.

[12] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 623.

[13] Robert Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia* (New York: Viking, 2009), 291.

personnel in the country to be ready to re-use the previously vacated bases used in the first Gulf War (1999), and also that a "secret drone base" had been recently built as well.[14] Despite outward appearances, the Gulf did *not* wane in international political and military strategy for the United States; rather, Saudi Arabia continues to be one of the pillars of U.S. support in the region. The legacies of the projection of U.S. soft power emanating from U.S. foreign military bases in Saudi Arabia can be readily found in the far-reaching consequences in the ways that they affected the growth and development of the Saudi state through infrastructure, private business, and military security strategy.

Saudi Arabia represents a case within this research where conventional approaches to understanding the role of the United States military, and its projection of U.S. power in the region, are simply insufficient to accurately describe the situation either historically or at present. As David B. Roberts emphasizes in his recent publication *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies: Continuity Amid Change* (2023), "to reflect on security concerns in a traditional way, with a majoritarian focus on military dynamics, would be too simplistic, especially in the Gulf monarchies."[15] He concludes that in adopting an exclusive focus on military dynamics, "subtleties highlighted by recent debates and developments in critical security studies" are left by the wayside and we inherently lose "a more nuanced grasp of the meaning of security."[16] Unlike the case of South Korea where military bases were embedded physically, architecturally, and culturally within the fabric of South Korea society, the United States' military presence in Saudi Arabia is, due to its political sensitivity, deliberately clandestine in order to reduce the potential for "blowback." Even before the deadly car bomb attacks on the Khobar Towers in 1996 which killed 19 U.S. servicemembers and injured nearly five hundred more, and which served as the impetus for the United States military to operate on highly secure military facilities far away from any urban centers in the Kingdom, the United States military had already had a fundamental and vital role in the growth and development of the Saudi state. In Saudi Arabia, instead of large and visible military bases, the conflation of U.S. military power with private business has been the cornerstone of their military relationship.

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[14] Vine, *Base Nation*, 42.

[15] David B. Roberts, *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies: Continuity Amid Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 6.

[16] Roberts, *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies*, 6

In order to fully grasp the extent of this type of relationship between the two states, clearly delineated categories of "public" or "private" businesses or interests, or even "military" or "non-military" power, cease to be useful signposts in this context. Laleh Khalili notes that to best understand this type of relationship, "we have to accept that many of our conceptual categories of public/private, state/corporation, domestic/foreign or civilian/military are simply inadequate."[17] The United States military, and private business such as ARMACO, the very first U.S.-owned company operating in the region since the 1930s, have been working hand-in-hand for decades within Saudi Arabia and in many cases, operating with similar and overlapping goals and methods. In fact, in place of "hard" military power in the form of soldiers or bases, in Saudi Arabia, it has been the United States Army Corps of Engineers more than any other entity which has wielded incredible transformative power within the Kingdom since the 1930s.

Khalili points directly to this unique role for the Corps, pointing out that in Saudi Arabia, "the US military has been a major geoeconomic actor that has wielded its infrastructural power via its US Army Corps of Engineers' overseas activities."[18] The Corps has been involved in projects as diverse as managing construction projects for a series of massive multibillion-dollar "military cities" throughout the country, to building and designing a "nation-wide television system" for Saudi Arabia in the 1950s.[19] Mazaher Koruzhde and Ronald W. Cox insist that the "U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf goes well beyond the geopolitics of 'oil for security,' which has been the focus of many scholarly studies."[20] The nature of this relationship, in the eyes of Koruzhde and Cox, is centered around a type of military industrial complex involving the United States military and government, private U.S. military contractors, and the Saudi state. They argue that "U.S. policy can best be understood as protecting the economic and geopolitical interests of a U.S.-Saudi transnational capitalist investment bloc that derives steady profits from the Persian Gulf" and that ultimately, "Only when a comprehensive picture of the economic links between U.S. and

[17] Laleh Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military: The Geoeconomic Role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Arabian Peninsula," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 4 (2018): 913, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066117742955.

[18] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 911.

[19] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[20] Mazaher Koruzhde and Ronald W. Cox, "The Transnational Investment Bloc in U.S. Policy Toward Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf," *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 10, no. 1 (2022): 4, https://doi.org/10.25148/CRCP.10.1.010572.

Saudi Arabia is drawn can we fully grasp the political and security implications of these links for the Persian Gulf and the Middle East."[21]

Khalili points to the case of Saudi Arabia as being particularly useful for exploring the dynamics of how the U.S. military exerts power in this way because of how significant the role of ARAMCO has been in the development of the Saudi state. The company itself may *technically* be categorized as a private business; however, primary source materials make it exceedingly clear that "the functioning of ARAMCO could not be separated from the work of the US military."[22]

This chapter will focus on the origins, and growth of the relationship between U.S. companies/defense contractors, the United States and Saudi governments, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers beginning in the 1950s, to the present day and will encompass five different sections. Section I will give context to the historiography of the period and contextualize the role of Saudi Arabia within both the "Arab Cold War" and the wider "Global Cold War." Section II will focus on the origins of the U.S.-Saudi relationship with a particular focus on the role of the private oil company, ARMACO, in facilitating diplomatic and military ties between the countries between 1933 and 1961 to construct the Dhahran U.S. Air Force Base. Section III will focus on the explosion of construction activities overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia between 1962 and 1975 including the construction of national radio and television networks as well as a series of military catamounts. Section IV will detail the construction of the largest military construction project in Saudi Arabia, King Khalid Military City, beginning in 1973, and will discuss the drawdown of Corps construction activities in the Kingdom until the outbreak of the first Gulf War in 1991. The conclusion will place the case study of Saudi Arabia within the context of other cases considered in this research and will discuss the implications of the Saudi case for the projection of U.S. power abroad during the Cold War and beyond.

Laleh Khalili provides an essential starting point for understanding the power dynamics in this relationship between the United States military and the Saudi State in her 2018 article, "The infrastructural power of the military: The geoeconomic role of the US Army Corps of Engineers in the Arabian Peninsula."[23] Her work traces the broad contours of this relationship, but much

[21] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 4.

[22] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 913.

[23] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military."

more detail is necessary to properly contextualize the situation within a wider network of U.S. military power projection across the world, and across a wider timeline. The official history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Bricks, Sand, and Marble U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947–1991* (2009) by Robert P. Grathwol Donita M. Moorhus will be used extensively throughout this chapter to provide the specifics of the projects undertaken by Saudi officials and Corps personnel.[24] Finally, Mazaher Koruzhde and Ronald W. Cox's work "The Transnational Investment Bloc in US Policy Toward Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf," (2022) provides essential contemporary context to this relationship after the 1970s, and into the twenty-first century.[25]

Section I: Saudi Arabia and the Cold War

On February 14, 1945, FDR made the journey to meet the leader of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Al Saud, for his very first voyage outside of his Kingdom. Even though ARMACO (then the Standard Oil Company of California) had been present in the region since signing a 1933 Concession Agreement, this meeting represented a significant turning point for the Middle East. The meeting between the globalist FDR and the isolationist monarch Ibn Saud marked the beginning of one of the most contradictory international and diplomatic relationships of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, built upon the foundations of oil, money, and weapons.

After 1945, ARMACO and the United States military developed a close and integrated relationship with the Saudi Arabian state for decades until the progressive nationalization of the company beginning in 1973 and concluding in 1980. However, the group most in contact with the oil company during the Cold War period, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, has barely registered within current historical research in the region. Prioritizations of events in Iran, Israel, Egypt, Algeria, or even Tunisia, have taken research and focus away from a steady and widely developed construction and contracting program within the Saudi Arabian Kingdom led by the Corps, in many cases aided by ARMACO staff. This relationship between the Army Corps of Engineers and the Saudis has extended past the Cold War's "end" in 1991 and proceeds straight

[24] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*.

[25] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc."

through the events of 9/11 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to today, the results of which remain widely underappreciated in current scholarship.

Approaching the Cold War history of Saudi Arabia from a lens that prioritizes a more dynamic economic/military analysis draws the focus away from standard Cold War narratives that highlight U.S./Soviet military or ideological power in the region. Regarding U.S. military basing in the Middle East and in Saudi Arabia specifically, there are substantial gaps in the literature. The most important recent publications regarding U.S. base presence in the region are Geoffrey F. Gresh's *Gulf Security and the U.S. Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (2015), Masaki Mizobuchi's 'Strategic asset or political burden? US military bases and base politics in Saudi Arabia' in Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi's *Exploring Base Politics* (2020) and David B. Roberts' *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies: Continuity Amid Change* (2023).[26] The work presented here is situated among more recent base studies publications that have been concerned with interdisciplinary analyses of area studies and focused on the Middle East region.

Approaching the U.S.-Saudi diplomatic relationship from a perspective of U.S. foreign military construction and focuses on base studies allows us to recast the origins of the U.S.-Saudi business relationship in a new way. Central to this argument is the theory of infrastructural power developed by Laleh Khalili in her 2018 article, "The infrastructural power of the military: The geoeconomic role of the US Army Corps of Engineers in the Arabian Peninsula."[27] For Khalili, "The Corps' work in Saudi Arabia confounded any formally defined sectoral or military/civilian or even foreign/national boundaries."[28] The operations of a branch of the U.S. military functioning within a space of liminality, between official and unofficial, between military and civilian projects, and between formal and informal representations of U.S. power and authority in the midst of the Cold War, reflects the importance of approaching works of military and diplomatic history from this wider lens.

This chapter argues that the wide range of infrastructure projects completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia between the 1940s and the 1990s — and facilitated by private U.S. business interests — have functioned both literally and figuratively as the foundations

[26] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military* and Mizobuchi, "Strategic Asset or Political Burden?"

[27] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military."

[28] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 924.

of the U.S.-Saudi diplomatic and military alliance today. When U.S. government officials arrived in Saudi Arabia in the 1940s, as Doug Vitalis emphasizes in *America's Kingdom Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (2006), the U.S. State Department was nearly totally dependent on private companies such as Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO). He notes that government employees "depended on ARAMCO's superior organization and expertise for reporting on developments in Dhahran and its hinterlands" and even that "It even depended on ARAMCO for housing."[29] By 1961, utilizing a loophole in the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, the Corps of Engineers was embarking on construction projects that included civilian airports, military catamounts, and even the very first Saudi Arabian television network.

The complex range of Corps activities in Saudi Arabia represent an aggregate of individual and infrastructural elements with profound effects on the military, political, and economic relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia, but they have not been afforded any substantial analysis in recent academic publications.[30] Since the Corps itself noted that "The behavior of the employee, or any family member, had potential diplomatic implications that could impinge on the relations between the United States and the host country," the conduct of the Army Corps of Engineers and its presence within Saudi Arabia deserves to be analyzed within the scope of informal diplomacy.[31] Diplomatic relationships cultivated by employees, family members, and

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[29] Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso Books, 2009), 34.

[30] The one exception is Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military." Others that deal with the importance of "soft power" in international diplomacy, such as Haluk Karadag's "Forcing the Common Good: The Significance of Public Diplomacy in Military Affairs," *Armed Forces & Society* 43, no. 1 (2017): 72–91, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16632334, focus more on the role of humanitarian aid facilitated by the U.S. military rather than military contracting or construction supervision. Karadag's notion that "Almost all armed forces contribute to various public diplomacy efforts," however, is relevant in Saudi context as well. Karadag, "Forcing the Common Good," 72. Works that focus on the Corps of Engineers, like Todd Shallat's "Engineering Policy: The US Army Corps of Engineers and the Historical Foundation of Power," *The Public Historian* 11, no. 3 (1989): 7–27 or his work *Structures in the Stream: Water, Science, and the Rise of the US Army Corps of Engineers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), discuss the Corps' role domestically and do not extend their analysis beyond U.S. borders. Similarly, works that focus on the Middle East region omit any serious consideration of Corps activities as historical actors. Jörn Brömmelhörster and Wolf-Christian Paes in their work, *The Military as an Economic Actor: Soldiers in Business* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) mention the Corps with a single note and David B. Roberts mentions the role of the Corps a single time in *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies: Continuity Amid Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023).

[31] In understanding the actions of these individuals within the purview of informal diplomacy, I am following the process that Giles Scott-Smith, describes in his work "Introduction: Private Diplomacy, Making the Citizen Visible," *New Global Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2014-0012. In this work, he identifies that "Once the frame of 'diplomacy' is altered, so the kinds of actors who become visible change with it … the designations 'diplomacy' and 'diplomat' become more fluid." He further emphasizes that "The processes of

Corps personnel forged fundamental political bonds that — in the eyes of the engineers themselves – helped "[pave] the way for Saudi acceptance of an American presence on their soil during Operations Desert Shield/Storm."[32] To borrow from William A. Rugh's work *American Encounters with Arabs: The Soft Power of US Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (2005), "Clearly, personal relationships counted."[33]

This examination of the role of the Corps of Engineers in the Gulf as informal diplomats makes extensive use of a highly underutilized source regarding Cold War Saudi Arabian history, Grathwol and Moorhus' *Bricks, Sand, and Marble: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947–1991* (2009).[34] This work, published by the Washington D.C. Center of Military History, collates an extensive amount of interview material from individuals involved in Corps activities in Saudi Arabia during the Cold War period.[35] The authors note that "dozens of current and former employees of the Corps of Engineers and its contractors" contributed to the monograph that was overseen meticulously by current and past Corps

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globalization through the twentieth century … have gradually re-positioned the state within a more crowded landscape of cross-border actors." Scott-Smith, "Introduction," 1. The activities of Corps personnel, and to an extent the individuals in service of private U.S. companies in the region, constituted exactly the kind of behavior of such "cross-border actors." Though an important work in the field of diplomatic history, Donna Alvah's *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946–1965* (New York: NYU Press, 2007) makes no mention of the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Middle East region, or of Saudi Arabia in particular. However, her understanding of the role of family members in the Cold War context, that "While servicemen in their official capacity represented U.S. military power, service wives and children, and to a lesser extent men as husbands and fathers, could be more convincing representatives of American good will and cooperation abroad," is a useful frame for understanding the dual nature of "hard" and "soft" power represented by the Corps of Engineers and their contractors in Saudi Arabia during this time period. Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors*, 2.

[32] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Historical Vignette 065 – Middle East Division's Extensive Construction Program: About the Corps' Middle East Division's Extensive Construction Program in Saudi Arabia," *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, accessed February 17, 2025, https://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/Historical-Vignettes/Military-Construction-Combat/065-Middle-East-Division/.

[33] William A. Rugh, *American Encounters with Arabs: The Soft Power of U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2005), 54.

[34] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*.

[35] The work notes that "Two historians at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of History, Dr. William C. Baldwin and Dr. Paul Walker, initiated the project that led to this Book" and that Baldwin "helped locate documents and photographs, suggested interviewees, monitored … progress, read all drafts of each chapter … and caught inconsistencies in the text." They further note that "When the Corps of Engineers was unable to print the manuscript, he [Baldwin] continued to champion the project and ultimately persuaded the U.S. Army Center of Military History to publish it." Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, xix.

personnel.[36] Thus, this work is not only valuable for what it offers in source material, but is a vital document for analyzing how the Corps *itself* understood its role in diplomatic relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia. In combination with a series of newspaper articles from the Cold War period, this chapter investigates how the Corps engaged with their Saudi counterparts and U.S. private business contractors to conduct the informal diplomacy that ultimately paved the way for military access within the Kingdom after construction activities concluded.

The current Cold War scholarship on the Middle East acknowledges that the theatre was one in which regional conflicts oftentimes superseded "superpower" jockeying between the United States and the Soviet Union. When one looks at Saudi Arabia in particular, however, the United States did indeed succeed in the goal of integrating the country into a global capitalist trade. This integration was only possible with the United States military operating outside of its intended purpose as an organization with the purpose to wage war, and instead transforming itself into a force deployed and utilized as a private construction and consulting company. Smoothing the way for the current and integrated military/public/private relationships that exist between entities within government, private business, and policy-making organizations today, this process is one that is both incomplete and ongoing, lending credence to the larger argument posed by historians such as Westad that we must look further back prior to the Second World War to understand long-term processes such as ideological growth, anti-imperialism, and global capitalist integration.

The focus on the multifaceted relationship between the United States military, and in particular the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, private U.S. businesses, the United States government, and the Saudi State, is essential to understand the depth and scale of the tightly wound and integrated contemporary U.S.-Saudi economic relationship. This relationship has implications not just for global markets — clearly illustrated by the 1973 oil embargo and the subsequent political punching-power of OPEC ever since — but also for political and security policies stretching from Washington to Beijing.

This chapter further highlights two theoretical considerations that historians should continue to incorporate moving forward within both area studies and interdisciplinary research of the United States military. The first is that within the context of base studies, security studies, and

[36] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, xx.

diplomatic history, military "power" is often conceived of too narrowly.[37] The role of the United States military, and the role of U.S. foreign military bases, exist within a complex nexus of diplomatic, economic, cultural, gendered, and international connections between individuals, communities, companies and nation-states.

This expression of U.S. military power cannot be easily compartmentalized. As David B. Roberts emphasizes in his publication *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies: Continuity Amid Change* (2023), "to reflect on security concerns in a traditional way, with a majoritarian focus on military dynamics, would be too simplistic, especially in the Gulf monarchies."[38] He concludes that in adopting an exclusive focus on military dynamics, "subtleties highlighted by recent debates and developments in critical security studies" are left by the wayside and we inherently lose "a more nuanced grasp of the meaning of security."[39] It is no longer enough to simply describe military power or security in quantifiable or disaggregated terms. The approach to military power in this work follows that of Pierre Bélanger and Alexander Arroyo in their work *Ecologies of Power* (2016) which emphasizes the importance of "the contemporary configurations, environments, and scales of military operations."[40] Their assertion that "we learn most about the magnitude of power conveyed spatially and temporally through military facilities and installations," is especially relevant for the case of Saudi Arabia given that it lacks a straightforward military relationship with the United States.[41]

One of the most widely cited definitions of infrastructural power comes from Michael Mann's 1984 article "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and

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[37] For example, Risa Brooks notes in *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 2, that "Conventional assessments of military power in international relations tend … to emphasize basic resources" and that "Power is generally reduced to basic human and military inputs." More recently, Colin S. Gray has noted that despite an acknowledged distinction between "hard" and "soft" power in the military context, "soft" power has not been subjected to a sufficiently critical forensic examination." Colin S. Gray, *Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2011), vi. Most importantly, he insists that "The utility of military force is not a fixed metric value, either universally or for the United States. The utility of force varies with culture and circumstance, *inter alia*. It is not some free-floating objective calculable truth." Gray, *Hard and Soft Power*, vii. A focus on the numerical can obfuscate elements of "soft" military power which are oftentimes vital in different cultural and regional contexts such as the Middle East, where personal relationships are highly valued.

[38] Roberts, *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies*, 6.

[39] Roberts, *Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies*, 6.

[40] Bélanger and Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power*, 13.

[41] Bélanger and Arroyo, *Ecologies of Power*, 13.

Results."[42] Mann defines such power as the "institutional capacity of a central state … to penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions."[43] Under this definition, the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia is both essential to, and irrevocably intertwined with, the history of the modern Saudi state.[44] Focusing on the role of the United States military, and its bases in different parts of the world solely in terms of waging war obstructs the less obvious but no less significant role that they played in the construction of modern nation-states in the twentieth century. By leading and directing construction projects for the Saudi state, the Corps played a direct role in constructing the physical architecture and infrastructure — i.e., the "institutional capacity of a central state" — of Saudi Arabia to exert power over its "territories" as well as to "logistically implement decisions."

The informal diplomatic relationships forged by the Corps of Engineers have certainly had implications for the U.S.-Saudi political and military relationship, but they have been no less significant along an economic axis. Koruzhde and Cox point out that as of 2022, "Saudi investors are now the single largest source of capital for U.S. startup companies," and that Saudi ARAMCO owns the largest oil refinery in the United States, located in Port Arthur, Texas.[45] Between the years of 2012 and 2022, U.S.-owned defense contractors were authorized to sell approximately $140 billion worth of military equipment and arms to the Saudi Government.[46] Koruzhde and Cox conclude that it is simply "no longer possible, if it ever was, to neatly separate the interests of a transnational investment bloc, focused on maximizing their own profits, from how the U.S. foreign

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[42] Khalil bases her theory of infrastructural power on conceptus of power advanced by Foucault and Mann in Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives européennes de sociologie* 25, no. 2 (November 1984): 185–213, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600004239.

[43] Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State," 185.

[44] Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State." For a more recent re-evaluation of the work, see Mann's 2008 article revisiting the concept, Michael Mann, "Infrastructural Power Revisited," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43, no. 3–4 (2008): 355–65, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-008-9027-7. For a more explicit definition of several of Mann's categories and definitions, see: Hillel D. Soifer, "State Infrastructural Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43, no. 3–4 (2008): 231–51, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-008-9028-6. For a work that discusses the concept in relation to globalization, see: Linda Weiss, "Infrastructural Power, Economic Transformation, and Globalization," in *An Anatomy of Power: The Social Theory of Michael Mann*, ed. John A. Hall and Ralph Schroeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 167–86.

[45] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 11–12.

[46] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 12.

policy establishment defines "strategic' interests."[47] Saudi Arabia has not only been incorporated into the global economic system: it has become a powerful and influential regional and global economic force in its own right.[48]

The United States military was, nearly a century ago, "present at the creation" of this economic/military/security relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was the collaboration between FDR and Ibn Saud that laid the foundation for the expanded and integrated relationship between the two countries today. The conflation of corporate and military interests by the United States is common within international relations literature, but the dynamic is generally presented as the United States invading militarily, thus "paving the way for the arrival of US businesses and capitalist relations."[49] In the case of Saudi Arabia, and indeed in all of the case studies presented in this research, the United States military need not invade a country, or even be antagonistic towards it, to have deeply felt impacts within the country itself. In fact, each of the countries considered in this research represent examples where the United States military expanded its influence domestically during times of *peace*.

Within the wider scope of international Cold War politics, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and even Saudi Arabia in general, have been broadly underrepresented. While one could say that in Asia the period of the 1950s through the 1960s were the highpoint of the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in regions such as Korea and Vietnam, a series of events and conflicts throughout the long 1970s set off a wave of unrest and violence throughout the Middle East. Even before the Suez Crisis (1956), the region had become perennially unstable after the founding of the Israeli state in 1948. The outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War (1975), the siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca months before the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the Soviet Union's misguided and disastrous war in Afghanistan (1979–1989), and finally the bloody and protracted Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), set in motion a series of conflicts situated along political and religious lines that have evolved and endured into the new millennium. But any discussion of the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in these wider Cold War events is

[47] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 15.

[48] For more on the Saudi Arabian strategy of economic diversification known as "Project 2030," see Mohammad Nurunnabi, "Transformation from an Oil-Based Economy to a Knowledge-Based Economy in Saudi Arabia: The Direction of Saudi Vision 2030," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 8, no. 2 (2017): 536–64, https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-017-0479-8.

[49] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 911.

nearly nonexistent despite the Corps literally building the infrastructure that allowed the Saudi Arabian state to participate fully in regional and international events.

On a macro level, to characterize these conflicts and the underlying religious and regionally political factors that continue to drive them as purely the product of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a mistake. In fact, it would be more accurate to understand such conflicts in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia throughout this time period and beyond as *regional* conflicts that were further intensified by the wider Cold War globalization and financial interest. Rashid Khalidi concludes that "this grafting of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union onto preexisting Middle Eastern rivalries and conflicts significantly exacerbated those conflicts in many cases."[50] Indeed, as Cold War historians conducting research in South America are quick to contend, the Cold War rivalry seemed more to provide up-to-date weaponry and tactics to states within the Middle East, and simply continue and intensify conflicts that predated the ideological Cold War than ultimately to promote any significant advancement of theories of capitalism or communism.[51]

For example, Paul Thomas Chamberlin contends that taken together, the Lebanese Civil War which began in 1975, the Iranian Revolution beginning in 1979, and the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, should be seen as having "shifted the focus decisively away from the Marxist paradigm of revolutionary violence and toward ethno-religious modes of conflict."[52] Kim Ghattas argues that "Nothing has changed the Arab and Muslim world as deeply and as fundamentally as the events of 1979" and that at its core, "The Saudi-Iran rivalry went beyond geopolitics, descending into an ever-greater competition for Islamic legitimacy."[53] And it is within this context of the violence or

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[50] Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 18.

[51] For example, as Vanni Pettinà and José Antonio Sánchez Román note, "The new approaches to the region are more complex and subtler, they emphasize the agency of Latin Americans and Latin American states and dig out social or cultural aspects traditionally neglected by the historiography focused on diplomatic or geopolitical issues." They further weigh in on issues of temporality which are just as relevant for the case of the Middle East presented here, "one is left wondering if the Cold War in Latin America was just a recollection of American interventions and if the proposed chronological continuity, which links the post Second World War period with the beginning of the nineteenth century, really helps our understanding of the causes of the tragedies which marked the period." Vanni Pettinà and José Antonio Sánchez Román, "Beyond U.S. Hegemony: The Shaping of the Cold War in Latin America," *Culture & History Digital Journal* 4, no. 1 (June 2015): e001, 1, https://doi.org/10.3989/chdj.2015.001.

[52] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields,* 346.

[53] Kim Ghattas, *Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry That Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2020), 2.

religious divisions in the Middle East during the Cold War period, that in Saudi Arabia in particular, hiding in plain sight, we see the decades of successful quasi-military construction programs overseen by the United States in nearly every country in the region which reflect different narratives of capitalist and economic collaboration.[54]

With respect to the involvement of the United States and the Soviet Union, both superpowers forged in this time frame, as they did in many different theaters of war across the world, an active involvement without fully grasping the implications of their participation. The Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze summarized the situation in Afghanistan and elsewhere in 1987 in a speech where he noted that ultimately "At times . . . [we] provoked enormous material investments in hopeless foreign policy projects."[55] The Americans were at times equally ineffective or knowledgeable.

In many instances, and in particular throughout the 1970s, U.S. foreign intelligence and policy analysts plotted courses without fully understanding what their ultimate outcomes or goals were in the region. Tim Weiner notes in *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (2008) that for U.S. officials, "The idea that religion would prove to be a compelling political force in the late twentieth century was incomprehensible." Speaking of the Iranian Revolution, Weiner notes that "Few at the CIA believed that an ancient cleric [Khomeini] could seize power and proclaim Iran an Islamic Republic."[56] Admiral Sansfield Turner, head of the CIA in 1979, described the geopolitical situation best, remarking, "We did not understand who Khomeini was and the support his movement had … We were just plain asleep."[57] Despite the lack of in-depth knowledge about the Middle East, its history, its people, and the significance of religion in everyday life and politics, the United States and other imperial powers (most notably the French and the British) had been actively involved in the region for decades even before the outbreak of the Second World War. And

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[54] The Corps history recounts extensive construction projects, offices, and divisions active in regions such as Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Northern Africa as well as Saudi Arabia. See, chapters five, The Trans-East and Gulf Districts, 1958–1960, and six, The Gulf District, 1961–1967, in Part II: The Mediterranean Division in Italy, 1957–1972, in Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 147-219.

[55] Tad Daley, "Afghanistan and Gorbachev's Global Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 5 (1989): 496–513, https://doi.org/10.2307/2644534, 504; quoting Eduard Shevardnadze, "At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR: Speech by E. A. Shevardnadze," *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, no. 2 (August 26, 1987).

[56] Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 428.

[57] Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 428.

even afterwards, their involvement had reflected a continual and obvious lack of regional context and knowledge both culturally and historically.

Douglas Little notes that "Despite repeated efforts to clarify U.S. priorities in the region during the quarter century after the Second World War, more often than not U.S. policies appeared confusing and self-contradictory."[58] But for all of the "confusing and self-contradictory" foreign policy decisions pursued in the Middle East during the Cold War, some organizations, like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had managed to, behind the scenes of high-level Cold War politics, construct a military infrastructure "that continues to operate in the region today."[59] The informal diplomacy conducted by everyday individuals, such as the families or civilian contractors of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, had very real implications for state-to-state diplomacy conducted by heads of state at critical junctures such as the first Gulf War in 1991. And in this regard, the work of the Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia can be linked back to the larger expansion of U.S. power in places like South Korea — military expansion with regional economic and political implications.

A short example from the mid-1970s regarding military construction in Saudi Arabia emphasizes the importance of the global approach in better understanding regional and national dynamics. In 1975, the Korean construction company, Hyundai (known far better today as a car manufacturer) took advantage of the détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, to win its very first contract (totaled at $22.2 million) in Saudi Arabia. By 1976, the Kingdom was the fourth largest market for overseas construction contracting for Koreans.[60] Between the years of 1977 and 1987 alone, Hyundai was averaging $28.9 million in construction contracts in Saudi Arabia. Simply assigning this near instantaneous increase in construction contracting between countries hundreds of thousands of kilometers away with few formal diplomatic connections to increased globalization or transnational capitalism does not provide a compelling answer. Rather, the answer, like many others, has to do with United State foreign military bases.

As we saw in Chapter III, the United States military was extensively involved in the development of the South Korean economy from the very first year of its tenancy on the Korean

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[58] Douglas Little, "Gideon's Band: America and the Middle East since 1945," *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 4 (1994): 514, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1994.tb00245.x.

[59] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 1.

[60] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 924.

peninsula. Economic development, military construction, and security strategies were all interwoven and contributed to the unique trajectory of development of the South Korean state after 1945. It is important to remember that at the very same time that such changes were occurring in Southeast Asia, similar, yet regionally differentiated processes were occurring all over the globe. And in many cases, domestic phenomena, like the United States military's involvement in safeguarding South Korea's economic growth, had far-ranging effects and global implications.

The United States military's tutelage of the Hyundai *chaebol* throughout the 1950s and 1960s by granting it preferential military contracts in Vietnam, Thailand, and Guam, also included being the middleman for facilitating its breakthrough into Middle Eastern military contracting in the 1970s. Laleh Khalili asserts that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had thus aided in the "the creation of a global circuit of labour, capital, products, services and expertise that decidedly functioned according to a grammar of liberal capitalist order." [61]

Over the course of the Cold War period, billions of dollars exchanged hands between not only the United States and Saudi governments but also flowed into the hands of U.S.-based construction contractors.[62] The emergence of new narratives, like the role of the Corps of Engineers in the Saudi Kingdom, reflect different understandings of Cold War history centered on capitalist and economic collaboration rather than the ideological posturing or binary reductionism that have often characterized earlier works on Cold War history. Analyzing the role of U.S. bases has the potential to link regions around the globe in ways not previously considered, like the "global circuit of labour" that undergirded U.S. global military presence during the Cold War and links Saudi Arabia to South Korea.

The United States military had hundreds of foreign bases across the globe throughout the Cold War period which formed a global network of communications, global security strategy, but also global economic development. Each of these different elements form different parts of an architecture and expression of power by the United States. Whereas the United States military's position in Korea was one that developed from the stance of a "liberator" and "caretaker" of a

[61] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 924.

[62] Adam Moore explores the evolution of the U.S. relationship to foreign military construction and contracting spanning the Second World War into the twenty-first century in *Empire's Labor: The Global Army That Supports U.S. Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9781501742170.003.0009.

devastated and colonized state, the United States' position on the Arabian Peninsula took on a radically different color — it was capitalist green.

Section II: Beginnings: 1933 – 1961

The United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia officially began with the 1933 agreement with the Kingdom and the Standard Oil Company of California. Whereas private U.S. business interests regarding oil served as the original impetus for a more formal and involved diplomatic relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States, but it was the Second World War — and in particular military considerations — that initiated the decades-long relationship between the two countries. Two key events during the Second World War formalized the character of the relationship between the U.S. and the House of Saud.

The first was the extension of the Lend-Lease program instituted by the FDR administration early in 1940s to provide military munitions and supplies to British and Soviet Forces.[63] A similar, albeit more modest, version of the plan was approved through the British to provide the Sauds with munitions for defense during the war. The second, and far more significant event, was the drawn-out and continual negotiation of the Dhahran Air Base within the country itself. James L. Gormly notes that "Building the base, Washington officials assumed, would provide Ibn Saud with some economic support and play an important role in the modernization and development of postwar Saudi Arabia."[64] The negotiation, agreement, and final construction of the base reflected several profound implications for Gulf politics for decades to come.

Construction of the base heralded changing winds in international politics as far as Saudi Arabia was concerned. Prior to the Second World War, the Middle East was understood within international politics as a sphere of British and French stewardship and influence. The construction of the Dhahran Air Base in 1946, continued military munitions deals, and the ever-increasing presence of U.S. private business interests in Saudi Arabian oil reserves, however, tipped the scales

[63] The most famous example of this being the "destroyers for bases" deal brokered between the British and the United States. For more on the U.S.-Britain arrangement, see Colin Flint, "Seapower, Geostrategic Relations, and Islandness: The World War II Destroyers for Bases Deal," *Island Studies Journal* 16, no. 1 (2021): 271–91, https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.139.

[64] James L. Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia: The United States and the Dhahran Airfield, 1945–46," *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 2 (1980): 195, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1980.tb00910.x.

of favor from the British to the Americans. Gormly notes that "Not only had Dhahran played a role in wooing the Saudi Arabians out of Britain's camp and in establishing an American commercial aviation presence in the region, but it had helped to solidify Saudi-American relations and link the two nations diplomatically and militarily."[65] These economic and military links would only grow as conflicts in the region further intensified and nationalist figures such as Abdel Nassar came to power in Egypt in 1954.

If it was the Second World War that began to pique the interests of U.S. officials about the potential of Saudi Arabia as an ally in the Middle East region, it was the longer view — the role of Saudi Arabia in the *Cold War* — that truly changed U.S. policy in the region. Christine Gilbert notes that by 1945 the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States had already determined that Saudi Arabia was "particularly valuable to the United States" and that "By the time World War II had given way to the Cold War, analysis within the DoS [U.S. Department of State] determined that development of the Kingdom's petroleum reserves was critical. [66] Furthermore, the timeline of construction of the Air Base itself reveals that it was primarily postwar contingencies that were the highest concern for U.S. officials, rather than shielding Saudi Arabia from World War II conflict.

The Dhahran base itself was not even completed or operational until a year *after* the cessation of hostilities in Europe in 1945. Regardless, and to the displeasure of British officials, the United States maintained that construction of the base was still vital despite the ostensible reason for its existence evaporating with the Potsdam Conference and the end of the Second World War. Gormly notes that this shift was explicit: "New reasons for building the base emphasized commercial and political reasons for the facility and nearly ignored the old military necessities."[67] Even as the Second World War was coming to a close, the United States was actively laying the groundwork for the next global conflict and expanding its role in the involvement, military stewardship, and backing of private oil interests in Saudi Arabia.

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[65] Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 205.

[66] Christine R. Gilbert, "The Interagency, Eisenhower, and the House of Saud," in *Case Studies Working Group Report*, vol. 2, ed. Richard Weitz (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2012), 833–913, https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/gdcebookspublic.2023692800. Gilbert also notes that private interests played a role in this developing relationship noting that "*Aramco's oil interests irrevocably enhanced the value of U.S.-Saudi relations.*" Emphasis added; 848.

[67] Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 199.

The geopolitical position of Middle Eastern states, and Saudi Arabia in particular, is and was fundamentally different in the postwar era from those states in the Pacific such as South Korea, Japan, or the Philippines. For example, in South Korea, military security after the cessation of conflicts in 1953 was an ever-present concern for millions who had experienced first-hand what it was like to live through modern warfare. The presence of U.S. forces in South Korea, while recently receiving far more vocal criticism, was actively sought in the years after 1953 and lauded (for a time) because it meant that if the North Koreans or Chinese attacked, the "tripwire" of U.S. soldiers stationed across the 38th parallel would bring the United States into the war immediately. In Saudi Arabia, the situation was far different.

Though the Saudi monarchy was fearful of external threats from nearly every country in the Gulf region (Israel, Transjordan, and Iran), it was not in a position to acquiesce to U.S. desires to have forces permanently stationed in the country. King Saud only reluctantly allowed the construction (and renewal) of the Dhahran Air Base for a short period of time due to internal and external threats to the survival of the Kingdom. Gresh highlights the uncertain nature of U.S. base presence across the world, and particularly in Saudi Arabia, noting that "A more permanent U.S. military basing presence was never an inevitable conclusion and depended upon a combination of shifting national security dynamics and U.S. military and economic aid packages."[68] Saud and his successors had to continually strike a balance between promoting military security in a highly uncertain geopolitical environment over the course of decades, while at the same time not provoking domestic political and religious movements within the Kingdom by having foreign forces stationed on Saudi soil — a proposition that was anathema to the religious establishment.

Ever since the creation of the Saudi state in 1932, a palpable and legitimate fear was that of military reprisals from the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan (now Jordan). This fear was linked to the consolidation of the peninsula in the 1920s through the conquest of various lands from Hashemite kings in the region. The creation of Israel in 1948, the Buraimi Oasis Dispute of 1952–1955, and the increasingly combative and anti-imperialist position of Nasser culminating in the Suez Crisis in 1956 further legitimized these fears in the early years of the Cold War.[69] By

[68] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 14.

[69] On April 6, 1956, *The New York Times* reported that "Revolutionary activity is reported among officers in the Saudi Arabian Army, in the tiny middle class … and in the illegal labor movement in the oil areas." Kennett Love, "Saudi Arabia's King Is Reported Moving to Prevent a Revolt," *New York Times*, April 6, 1956, 1, 3, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1956/04/06/121447529.html?pageNumber=1.

1949, officials in the U.S. State Department were conscious of the delicate nature of the negotiations necessary to establish a wider-ranging relationship with the House of Saud. The White House deliberately held back any large influx of U.S. military and construction personnel as well as construction equipment in 1949 while agreements were being brokered.[70]

However, in 1951, Fluor Corporation Ltd. of Los Angeles, California won a contract for the construction of various facilities at Dhahran Air Base. The Fluor Corporation already had an established presence within the peninsula because of other professional contracts with the ARMACO oil company which owned oil fields adjacent to the location of Dhahran Air Base.[71] Thus, the origin of the official U.S. military base presence within Saudi Arabia was — from the very beginning — born from a convoluted and interrelated series of relationships between the United States military, private U.S. construction companies, the ARMACO oil industry, and the Saudi Arabian government. The career of an individual such as William E. Mulligan illustrates this intersection.

Mulligan, who worked for ARMACO for several decades during the Cold War, noted that in 1946, he was "discharged from the U.S. Army Air Force" and then headed off "to the new oil community called Dhahran to join Aramco."[72] The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers official history explicitly notes that in 1951, even the modest progress that had been made in the construction of the facilities at Dhahran Air Base, "depended on Fluor's established relationship with ARAMCO; the contractor rented a good portion of its equipment from the oil company."[73]

These relationships — between the United States Army Corps of Engineers, private U.S. contractors, private Saudi contractors, and the Saudi State — blossomed over a course of decades during the Cold War, quietly and innocuously engaging in many of the very vital and key processes

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[70] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 37.

[71] Nathan Herring, "A Lasting Legacy: The Dhahran Airfield and Civil Air Terminal," *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Public Affairs Office*, May 23, 2014, https://www.army.mil/article/127106/a_lasting_legacy_the_dhahran_airfield_and_civil_air_terminal.

[72] Another employee, Roger K. Hadley, remarked in 1984 that by working for ARAMCO he was able "to see how intimately Aramco's growth and the country's growth had been tied together." Mulligan, in the same article, noted that it was "a quote that, in its way, sums up the Aramco story: a kingdom and a company growing up together for 50 years." Mulligan does admit his description, however, "sounds like a PR handout." William E. Mulligan, "A Kingdom and a Company," *Saudi Aramco World*, May–June 1984, 44–72, https://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/198403/a.kingdom.and.a.company.htm.

[73] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 37.

of modern state-making. Robert Vitalis, in *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier (2009)*, concludes that "Oil company executives and other Americans engaged in all the most basic material and symbolic practices of nation-state formation, from drawing organizational charts and construction plans to building entire new cities, bureaucracies, and traditions."[74]

Though Vitalis was principally concerned with the role of U.S. oil companies within Saudi Arabia, we must clarify a wider scope of engagement in the process of such state construction and the active role of both state, and non-state actors. Khalili provides a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between all parties, noting that "The Corps of Engineers' symbiotic relationship with ARAMCO in the former's early stages of operation in Saudi Arabia is instructive in understanding the inextricability of military and commercial activities."[75] The later construction of entire military "cities" across the peninsula complete with electric, road, water, and transport access would not have been possible without the connections and practices between private military contractors and the United States military in the years just after the Second World War. The notion that it was only with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars that military contracting was the norm, is misguided given the longer history of this practice within Saudi Arabia since 1949. Some, like John A. Alic, point as far back as the First World War. [76]

Furthermore, we must consider these interrelated relationships between the United States military, private businesses, and the Saudi state within the wider timeline of U.S. presence in the region given the extensive presence and economic relationships within the twenty-first century. Not only were the results of these relationships profound — the forging of economic, political and personal relationships between U.S. and Saudi entities — but also tangible in the multi-billion-dollar construction projects across the Kingdom. If these projects and relationships, in particular the presence and role of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, are *not* discounted, then the historical record is at odds with portions of current historiography. Statements like those of Rashid Khalidi in *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (2009), cannot be entirely accurate: "It was not until after the advent of a completely different post–Cold

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[74] Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso Books, 2009), xiii.

[75] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 920.

[76] John A. Alic, "The Origin and Nature of the U.S. 'Military-Industrial Complex,'" *Vulcan* 2, no. 1 (June 23, 2014): 63–97, https://doi.org/10.1163/22134603-00201003. See also Lair, *Armed with Abundance*.

War American strategy, one involving a large-scale, long-term, multicounty American military presence in the Middle East, that, starting in 1991, U.S. forces were once again based at Dhahran, as well as in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and elsewhere in the region."[77] Statements such as these serve to underemphasize the role of the U.S. Corps of Engineers as what Khalili describes as a "major geoeconomic actor that has wielded its infrastructural power" within the Kingdom. The reality was that the Corps had operated continuously, and for decades, before U.S. troops finally returned en masse in 1991.[78]

In the early postwar years between 1946 and 1950, the reliance of the United States government on private U.S. companies, such as ARAMCO, was nearly total. Vitalis notes that the consular staff in Saudi Arabia during this period, "depended on ARAMCO's superior organization and expertise for reporting on developments in Dhahran and its hinterlands" and that "It even depended on ARAMCO for housing."[79] Vitalis' reference to the U.S. Ambassador J. Rives Childs' correspondence to the State Department in 1947 captures the essence of the relationship between the U.S. government and the private oil company in Saudi Arabia at the time. He notes that Childs warned the White House that ARAMCO was "an octopus," whose tentacles were spread "into almost every domain and phase of the economic life of Saudi Arabia."[80] Childs included a warning in the dispatch that spoke to the increasing involvement of private U.S. business into the fabric of Saudi Arabian society, and thus, U.S./Saudi relations for decades to come: "The longer we delay … the deeper its tentacles [ARAMCO] will be spread and *in the end the policy of the Government of the United States in Saudi Arabia and in the Middle East may be dominated and perhaps even dictated by that private commercial company.*"[81]

Things quickly began to take shape, however, and in 1946 the *New York Times* reported that "U.S. Oil Towns Dot Saudi Arabian Soil."[82] The article emphasized that even as roads were

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[77] Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis*, 16.

[78] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 911.

[79] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 34.

[80] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 34.

[81] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 34. Emphasis added.

[82] C. L. Sulzberger, "U.S. Oil Towns Dot Saudi Arabian Soil: Record Boom Is Forecast—Potential Is Estimated to Exceed Our Own Reserves," *New York Times*, November 28, 1946, 2, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1946/11/28/93187670.html?pageNumber=2.

"slowly spreading their tentacles" and airports were "being laid down at such remote and ancient towns as Riyadh and Hofuf, western ideas [were] gaining a small foothold."[83] The trend continued rapidly and on November 23, 1959, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "Arabian Oil Town is Like a U.S. Suburb," proclaiming that "Dhahran Was Built to Provide Homes for Americans."[84] Throughout the years of 1957 and 1958, the Saudi Arabian government, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, as well as U.S. private contracting companies, engaged in a spiralling series of discussions regarding contractual obligations for the facilities at Dhahran Air Base. None of these discussions or construction projects occurred in a vacuum, and were in fact, only made possible by the trailblazing of private business interests of ARAMCO. This political, military and economic dynamic would characterize the U.S.-Saudi relationship during the Cold War.

Vitalis notes that ARAMCO was unique in Saudi Arabia, and in international business more generally, because "most firms that operated elsewhere on the world oil frontiers followed the flag to places where their countries' embassies and residencies already functioned. In the case of ARAMCO, the situation was the reverse."[85] ARAMCO was unique in its approach to business in that it contained an entire internal department for the express purpose of government relations — a department few, if any, other oil companies boasted at the time. The traditional roles became so reversed that by the 1940s and 50s, it was the United States government and the Military Corps of Engineers who relied on *ARAMCO* experts for guidance in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, as Khalil argues, "From the very beginning … the various branches of the US military depended on private firms for advancing their programme support and construction."[86] In nearly all ventures in the Kingdom, the octopus led the way.

The complexity of these relationships between the United States military, private contractors, and the Saudi State, can be seen in a series of disputes regarding the construction of the facilities at Dhahran Air Base throughout the 1950s. After the successful construction of the

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[83] Sulzberger, "U.S. Oil Towns Dot Saudi Arabian Soil," 2.

[84] Dana Adams Schmidt, "Arabian Oil Town Is Like a U.S. Suburb: Dhahran Was Built to Provide Homes for Americans," *New York Times*, November 23, 1959, 3, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1959/11/23/80561337.html?pageNumber=3.

[85] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 69.

[86] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 921.

contracted building at Dhahran, the Saudi government demanded that Fluor employees pay both retroactive and current income taxes. After doing so, the Saudi government then claimed that the same employees were responsible for "retroactive charges for work permits, visa fees, and quarantine fees."[87] Fluor refused to pay for the additional charges, and the Saudi government responded by barring the remaining Fluor employees within the country from leaving. The Corps official history explicitly notes that "*The matter did not involve the Corps of Engineers directly* until U.S. Ambassador George Wadsworth intervened."[88] He assured Saudi officials that the Mediterranean Division's area engineer in Saudi Arabia, Major William Bailey, would remain in the country and negotiate a suitable agreement regarding the dispute if Fluor employees were allowed to leave. Saudi officials agreed, and the employees were allowed to depart.

In the months that followed, Saudi officials issued court summons to Major Bailey six different times to come before the police chief and pay the debts attributed to the Fluor employees.[89] Each time he explained that he was not responsible for paying the debts but was simply authorized to negotiate on behalf of the Fluor employees. After one particularly charged meeting, the tone of the police chief became "threatening," and Major Bailey refused to attend any further summons. Several weeks later, Bailey received a message from the U.S. Consulate in Dhahran informing him that he was to appear before a Sharia Court of the Government of Saudi Arabia.[90] As a non-Muslim, Major Baily would have no official status or rights in the proceedings. He described the situation in an interview years later: "I would not be allowed to speak on my behalf or have any defense. They would just merely call me up before the bench and demand the money and if I couldn't produce it, I would be confined. [The Saudis] don't feed their prisoners or bring them water. That's all done by relatives, and I didn't have any relatives [in Saudi Arabia]."[91]

Bailey proceeded to radio U.S. Ambassador George Wadsworth, who then immediately drove to Riyadh to meet personally with King Saud to intervene on Bailey's behalf. Several days later, "in a scenario worthy of a spy novel, Navy pilots went to Bailey's quarters, gave him a Navy

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[87] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

[88] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160. Emphasis Added.

[89] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

[90] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

[91] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

uniform, and flew him out of Saudi Arabia before sunrise."[92] The official history of the Corps notes that ultimately, the resolution of this issue only came when the United States government itself "paid the taxes that Saudi Arabia had levied against Fluor."[93] Rather than trade following the flag, here, it would appear that the reverse was true: the U.S. government intervened to rescue it's foreign policy being carried out by a private company.

This incident illustrates how deeply intertwined the priorities and goals of private companies and military contractors were with the United States military during this period, and how difficult it ultimately is to disentangle financial obligations from a private business and the United States military. Furthermore, this incident served to create a legacy that "for several years shaped the attitudes of Mediterranean Division officials [Corps of Engineers] toward work in Saudi Arabia."[94] From that point forward, negotiations regarding military or civilian construction that involved the Corps and private U.S. contractors were consistently fraught with the differing interagency priorities from the U.S. State Department, U.S. military, and the Saudi government. The only commentary from the official Corps history of the events regarding the 1955 Fluor/Bailey incident notes that "The episode is a delicate one" and that "descriptions conflict, and at least one journalist was denied permission to publish an article on the incident even twenty years later."[95]

Wider Cold War considerations undoubtedly prompted the United States government to get involved in Fluor's case as in the very same year Egypt's Abdel Nasser agreed to a multi-million-dollar arms deal with the Soviet Union, terrifying the White House, but even more so, King Saud. The rise of pan-Arabism had already contributed to a widespread ARAMCO strike within Saudi Arabia in 1953 threatening Saudi legitimacy from within.[96] By 1956, the Suez Crisis threatened it from beyond. Christine Gilbert identifies the event as a lynchpin in the shifting geopolitical strategies of both the United States and Saudi Arabia: "the deterioration of American hopes for

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[92] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

[93] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160. Emphasis added.

[94] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 160.

[95] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 162.

[96] On Pan Arabism and Nassar, see Malik Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," in *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, 6th ed., ed. David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas (London: Routledge, 2018), 128–47 and Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, "The Rise and Fall of Pan-Arabism," in *Routledge Handbook of South-South Relations*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Patricia Daley (London: Routledge, 2018), 168–76.

Egypt highlighted the increased importance of American relations with Saudi Arabia and other Middle East states."[97] She further notes that "Throughout the Suez Crisis, the President, Secretary Dulles, lower-level DoS officials, and U.S. Foreign Service officers urged Saudi mediation and endeavored to reconcile American policy with Saudi opinions."[98] Gresh concurs, concluding that "From 1952 to 1956, the Arabian Peninsula's regional security concerns shifted with the rise of an Arab nationalism championed by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser …. The spread of Arab nationalism into Saudi domestic politics did not concern the monarchy to the same extent as external security concerns."[99]

In light of the uncertain political situation in 1957, the Eisenhower government and King Saud happily signed a 5-year treaty for the expansion and further use of the Dhahran Air Base, as well as on-site training for Saudi Army, Airforce, and Navy. The price for the deal was $35 million in military training, $20 million in grant economic aid, and $50 million in credit toward Saudi Arabia's $110 million purchase of American arms.[100] Significantly, though the focus on this agreement was obviously military in nature, it is important to highlight that King Saud was personally interested in further improving the *commercial* air facilities at the *Civilian* Air Terminal at Dhahran.[101] At a meeting in May of 1957, U.S. ambassador Wadsworth met with U.S. representatives from various U.S. military agencies (including the Corps of Engineers), and "repeatedly emphasized the importance to King Saud of President Eisenhower's offer to help build the civil air terminal" and "Because of the personal aspect of the commitment, Wadsworth asserted that this was the most important item in the agreement."[102] Wadsworth was not content with allowing any organization other than the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to spearhead the construction effort given its importance to the King. This is a highly specific example of how, in the words of Khalili, "The infrastructural role of the US Army Corps of Engineers in the Middle East … went far beyond the construction of military infrastructures and explicitly advanced goals

[97] Gilbert, "The Interagency, Eisenhower, and the House of Saud," 847.

[98] Gilbert, "The Interagency, Eisenhower, and the House of Saud," 861.

[99] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 45–6.

[100] Gilbert, "The Interagency, Eisenhower, and the House of Saud," 870.

[101] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 162.

[102] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 162.

of economic development via the expansion of civilian infrastructures."[103] Not only was the Corps stretching beyond the military's role in the expansion of Saudi infrastructure, it had already become an important recognized player in U.S.-Saudi diplomacy.

In the late 1950s, U.S. and Saudi priorities clashed in the negotiations for the construction of both the civilian aviation infrastructure at Dhahran and a training school for the Royal Saudi Air Force in Riyadh. One issue, which would become a staple feature of nearly all subsequent military construction projects in the Kingdom, was the demand by the Saudi state that each contracted projects be further *subcontracted* by domestic Saudi companies, thus entwining both states and private companies of each at different hierarchical levels. This demand, understandably, caused a myriad of logistical challenges. The contract was won by the U.S.-owned construction company Oman-Farnsworth-Wright and included specific provisions for subcontracting services to Saudi-owned companies and employing Saudi nationals.[104]

In 1959, the Saudi government became frustrated that the estimated cost of the construction project at Dhahran — valued at $5 million — did not "translate into $5 million in contracts."[105] Furthermore, customs duties on materials and construction vehicles, various taxes, and fees, like those that had required diplomatic intervention with the Fluor construction company years prior, continued to plague Oman-Farnsworth-Wright. These disputes became so heated, that in September of 1959, the Saudi government even went so far as to impound "all construction equipment and materials imported by Oman-Farnsworth-Wright."[106] In consequence, for a second time, direct diplomatic intervention was needed by the U.S. State Department to move the project forward. And for a second time, the United States acquiesced to Saudi demands and agreed with the Saudi government that the contracting company would pay the fees for construction materials that were brought into the Kingdom, "although the Dhahran Airfield Agreement had specifically exempted these goods from such procedures."[107]

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[103] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 920.

[104] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 164.

[105] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 164.

[106] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 164.

[107] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 164.

The beginning of the relationship between the United States military and government and Saudi Arabia in the 1940s relied heavily on the role of private companies such as ARAMCO to facilitate negotiations, provide logistical support, and local technical knowledge. By the 1950s, it was clear that it was the symbiotic relationship between public and diplomatic power (U.S. military and State Department) and private economic and logistical power (oil and construction contractors) that would prove to be the silver bullet for effectively working within the Kingdom.

The combination of diplomatic power and private business ultimately proved to be effective in smoothing ruffled feathers for construction projects. Nevertheless, more potent geopolitical changes and powerful voices of dissent within the Kingdom itself demanded that the House of Saud make changes. As David Commins notes, "The emergence of modern politics jolted the Kingdom's rulers and they responded by clamping down on sources of dissent."[108] Though the origins of widespread strikes in 1953 can be traced to working conditions, the importation of foreign ideologies such as pan-Arabism and communism were quickly blamed and "for political rather than religious reasons, the government reinvigorated the Committees for Commanding Right and Wrong."[109] The responses from the House of Saud were to expel and limit the number of foreign and migrant workers, and to regulate moral and religious vice with laws such as the 1957 ban on women driving in Riyad.[110] They also played a major role in the decision to not renew the Dhahran Air Base Agreement with the United States which expired in 1962.

In the midst of a particularly precarious moment for the Saud family in 1960 where fear of external threats such as communism and pan-Arabism threatened to drive both cultural and social wedges between the Saudi people and the monarchy, domestic threats to legitimacy reached a fever pitch. In July of 1960, U.S. officials discovered an alarming plot among Saudi Air Force officers

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[108] David Dean Commins, *The Mission and the Kingdom: Wahhabi Power Behind the Saudi Throne* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 109.

[109] Commins, *The Mission and the Kingdom*, 109. Committees for the regulation of on moral and religious standards had varying amounts of authority in Saudi society during the Cold War period and strengthened considerably during the 1970s. For more on their origins and function, see Frank E. Vogel, "The Public and Private in Saudi Arabia: Restrictions on the Powers of Committees for Ordering the Good and Forbidding the Evil," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2003): 749–68.

[110] The topic of the driving ban has become, in the twenty-first century, a touchstone for discussing broader tensions stemming from modernization in Saudi Arabia. See both Deborah L. Wheeler, "Saudi Women Driving Change? Rebranding, Resistance, and the Kingdom of Change," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 11, no. 1 (2020): 87–109, https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2020.1724155 and Ismail Lala, "Women Driving in Saudi Arabia: Female Perceptions Five Years after Lifting of the Ban," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2025): 28–49.

to overthrow the monarchy and murder Prince Faisal which would have drastically threatened the United States' already precarious position in the Middle East, and in particular, their military and logistical hub at Dhahran.[111] After informing the monarchy of the plot, U.S. officials were blindsided by the response from Prince Faisal who "asserted that the U.S. military would have to vacate its Dhahran base because burgeoning anti-American sentiment threatened the monarchy's survival."[112] Gresh asserts that this moment in 1960 "marked the beginning of the end of U.S. control over Dhahran" and that "No possible incentive could prevent the U.S. expulsion from Dhahran, because the prolonged U.S. presence there had become too much of a domestic political lightning rod for the Saud monarchy."[113] Vitalis notes that "the irony in this case should make one pause," given the years of both criticism and expressions of support of U.S. military presence in the Kingdom for years up until that point.[114]

Regardless of the legitimacy of the claim that it was the presence of the United States military in the region that was the source of domestic discontent (though Nasser continually harped on the hosting of U.S. forces in anti-Saudi propaganda), the decision to not renew the agreement for Dhahran in 1960 proved to be a powerful symbolic gesture.[115] However, much like the decision to not renew leasing contracts at the Subic and Clarke U.S. military bases in the Philippines in the 2010s or the decision to cede control of the U.S. Yongsan Garrison in South Korea in the early 2000s, these seemingly profound or monumental decisions to buck an "official" transgression of sovereignty simply provided a powerful cloud of dust to cloak the continued and very much still-involved role of the United States military in these parts of the world.[116]

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[111] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 79.

[112] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 79.

[113] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 80.

[114] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 224.

[115] It is important to note that though the decision to not renew the lease for the base occurred in 1960, the United States did not officially vacate the base as a military asset until 1962.

[116] As Gresh notes, "The U.S. military lost its basing privilege at Dhahran, but other ties to Saudi Arabia remained." Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 82. The Philippines renegotiated base access to the U.S. military after declining to renew base leases in the 2010s. This reflects an important point about contingency; namely, that simply because a country has decided to close a military base, this does not mean that in the future access will *remain* forbidden. Regarding the Philippines in particular, see Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Philippines-U.S. Alliance and 21st Century U.S. Grand Strategy in the Indo-Pacific Region: From the Obama Administration to the Biden Administration," *Defence Studies* 22, no. 3 (2022): 414–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2073224.

What is key to note in the case of Saudi Arabia, is that the absence of official U.S. military bases did not limit the ability of the United States military from continually operating and playing a profound role in the development of a modern nation-state. U.S. troops still routinely conduct wide-scale military training exercises in the Philippines (and in their free time patronize bars and brothels), and they continue to play rounds of golf within the confines of the largest U.S. foreign military base in world just 65 kilometers from the formerly occupied site of Yongsan Garrison in South Korea. In the case of Saudi Arabia from the 1960s and beyond, engineers for the United States military continued to build roads, erect water and electric systems, and construct entire cities within the Kingdom long after King Saud triumphantly refused to renew the United States Air Base in Dhahran in front the Arab world.

A series of banknotes from the 1960s and 70s depicted below, illustrate the degree to which the United States Army Corps of Engineers and foreign corporate interests were intertwined with domestic political legitimacy, and economic and infrastructural development. The 1 Riyal banknote depicts the Civilian Dhahran Airport — transformed from the U.S. military's Dhahran airbase. As Jan Penrose argues, "Both coins and banknotes have been shown to work unobtrusively as bearers and transmitters of the iconography of the nation-state in which they are issued and which they, in turn, represent and help to construct."[117] In placing elements of domestic infrastructure on bank notes, the Saudi Arabian state was emphasizing the importance and centrality of infrastructural and economic development to national identity. Behind this emerging national identity lies a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that played a fundamental yet unrecognized role in the construction of this changing version of national Saudi identity throughout the Cold War. While a formal military base may have been discontinued, the military presence continued unabated. By 1969, *The New York Times* reported that the Saudis were "Replacing Bedouin Rifles with Missiles."[118]

[117] Jan Penrose, "Designing the Nation: Banknotes, Banal Nationalism and Alternative Conceptions of the State," *Political Geography* 30, no. 8 (2011): 429–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.08.002.

[118] Terence Smith, "Saudis Replacing Bedouin Rifles With Missiles," *New York Times*, August 17, 1969, 16, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1969/08/17/89365432.html?pageNumber=16.

Figure 7 – Front and back of second issue of Saudi Riyal banknotes (1968) depicting the Dhahran Airport and the Dammam Sea Port.[119]

[119] Saudi Central Bank (SAMA), *Second Issue of Saudi Banknotes (1968)*, accessed July 24, 2025, https://www.sama.gov.sa/en-US/Currency/Pages/SecondIssue.aspx.

Figure 8 – Front and back of third issue Saudi Riyal banknotes (1976) depicting the al-Nur Mountain in Makkah and again, the Dhahran Airport.[120]

Section III: Forging the Corporate Crucible: 1962 – 1975

Just as the decades of the 1940s and 1950s laid the groundwork for a convoluted nexus of power swirling around the United States government, private U.S. companies, and the Saudi state, the subsequent decades saw an intensification of collaboration between the two countries driven by a series of external and internal threats to the Kingdom. Though the formalized military presence of the United States in Saudi Arabia in the form of brick-and-mortar military bases such

[120] Saudi Central Bank (SAMA), *Third Issue of Saudi Banknotes (1976)*, accessed July 24, 2025, https://www.sama.gov.sa/en-US/Currency/Pages/ThirdIssue.aspx.

as Dhahran were renounced and "closed" to U.S. forces, these changes meant little in tangible terms for the business of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Contrary to accounts of U.S. military presence within Saudi Arabia that view power and presence in purely military terms — the presence of troops, weapons, and physical bases — if we adopt a more pluralistic view of *infrastructural* power, the United States Army Corps of Engineers emerge as actors of extreme importance for the modern Saudi state *and* for the contemporary economic and diplomatic connections that they helped to forge between the U.S. and the Kingdom. The period of time between the official closure of Dhahran Air Base in 1962 and the outbreak of the first Gulf War in 1991 which heralded the return of a wide range of coalition troops on Saudi soil, witnessed some of the most intense and elaborate construction projects by the United States military in the Middle East during the entirety of the Cold War. In fact, as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers official history notes, during the closing years of the 1960s, when "the war in Vietnam dominated the allocation of American resources for construction and personnel," of all the countries in the Middle East, it was exclusively Saudi Arabia "that evinced a very strong desire to have U.S. Army engineers heavily involved in building the country's military infrastructure."[121] And in many instances, the construction of military infrastructure necessitated the construction of *other* infrastructure — like roads, water lines, and radio systems — that could hardly be placed squarely within the column of the military.

Looking at the relationships grown within the trinity, of the U.S. government and military, U.S. private companies, and the Saudi State, we are in a better position to understand the modern evolution of that relationship that has resulted in a distinct and massively increased level of economic and political codependency between both nations. Furthermore, by breaking down rigid definitions of what constitutes "military power," and moving away from the compartmentalization of the effects and actors that create such power, we can recast the role of the United State military both within Saudi Arabia and in the Middle East during the Cold War. U.S. soldiers were not stationed in large numbers across the Kingdom in military bases throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. But when they returned in 1991, they made extensive use of the electric grids, tv stations, paved roads, buildings, water lines, diplomatic and political ties, and religious and cultural knowledge that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had helped build and cultivate for decades before their arrival.

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[121] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 269.

In the midst of another life-changing conflict a continent away in Europe, Anne Frank ruminated in 1943 on the importance of media infrastructure, writing in her diary that "the radio, with its wondrous voice, helps us to not lose heart."[122] During the 1940s, the use of the radio was essential for the purposes of conveying information to the public, the dissemination of news and war reports, and entertainment. It also was an absolutely essential tool for spreading propaganda.[123] By the beginning of the 1960s, the Saudi monarchy was acutely aware of the power inherent in the medium of both radio and television. After all, their volatile neighbor, Abdel Nasser, had, by the 1950s, been using it extensively for various propaganda purposes in Egypt. The most famous program, *The Voice of the Arabs*, was used by Nasser to great effect both within and on the fringes of Egypt to promote his messages of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and eventually by the 1960s, anti-Saudi rhetoric in the region.[124] Nasser was especially effective until the 1960s because, in the words of Douglas A. Boyd, "The one deterrent which might have been effective — viable domestic and international radio services — did not exist in any Arab country outside of Egypt."[125]

Many in the Saudi Kingdom were susceptible to Nasser's egalitarian message of pan-Arabism because of the wide economic gap between the monarchical family and the lower classes. In conjunction with the extended dispute over the Yemeni Civil War (1962–1970) where one side supported by Nasserist forces and the other backed by the Saudis, the monarchy felt it absolutely necessary to modernize not just its military, but also, its form of media communications with its own borders. The threat to the monarchy became explicit on May 2, 1966, when *The New York Times* reported that the tension over the growing conflict had caused Nasser to issue a public threat

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[122] Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, trans. Susan Massotty (New York: Doubleday, 1995), entry for Sunday, June 13, 1943, Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/AnneFrankTheDiaryOfAYoungGirl_201606/Anne-Frank-The-Diary-Of-A-Young-Girl_djvu.txt.

[123] For development in the United States during this period, see Michael J. Socolow, ""News Is a Weapon": Domestic Radio Propaganda and Broadcast Journalism in America, 1939–1944," *American Journalism* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 109–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2007.10678081.

[124] Anas Alamed notes that the program was "one of the most influential media tool in Arab media history not only because the radio waves reached through all Arab countries, but also because the radio's message played a significant role (if not fundamental) in changing the map of Arab politics in 1950s." Anas Alahmed, *Voice of the Arabs Radio: Its Effects and Political Power During the Nasser Era (1953–1967)* (paper presented at the Joint Journalism Historians Conference, Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, New York University, March 12, 2011), 2, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2047212.

[125] Douglas A. Boyd, "Development of Egypt's Radio: 'Voice of the Arabs' under Nasser," *Journalism Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (1975): 648, https://doi.org/10.1177/107769907505200406.

to the monarchy that Egypt would "invade and occupy parts of Saudi Arabia" in the case of any "aggression or infiltration" into Yemeni territory. [126]

Radio broadcasts in the region frequently levelled criticisms on the monarchy for being a client state of the West and kowtowing to companies such as ARMACO. One broadcast from 1967 asked, "Arabs, is Faysal a King of the Muslims' Holy Land, or a King of the Jews and the Saxons? Arabs, by God, Arabs: what is the people's verdict, what is God's verdict on such an agent King? We know the verdict and wait for the execution."[127] In response, ultimately, it was the United States military and especially the Army Corps of Engineers, which proved to be the best organization in Saudi Arabia to tackle the complex issues of media, economic, and military development.

In 1962, King Saud privately asked the Kennedy White House to help supply the country with broadcasting equipment. Kennedy responded positively, approving three "5-kilowatt radio transmitters as a gift to the king" in an effort to, according to an internal memo, "maintain the momentum in the development of our relations."[128] Requests by the monarchy were hardly limited to either communications or to military aid, however. King Saud further emphasized the need for economic assistance in modernizing the country through U.S. "support for the construction of schools, ports, highways, and hospitals."[129] And in 1963, in direct response to Nasser's communications campaign, the Saudi monarchy requested help from the Army Corps of Engineers to help develop an entire domestic "owned and operated nationwide television network."[130]

Like many aspects of Saudi society, however, the embrace of media, whether print, radio, or television, was controversial. David Commins notes in *The Mission and the Kingdom: Wahabi*

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[126] Hedrick Smith, "Nasser Threatens Saudis on Yemen," *New York Times*, May 2, 1966, 1, 6, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/05/02/83530882.html?pageNumber=1.

[127] Boyd, "Development of Egypt's Radio," 652, quoting *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, no. 2460 (May 9, 1967), A6.

[128] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 84.

[129] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 84. Douglas Little identifies the Kennedy administration as a significant in the realignment of different priorities for U.S. policymakers noting that "Kennedy's tilt toward Saudi Arabia was part of a broader realignment of American policy toward the Middle East that would be completed by Lyndon Johnson" and that "What little has been written about America and the House of Saud confirms that a diplomatic marriage of convenience was consummated between Washington and Riyadh during the mid–1960s." Little, "Gideon's Band," 535.

[130] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 251.

Power Behind the Saudi Throne (2016) that because of the low levels of literacy within the Kingdom, "demand for newspapers and periodicals remained weak into the 1960s."[131] In consequence, foreign Arab employees, many who were Egyptian and were oftentimes sympathetic to Nasserist messages, filled the void. Since the 1950s, U.S. employees and soldiers at Dhahran and ARAMCO housing complexes, sequestered away in the desert near the oilfields, had been enjoying regular radio entertainment. By the time the Saudi monarchy realized that tools such as radio and television media were going to be essential for the administration of the Saudi state, the rest of the population was still not entirely prepared. Commins notes that a radio broadcast of a woman's voice in 1963, "prompted a delegation of the ulama[132] to declare their outrage to Crown Prince Faisal."[133] Television fared no better. In 1965, the first television program aired by the state media organization triggered a wave of violent protests.[134]

But before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was able to help in the construction of Saudi television and media systems, the U.S. government had to sever a gordian knot of its own making. In 1963, a year after the outbreak of the Yemini civil war, the U.S. government responded to requests for aid in constructing a television system by sending the U.S. chief of the Federal Communications Commission, Edward W. Allan to the kingdom. His recommendation was that the Saudi government "contract with private companies."[135] The Saudi government responded negatively to the recommendation, insisting that the U.S. government play a more involved role. The Saudis replied that they "lacked the skills to manage the time-consuming and cumbersome contracting procedures."[136] At this point, the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Parker T. Hart

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[131] Commins, *The Mission and the Kingdom*, 109.

[132] "a body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology." "Ulema," *Oxford Reference*, accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803110529564.

[133] Commins, *The Mission and the Kingdom*, 110. For more on the role of the Ulama specifically in Saudi Arabia, see Alexander Bligh, "The Saudi Religious Elite (*Ulama*) as Participant in the Political System of the Kingdom," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 1 (1985): 37–50. For more on the role of the ulama generally, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[134] Commins, *The Mission and the Kingdom*, 110.

[135] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[136] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

"vigorously urged his government to take on the role" in the project.[137] As a result, the United States State Department managed to circumvent any legal issues of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers engaging in a project of foreign domestic infrastructure development through the use of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act: Grathwol and Moorhus note that "Although Section 601 of that act encouraged the maximum use of private-sector resources, as Allen had recommended in his report, Section 607 authorized U.S. government agencies, with the president's approval, to provide services and commodities to foreign countries on a reimbursable basis. The State Department asked the Corps of Engineers to undertake the contracting responsibilities associated with the Saudi television broadcasting network, and the chief of engineers assigned the task to the Mediterranean Division."[138] The lines between political, domestic, and military aid in the U.S.-Saudi relationship were becoming increasingly blurred.

At the same time that the United States government was finding ways to bend the rules in order to further support the construction of Saudi infrastructure, the U.S. military was engaged in more explicit displays of support in 1963. In April, both governments agreed to proceed with "Operation Hard Surface" in response to Nasser's increasingly active participation in the Yemini Civil War, targeting villages along and within the borders of Saudi Arabia. In an effort to deter further aggression by Nasser, Operation Hard Surface provided U.S. military support to the Saudi army "composed of eight F-100s fighter jets, one transport type command support aircraft, one control and reporting post, and six KB-50 tanker aircraft for use in fueling and transportation." [139]

In May and August of that year, deliberations regarding the specifics of U.S. Army Corps of Engineer support program continued, revealing that the Saudis wanted the Corps to construct, initially operate, and then train Saudi personnel at the TV stations.[140] The Corps history notes that "The Saudis acknowledged that they lacked even the capacity to define the program."[141] Widening the scope of cooperation even further, the involvement in the construction of the TV station then led to the opening of an "irrevocable letter of credit with the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York"

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[137] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[138] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[139] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 86.

[140] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[141] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

where the Corps could "withdraw money as needed."[142] The agreements were formalized in December 1963 and January 1964 which outlined that the Corps would "supervise operations and maintenance contracts… [and] monitor student training in the United States," and "serve as consultant to the Ministry of Information on the television system and other related matters."[143] The Corps also agreed to provide a "qualified employee stationed in the United States as a full-time coordinator and adviser to the Saudi students sent to the United States to train in television programming and station operations and maintenance." [144] The Corps was now operating on two continents to build, maintain and train personnel for a mixed domestic/international communications program to support the Saudi monarchy, a far cry from their historical mission.

In an article published by *The New York Times* on March 19, 1968, Dana Adams Schmidt reported that "Television has become both the index and the agency of change in the puritanical theocracy of Saudi Arabia."[145] Schmidt was also quick to highlight the U.S. Army-U.S. Business-Saudi relationship during this period, subtitling a section "U.S. Army Involved" and remarking that "Americans are playing a key role in the expansion."[146] Furthermore, Schmidt, like many historians of today, was particularly keen in assessing the controversy and difficulties posed by a medium of cultural dissemination being so rapidly introduced into such a "puritanical theocracy." He notes that despite a significant portion of content consisting of various educational programs, pieces of religious or moral edification, "Twenty to 30 percent of all programs are imported and more than half of these are American."[147] He also observed that due to strict moral and religious standards, "an American may find his favorite program hard to follow after it has been chopped by censors."[148] Still, Schmidt believed that such a powerful social and cultural medium as television, disseminating even censored crumbs of U.S. soft power, meant that "new concepts,

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[142] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[143] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[144] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 252.

[145] Dana Adams Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes in Saudi Arabia," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1968/03/19/77080766.html?pageNumber=10.

[146] Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10. Schmidt also notes the role of subcontractors such as NBC as being vital to the continuing maintenance of the project.

[147] Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10.

[148] Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10.

particularly concerning the relationship of men and women, are inevitably implanted in the heart of families whose women hardly ever leave the house."[149]

From 1963 to 1966, the United States Corps of Engineers facilitated the process of contracting, subcontracting, training of employees — in both English and in technical broadcasting techniques in New York City — and aided in the eventual extension of the original contract service for the television stations beyond the 1966 date to a subsidiary of the National Broadcasting Network (NBC).[150] Despite how deeply intertwined the U.S. military, U.S. private business, and the Saudi government became during this project (to say nothing of the other infrastructural projects occurring at the same time, or the explicit aid of U.S. weapons and vehicles during the Yemini Civil War during the 1960s), the construction of the television system was considered "quite delicate" by both the U.S. and Saudi governments at the time. The Corps' official history notes that "neither government wanted any suspicion that the United States might be using television broadcasts to promulgate its own propaganda."[151] These fears were well founded.

The United States military and the Saudi Arabian government had worked in tandem to create a medium for the dissemination of domestic propaganda and religious and moral instruction acceptable to the Kingdom. But once created, mediums of the dissemination of information, print media, radio, television, and now the internet, can hardly be controlled in their entirety. When Schmidt was reporting three years after the network aired its first programs, Saudis could already consume such Hollywood-produced classics such as "'Peyton Place,' 'The Fugitive,' 'Life With Father,' 'Combat,' 'Forest Rangers,' 'Voyage Beneath the Sea,' some Westerns," and even, "some wrestling."[152]

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' role in the construction of the Saudi Television System is an instructive for those looking to map the contours of U.S. power during the Cold War. Instead of looking at the ways in which the physical spaces of military bases shape human behavior or affect power relations, this is one example where we may inverse this dichotomy, and look at the ways in which quasi-military actors such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exerted agency in

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[149] Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10.

[150] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 255.

[151] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 255.

[152] Schmidt, "Influence of TV Brings Changes," *New York Times*, March 19, 1968, 10.

the construction of infrastructure that ultimately served — and continues to serve — as a conduit of both Saudi state power and U.S. soft power. In a country whose basis of governmental legitimacy rests on a strict religious adherence and aversion to outside Western influence, this influence is particularly significant. Through the mediums of television and radio, according to one banker involved in Saudi construction projects in 1976, "the Corps gained the confidence of the royal family."[153] Within these circumstances, the impacts and influence of quasi-military organizations, such as the Corps, in international politics cannot easily be separated, and should not be ignored.

The development of the Saudi television system during the 1960s is as much of a story about external Cold War threats to domestic political legitimacy as it is the development of modern infrastructural systems within the confluence of private, state, and military power.[154] Gretchen Heefner's chapter on U.S. military bases in the *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (2022), focuses on the traditional view of the presence of military power when she looked at "the surprisingly intimate ways in which negotiation for and maintenance of foreign military bases illuminate the operation of US power."[155] However, we can see that even in light of the *failure* to negotiate and maintain U.S. bases like Dhahran, the U.S. investment in nonmilitary domestic infrastructure *still* illuminates the operation and extension of U.S. power, even if that power is conceived of outside of military access and physical structures.

This blurring of domestic and military initiatives makes the example of Saudi Arabia a complex case for the analysis of the impact of U.S. military bases on domestic politics. By 1963, the Saudi Arabian government was overseeing over fifty different ongoing military-related construction projects.[156] Given the previous success with the television system, the government requested further assistance by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and, illustrating the importance

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[153] Stevenson, "Army Engineers in Arabia."

[154] In addition to the television program, the procurement of military vehicles for the Saudi state was another long-running program headed by the Corps of Engineers. The official history notes that the "Mediterranean Division logistical and supply program, in its early years called the Saudi Arabia Mobility Program (SAMP), was out of the normal range of Corps of Engineer activities. Nonetheless, it became the longest-running engagement by U.S. Army engineers in Saudi Arabia and remained active into the late 1990s under a different name." Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 262.

[155] Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion," 56, 57.

[156] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 256.

of personal relationships in Saudi culture, they made a formal request to the six U.S. engineers who were previously stationed in the country and who had worked on different projects to work as supervisors for further military construction and military vehicle procurement. All six refused to return.[157] Undeterred, the Saudi government continued through diplomatic channels to reach an extensive and wide-ranging construction program for a series of three different "cantonments," or military bases, near the Yemini border which was eventually signed in 1965. The plans for the construction program estimated a cost of over US$100 million and included the construction of a road network, approximately three hundred buildings at two different sites, and double that amount at a third garrison.[158]

By 1965, a formal agreement was signed between the two countries that, from a legal perspective, granted those working on the projects "a status not enjoyed by other US military personnel."[159] Several provisions included complete immunity from civil procedures for not just Corps personnel, but their dependents as well. Going further than even some of the SOFA agreements signed between closely allied countries in the same period, the agreement agreed that if Corps personnel or their dependents were found violating Saudi Arabian law or in Saudi custody, they would then simply be relinquished back to the Corps.[160]

After establishing another line of credit with Chase Manhattan Bank, from which the Corps could draw for expenses, construction began in earnest. Utilizing three different construction companies based in Delaware and Massachusetts, by 1966 there were over 30 individuals working within the Kingdom, as well as over 90 employees working on various projects from offices in Athens.[161] Though the construction projects pursued by the monarchy in the early 1960s were centered around threats from Nasser and the ongoing Yemini civil war (as well as internal unrest and occasionally extreme instances of palace intrigue), Israel's invasion of Egypt in 1967

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[157] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 257.

[158] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 260.

[159] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 261.

[160] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 261. Such specifics are highly irregular in the more formal framework of SOFAs between other allied countries that hosted U.S. military bases in the twentieth century. Likely due to the less permanent nature of the construction contract, different legal provisions were included. An investigation of similar legal protections for U.S. personnel under the umbrella of construction contracting in foreign countries would be a promising area for further study.

[161] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 261.

fundamentally reshuffled the geopolitical situation. Though it may be true that, according to Greash, "internal security concerns took center stage and impacted the U.S. military's ability to maintain the basing presence that it had established during World War II," in its place, the United States Army Corps of Engineers had still managed to broker a multi-million dollar military construction contract from the Saudi Arabian government, replete with nearly complete legal immunity for employees *and* their dependents.[162]

With the defeat of Egypt in the Six-Day-War of 1967 came the beginning of the end of Nasser's preeminence as the scion of Arab leadership in the Middle East. Though Israel remained a point of contention for every Arab state and the plight of the Palestinian people remained in the spotlight, for the Saudi government, Nasser and Yemen dominated concerns until 1967. At that point the calculus shifted.

Nasser agreed to withdraw support and troops from the conflict in Yemen, but the need for military security within the Kingdom remained at a fever pitch. Despite a temporary embargo on oil shipments to the United States for its support for Israel and the fact that "the Saud monarchy downplayed its relations to the United States internally because of the continued domestic insecurity and virulent anti-American sentiment," the latter portion of the 1960s and the 1970s continued to be a period of extensive and uninterrupted construction for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.[163]

This period from the end of the 60s until 1979 saw significant unrest in the Muslim world characterized by: the Grand Mosque seizure in Saudi Arabia, the Iranian revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Externally, Egypt's decline brought Saudi Arabia to a position of prominence as a leader of the Arab world. The continued fear of Israel given its success in the Six-Day-War and then after the Yom-Kippur War in 1973 greatly impacted the monarchy's perspective

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[162] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 90.

[163] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 89. On June 22, 1967, *The New York Times* reported that "Arab Oil Exports to West are Half of Normal" and that "Oil is a double edged sword for the Arab states. A total cutoff would handicap the advanced economies of Western Europe and North America as well as the American war effort in Vietnam, but it would also deprive Arab governments of vital revenue." Hedrick Smith, "Arab Oil Exports to West Are Half of Normal: Shipments by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait Counteract Effect of Boycott," *New York Times*, June 22, 1967, 12, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/06/22/83243878.html?pageNumber=12. The Corps History indicates that the embargo caused delays in some construction projects but were hardly disastrous.

on defense. Construction projects during this period seemed to "multiply almost monthly."[164] It was also during this period where the symbiotic relationship between the U.S. military, the Saudi state, and multiple private U.S. businesses began to expand even more.

ARAMCO's initial involvement in shaping and driving U.S. foreign policy within the Middle East continued unabated. In 1962 ARAMCO's Washington office "secretly arranged a $14 million loan to the Syrian government, at Faisal's request, although the company's head, Tom Barger, told his embassy contacts that there was no 'solid evidence of Syria's urgent need' of the funds."[165] Vitalis concludes that "ARAMCO did it to build goodwill with Faisal and improve the prospects for negotiations."[166] But it was the series of extensive construction projects, beginning in the latter portion of the 1960s and continuing into the 1970s that began to mutually reinforce the need for U.S. involvement in the region, and in Saudi Arabia specifically, as a matter of "national security." Koruhzde and Cox identify this period as a keystone moment in both U.S. foreign policy and in the beginning of a continually growing economic relationship between the countries:

> A transnational investment bloc led by defense contractors, as early as the 1970s, was instrumental in working with U.S. policymakers to identify U.S. military expansion in the Persian Gulf region as central to U.S. national security. They were joined as early as the 1980s by an emerging transnational investment coalition that included U.S. energy and financial corporations. These relationships have expanded dramatically over the decades, as an even wider range of U.S. transnational investors have committed substantial capital in Saudi Arabia as part of the restructuring of the Saudi economy.[167]

The logic of supporting the Saudi Arabian state geopolitically had tangible benefits, especially after the loss of one of the "pillars" of U.S. security in the Middle East, Iran. This support was already being implicitly reinforced by the continued presence and profit margins of U.S. companies and defense contractors within the Kingdom including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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[164] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 267.

[165] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 237.

[166] Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, 237.

[167] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 15.

Long before U.S. military personnel were stationed and then later bombed at the Khobar Tower housing complex in 1996, in 1969, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintained fifty-six different housing leases, forty-five "villas" for families, and rental agreements for a series of recreational facilities and beach cabins.[168] The names of these housing complexes or villas are not known to the general public and are rarely mentioned, if at all, in academic works. This is because the Khobar Towers were an exception, rather than the norm in Saudi Arabia. The omission of the range of other U.S. military presence is not highlighted precisely *because* it is deemed inconsequential despite its massive impact on the development of the modern Saudi state.

Osama bin Laden himself, in an interview in 1998 pointed to the presence of U.S. forces in the country since the Gulf War in 1991, but failed to acknowledge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presence since the 1950s, as the source of his discontent: "Every day the Americans delay their departure, they will receive a new corpse."[169] The interviewer, John Miller, noted that "bin Laden told me his first priority is to get the American military out of Saudi Arabia."[170] In fact, in his "Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holiest Sites" from 1996, bin Laden explicitly notes that "it has been seven years since their [Americans] arrival, and the regime is unable expel them out of the country."[171] When placed within the wider context of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' activities in the Gulf — spanning decades and costing billions of dollars — the omission is glaring. While Osama bin Laden was fighting the Soviet forces in Afghanistan from 1979 onward, the United States Army Corps of Engineers had already been building airports and military fortifications for the Saudi Arabian state decades before his "Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holiest Sites."

From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the Saudi Arabian government continued the construction of three different military catamounts throughout the Kingdom, employing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but also a series of U.S., West German, and Italian construction companies. Effectively, in the words of Khalil, "The Corps' work in Saudi Arabia confounded any

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[168] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 285.

[169] Miller, interview with Osama bin Laden, "Greetings, America."

[170] Miller, interview with Osama bin Laden, "Greetings, America."

[171] Usama Bin Laden, *Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holiest Sites*, translated by Combating Terrorism Center, U.S. Military Academy, May 9, 1996, Harmony Program, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Declaration-of-Jihad-against-the-Americans-Occupying-the-Land-of-the-Two-Holiest-Sites-Translation.pdf.

formally defined sectoral or military/civilian or even foreign/national boundaries."[172] These projects cost billions of dollars, employed hundreds of foreigners with construction and logistical expertise, domestic Saudi subcontractors (like that of Osama bin Laden's father's company, Binladen Construction), and tens of thousands of foreign workers from Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan living in the Kingdom.

Though ostensibly military facilities, projects like King Abdulaziz Military Cantonment completed in the early 1970s were capable of hosting thousands of soldiers alongside their families, and included a range of amenities such as hospitals, "schools, family quarters, maintenance shops, community facilities, and utilities."[173] The Corps history notes that "At the end of calendar year 1971, it became clear that, rather than ceasing, the work in Saudi Arabia would expand in the next decade."[174] When observed critically, the military facilities requisitioned – even beyond the physical infrastructure of roads, ports, or powerlines previously described — by the Saudi Arabian state, were constructed through expertise, labor, and contracts from a combination of governments, militaries, and businesses within a multinational coalition of countries. In 1973, *Time* named the leader of Saudi Arabia, King Faisel, as the "man of the year," remarking that the King had done much to guide Saudi Arabia "toward wealth and prominence," and that he was "doing much to mold the destiny of the oil-thirsty world."[175] At the same time that Faisal was "molding the destiny of the oil-thirsty world," the U.S. military and its contractors were busy building his own Kingdom.

Section IV: King Khalid Military City and the End of Corps Activities: 1973 – 1991

Before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers concluded its activities in Saudi Arabia, it received a series of construction contracts that dwarfed all previous expectations. These projects represented another step in the intensification of the U.S.-Saudi diplomatic and economic

[172] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 924.

[173] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 306. King Khalid Military City was completed in 1973, and both the King and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers celebrated its opening on September 22, just one month before the Yom Kippur War.

[174] Khalili, "The Infrastructural Power of the Military," 924.

[175] "The Life and Times of the Cautious King of Araby," *Time*, November 19, 1973, 90, https://time.com/vault/issue/1973-11-19/page/112/.

relationship that survived the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was during this period that the Saudi Arabian petro-economy afforded the monarchy the opportunity to modernize the state, but also to deepen the links and capital investment already present between private U.S. contractors and the Kingdom. By the time that the Corps departed Saudi Arabia in the 1990s, their role in constructing the literal infrastructure in the Kingdom had been achieved. At the same time, so had their work in facilitating the growth of diplomatic and economic links that, after the end of the Cold War, remained as strong as ever. Even the unabated support of the U.S. for the Israeli state, during the Cold War and afterwards could not seriously challenge the opportunities presented by Saudi oil and U.S. dollars.[176]

After the Saudi monarchy agreed to participate in the oil embargo against the United States after their public support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, many within the United States speculated about the "advisability and feasibility of militarily seizing oil fields in Saudi Arabia."[177] But the many economic, political, and military links already forged by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, continually working on projects within the Kingdom through the crisis of 1973, proved to be more than enough to weather the political storm of the pro-Israeli lobby. In 1973, one year after Radio Riyad reported that "The government of King Faisal decided to reduce its production [of oil] by 10 per cent immediately beginning today and until the end of November … the government of the kingdom will stop the flow of oil to America," the Kingdom and the U.S. established the "U.S.-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation."[178] By 1974,

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[176] A 2016 report from the Congressional Research service noted that "Saudi Arabia remained the largest U.S. trading partner by overall value in the Middle East in 2015" and that "To a considerable extent, the high value of U.S.-Saudi trade is dictated by U.S. imports of hydrocarbons from Saudi Arabia and U.S. exports of weapons, machinery, and vehicles to Saudi Arabia." Christopher M. Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, CRS Report RL33533 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, September 20, 2016), 29, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1017814.pdf. More recently, F. Gregory Gause III notes that "in November 2022, the Biden administration granted sovereign immunity to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, known as MBS, on the basis of his role as Saudi Arabia's prime minister, in a U.S. civil case brought against him by the fiancée of Jamal Khashoggi, a journalist murdered at the hands of Saudi operatives. The immunity is one sign, among many others, that the U.S.-Saudi relationship is not headed for rupture." He concludes that ultimately, despite geopolitical shifts in the twenty-first century, "the elements of continued cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia are still in place." Gregory Gause III, "The Kingdom and the Power: How to Salvage the U.S.-Saudi Relationship," *Foreign Affairs* 102, no. 1 (January/February 2023): 116, 125.

[177] Christopher M. Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, RL33533 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 16, 2009), 4, https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/uscrs/2009/en/71425.

[178] Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations* (2009), 10 and United Press International, "Saudi Arabia Threatens Oil Cutoff," *UPI Archives*, October 19, 1973,

the Corps was overseeing a series of construction contracts for the Hafar al Batin military facility that they estimated would cost between eight to fifteen *billion* dollars.[179] Through decades of domestic and international political controversy the United States and Saudi Arabia have managed to maintain ironclad economic connections whose practicality have simply transcended any religious, ideological, or political controversy.

The "containment policy" of the United States during the Cold War was designed to safeguard countries from communist influence or invasion. Troops and bases represented the military arm of containment. At the same time, incorporation into the U.S. *economic* system of global capitalism was just as vital from a policy perspective. NSC-68, the "blueprint" for U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War explicitly noted that "Foreign economic policy is a major instrument in the conduct of United States foreign relations. It is an instrument which can powerfully influence the world environment in ways favorable to the security and welfare of this country."[180] The document, in unambiguous terms, summarized that "United States foreign economic policy has been designed to assist in the building of such a system and such conditions in the free world."[181] If, by 1974, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was discussing a construction project in Saudi Arabia that "dwarfed any previous project undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers anywhere in the world" at the time, it becomes difficult to argue that the U.S. had "failed to impose Cold War priorities on their clients," especially as those priorities proved to be, in the case of the relationship with Saudi Arabia, mutualistic and symbiotic.[182]

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https://www.upi.com/Archives/1973/10/19/Saudi-Arabia-threatens-oil-cutoff/8510894230327/. Four days later, King Faisel outlined three requirements for suspending the oil embargo. He demanded a "complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, granting of the right of self-determination to the Palestinian people and affirmation of the Arabism of Jerusalem." Faisel remarked on these demands in an interview, stating "In clearer and more decisive words, Saudi Arabia will not change its attitude of suspending oil exports to some countries and cutting back quantities to other countries except after the fulfilment of these points collectively and in a manner acceptable to all Arabs--no matter how long it takes." "Saudi Arabia Warns U.S. Against Oil Countermoves," *New York Times*, November 23, 1973, 56, 73, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1973/11/23/80818046.html?pageNumber=56.

[179] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 336.

[180] United States National Security Council, *NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, April 14, 1950, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I*, doc. 85, 28, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v01/d85.

[181] United States National Security Council, *NSC 68*, doc. 85, 29.

[182] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 336.

Beyond the economic relationship, on a conceptual and procedural level, the United States U.S. Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia had been actively and consciously mandating both the content of institutional knowledge, *and* the method of knowledge dissemination — both explicit forms of power. Khalil notes that "Beyond delineating the contours of contracting," the Corps "introduced new modalities of management both to its contractors and to the government. And even if these "U.S. conceptions" of management, administration, or knowledge systems struggled to gain a foothold in a highly conservative and regimented Saudi society, it would be impossible to argue that the hundreds of young Saudis sent to U.S. universities during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s with the explicit purpose of learning how to manage Western radio and television systems built in the Kingdom were *not* inculcated with Western-style business and administrative practices.[183]

Finally reaping the benefits of the squeezed oil market, by 1975, the Saudi Arabian state was about to undergo a whirlwind set of transformations cultural, infrastructural, and economic. Robert Lacey recounts that Dr. Horst Ertl, a professor of chemistry at the College of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran in 1975, remembered how "Suddenly everyone had money in their pockets. It was incredible."[184] Lacey notes that during this time, in Saudi Arabia, "The construction crane, it was said, was the new national symbol of the Kingdom."[185]And just as the citizenry of Saudi Arabia began experiencing the windfall of the petro-economy, the U.S. Corps of Engineers began the construction of the "largest single construction effort" in its entire history which had been undergoing planning since the 1960s — King Khalid Military City.

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[183] In his 1972 dissertation on Saudi students in the United States and their "perceptions of university goals and functions," Mohammed Ahmed Rasheed described the importance of these students in the role of modernizing Saudi state. A passage from the introduction is worth reproducing in full: "In the past, almost all of the American educated students filled key position in governmental and private agencies. Among the American universities alumni are ministers, deputy ministers, university presidents and college deans, and directors of very important organizations. In fact, prominent among their society are the educated Saudis, and thus they will remain as long as the mass of people and the high authority in the country have an increased favorable expectation from the highly educated people. They are expected to have a major role in providing positive guidance to the whole process of change going on in the different aspects of life. Indeed, Saudi intellectuals are regarded as people of ideas and are expected not only to think profoundly about the national problems, but to take the necessary steps to translate their thoughts into practice— to bring their skills to bear on the problems facing the nation. Thus, *every public institution in Saudi Arabia is to be very much influenced by the Saudi students upon their return*. Colleges and universities are no exception." Emphasis added. Mohammed Ahmed Rasheed, *Saudi Students in the United States: A Study of Their Perceptions of University Goals and Functions* (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1972), 3.

[184] Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom*, 14.

[185] Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom*, 14.

Plans for the Military City began in the 1960s and finally came into fruition after Saudi Arabia's petro-economy took off a decade later. The Saudi Arabian military wanted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to "manage the creation of an entire city for seventy thousand inhabitants" which would be located "forty miles from the nearest highway where no settlement of any kind existed."[186] Such a project necessitated the construction of not just the city itself, but the entire infrastructure — of electric, water, sewage, and road access — to both build and supply the military city after it was constructed. The daunting size of such a project was further complicated by the need for foreign contractors to work in desert conditions in a foreign country where, in the words of *Time* in 1973, "the only law of the land is Islam" and where "Harsh penalties for crime remain on the books."[187]

The most significant aspect of such a contracting system, especially in the case of the King Khalid Military City, was that "the government," i.e., the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "alone [determined] the award fee, and its decision is [was] not subject to the disputes clause in the contract."[188] In this sense, the U.S. Military was directly responsible for assessing the quality and efforts of U.S. and internationally subcontracted construction projects in Saudi Arabia and wielded a significant amount of power in the construction of Saudi-state commissioned projects. Furthermore, the Corps insisted on using U.S.-based companies that were "prime U.S. contractors" who had "extensive experience" in construction projects so that they would "maintain their internal cost records in a form that allowed the U.S. government to audit them over the life of the contract."[189] The eventual result of back-and-forth negotiations between the proposals by the Corps and the Saudi state resulted in a joint Saudi-U.S.-Dutch coalition of companies to complete the project.

The construction of such a massive military facility in such harsh conditions constituted a years-long effort. The project that began in the 1970s was only completed in 1986 — a decade after construction formally began. The Corps' construction projects continued straight through some of the most turbulent years of the Cold War including the signing of the Camp David Accords

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[186] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 465.

[187] "The Life and Times of the Cautious King of Araby," 90.

[188] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 469.

[189] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 469.

in 1978, as well as the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in 1979. In fact, like previous Corps projects that continued throughout other highly delicate geopolitical Cold War moments, the construction of the King Khalid Military City progressed, not without delays appropriate for an international and billion-dollar project of its size, but on the whole, unaffected by a "global Cold War." Though the official history makes specific note of the changing geopolitics in 1979 and beyond as having "impinged on the atmosphere in which the Middle East Division conducted its operations," the construction of various Corps projects continued into the 1980s.[190]

The collapse of Iran as a stalwart geopolitical ally in the region and the capture of hostages at the U.S. embassy, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Soviet presence and influence in Yemen and Somalia, and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by extremist Salafi militants all occurring in 1979 was groundbreaking for both the U.S. and Saudi governments. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war just a year later in 1980, while the Lebanese civil war raged on at the same time, produced an atmosphere of uncertainty and palpable fear on both sides of the relationship. On the U.S. side, there was a very real potential to lose a fundamental foothold in Middle Eastern affairs, and for the Soviets to score victories in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia. For the Saudis, the threat of Khomeini's revolution spreading into the Kingdom, and further destabilizing a domestic situation already rocked to its core by the seizure of the country's most holy mosque by Salafi extremists posed a similarly terrifying prospect.

The U.S. response was to strengthen ties with its other "pillar" of security in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, by requesting basing privileges that it had not enjoyed since the expulsion of U.S. forces from Dhahran decades prior. However, with anti-American sentiment at a fever pitch within the Kingdom, the Saudi government was careful to "vigorously and publicly" reject any request for base access. One aide in the U.S. defense department remarked that "We talked to the Saudis about a number of ideas, including the establishment of a base in the area, but they quickly turned us down."[191] Within the very same article, however, the *New York Times* also reported that "Although Saudi Arabia has also apparently ruled out the creation of a formal military consultative

[190] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 513.

[191] Richard Burt, "Saudis Reject Idea of a U.S. Base," *New York Times*, February 27, 1979, 2, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1979/02/27/121006849.html?pageNumber=2.

body with Washington, officials said that informal military ties were being stepped up."[192] Greash notes that during this time period, the monarchy quietly allowed "U.S. military advisors and trainers to assist in military operations and in support of the Saudi's newly acquired weapon systems."[193]

Just as construction of U.S.-led construction projects in the Kingdom progressed throughout the politically charged decades of the 60s and the 70s, the same in-depth infrastructural cooperation continued into the 1980s between the Army Corps of Engineers and the Saudi State. In fact, almost identical to the situation following the Yom-Kippur War in 1973, was followed by the establishment of the joint U.S.-Saudi economic collaboration organization a year later in 1974, the ostensibly anti-American chord struck by the Saudi state in response to the Grand Mosque seizure in 1979 was quickly followed by "a decade of collaborative U.S.-Saudi foreign policy efforts," including the Kingdom matching the U.S. dollar-for-dollar in supporting and arming mujahideen fighters against the Soviets.[194] It would appear that despite a complex global situation, the closeness of the relationship between the Saudi state, U.S. military contractors, and the U.S. government in domestic Saudi politics continued unabated throughout the 1970s.

In 1975, the military construction company, the Vinnell Corporation, after decades of military construction contracts in Vietnam, was saved from bankruptcy when it secured a $77 million contract to train the Saudi Arabian National Guard.[195] Vinnell had already established an extensive relationship with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the point where several CIA agents had, with Vinnell's permission, conducted undercover operations posing as employees in the Middle East and Africa by 1975.[196] Matthew J. Gaul notes that "In return, the CIA helped Vinnell win construction contracts on oil fields in Libya and Iran" and highlights that in a CIA memo from 1975, one official described them as "our own little mercenary army in Vietnam.... [W]e used them to do things we either didn't have the manpower to do ourselves, or because of

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[192] Burt, "Saudis Reject Idea of a U.S. Base," 2.

[193] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 143.

[194] Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations* (2009), 5.

[195] Matthew J. Gaul, "Regulating the New Privateers: Private Military Service Contracting and the Modern Marque and Reprisal Clause," *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 31, no. 4 (June 1998): 1497.

[196] Gaul, "Regulating the New Privateers," 1497.

legal problems."[197] In 1979, Vinnell's indirect role of military training organization was cast aside when, after the Grand Mosque seizure, they (alongside U.S. military personnel) actively participated in planning and organizing an assault on the building.[198]

The windfall of petrodollars in the 1970s also meant that the Kingdom was able to further strengthen ties not just diplomatically or militarily with the United States, but to take an active role in private U.S. business as well. In 1975 the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) borrowed $100 million from the monarchy.[199] In 1979, International Business Machines (IBM) announced that it had received a $300 million loan from the Saudi Arabian government.[200] These early examples of a rapidly growing U.S.-Saudi "transnational capitalist investment bloc" show how inseparable a U.S. foreign policy could become from efforts to protect "the economic and geopolitical interests" of those investors in the Gulf region.[201]

Given the lack of cohesion of foreign policy efforts in the region by the United States after the Second World War, and especially the military and State Department's lack of knowledge of Middle Eastern languages, geography, culture, and history, it would be difficult to argue that the U.S. military had consciously planned for the Army Corps of Engineers to play such a vital role in U.S.-Saudi diplomacy and foreign policy as far down the road as the 1980s. Regardless, by 1979, the fact that the Corps of Engineers had been working within the Kingdom extensively for decades meant that when the time came for a policy reorientation toward the monarchy, the engineers had already built the requisite *diplomatic* infrastructure. The official Corps history explicitly states that "*A part of this overall strategy involved the Corps of Engineers and its ability to translate diplomatic bonds into operational military installations*, either to strengthen the military establishments of friendly nations or to support directly the military forces of the United States."[202] Statements such as these emphasize the need to look beyond "official" military installations in

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[197] Gaul, "Regulating the New Privateers," 1497.

[198] Gaul, "Regulating the New Privateers," 1497.

[199] Reginald Stuart, "A.T.&T. Discloses Saudi Financing," *New York Times*, July 18, 1975, 56, 63, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1975/07/18/76371881.html?pageNumber=56.

[200] Stuart, "A.T.&T. Discloses Saudi Financing," 56.

[201] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 1.

[202] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 519.

assessing the role of the U.S. military, and military bases, during the Cold War and their ability to impact interstate relations through the use of informal diplomacy.

The groundwork for the presence of the U.S. military in the Kingdom during the first Gulf War in 1991 was laid by ARMACO and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in constructing military and civilian infrastructure for decades prior. The White House may not have had a concerted, half-a-century-long foreign policy plan to inculcate U.S.-based construction and business practices in Saudi Arabia in the hopes for an eventual diplomatic readjustment and payoff down the line. This does not mean, however, that we should fail to recognize the asynchronous and indirect path toward military access that eventually occurred.

Military contractors, even those *not* affiliated with a literal branch of the U.S. military like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, played a fundamental role in advancing U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf during and after the Cold War. Just as it would be impossible to separate the actions of organizations such as ARMACO in Saudi Arabia, or the "octopus," during the 1950s or 1960s from the role of the U.S. military, the same can be said of other military contractors in the decades afterwards. In the eyes of some Saudis, private military contractors such as Vinnell operating in Saudi Arabia served as "*de facto* American agents who [were] in Saudi Arabia to implement American foreign policy."[203] Without taking into account the longer-term presence of all of the associated actors, military and otherwise, our understanding of the events of drastic geopolitical changes within the twenty-first century is incomplete.

At the same time that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was reaching the peak of its contracting work in the Kingdom by the mid-1980s, a series of transnational organizations, including private businesses, investment firms, think tanks, and collaborative international investment blocs, built on the diplomatic and infrastructural connections laid by the Army Corps of Engineers. Their decades of contract supervision helped promote the U.S.-Saudi connection as vital to domestic U.S. security. Cox and Koruzhde note that their influence "consolidated during the Reagan administration and their narrative of 'U.S. interests,' 'national security,' and 'threats,' to 'U.S. interests' in the Persian Gulf became the political consensus-building wisdom ever since."[204] Fitting neatly within the rhetoric of domestic U.S. militarization, the conflation of

[203] Gaul, "Regulating the New Privateers," 1500.

[204] Koruzhde and Cox, "Transnational Investment Bloc," 5.

"global" security being grafted onto domestic "U.S." security can be clearly seen during the 1980s in reference to the Middle East.

In a statement near the end of the Iran-Iraq War, in 1987, the Reagan White House emphasized that "this conflict threatens America's strategic interests, as well as the stability and security of all our friends in the region."[205] The reality was that in Saudi Arabia, it was not necessarily the 1980s that created a nexus of U.S foreign policy/corporate interest blocs. Rather, it was in this decade that such connections became larger, more involved, and then after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the new status quo. If decades of continual collaboration between the Saudi state and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the use of private contracting schemes helped forge vital diplomatic connections that were utilized by the White House after the end of the Cold War to stay economically close to the Kingdom, the vast investment of Saudi funds back into U.S. companies such as IBM or the American Telephone Network represented the flip side of nearly a century of U.S. economic and militaristic presence in the country.

The inextricability of commercial and security interests from a foreign policy perspective were not lost on the United States as it navigated the waning Cold War years of the 1980s. In a classified presentation regarding Gulf disruptions of oil production from 1984, this commercial/security connection was further emphasized. The presentation noted that "If our policy of reliance on free market forces is to be successful in the domestic arena, we must ensure that the international market functions well enough to prevent the US from having additional problems at home."[206] As part of ensuring the flow of oil to the United States, the Department of Defense deployed "four U.S. Air Force Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft" with additional "support personnel and radar and communications equipment" as well as organized the "U.S. Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force" in order to secure a measure of regional stability in the wake of the Afghan invasion in 1979, and the Iran-Iraq war in 1980.[207] Though the Saudi

[205] Ronald Reagan, "Statement on the Iran-Iraq War," *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum*, February 25, 1987, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/statement-iran-iraq-war.

[206] William F. Martin, Roger W. Robinson, and Ben L. Bonk, *The Iran-Iraq Threat to World Oil Flows* (Washington, D.C.: Crisis Management Center, Executive Secretariat, National Security Council, May 22, 1984), Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, RAC Box 36, 15, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/public/2023-01/40-748-12026383-R36-060-2022.pdf.

[207] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 157.

state consistently rejected a *physical* basing presence within the Kingdom, arms sales and military contracting continued throughout the 1980s.[208]

The situation in the latter half of the 1980s in the Middle East illustrates the degree to which general conclusions about global "peace" following any collapse of bipolar politics are only partially true. Gorbachev's decision to pull Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, and to drastically reduce Soviet control over Eastern European states did little to soothe tensions between Iraq and Iran. In fact, "it did little to stabilize the politics of the Middle East," and the reality was that by 1989, "the Middle East remained as volatile as ever."[209] Furthermore, the "tanker war" which threatened U.S. interests in the security of shipping oil through the Red Sea prompted the Reagan administration to take a more active maritime role, lessening the pressure for other Gulf states (Saudi Arabia included), to host U.S. bases or troops.[210]

At the same time that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was steadily declining, the work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers within the Kingdom was similarly drawing down. By April of 1988 the Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation hosted a ceremony marking the conclusion of the decades-long collaboration between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Saudi state since the Second World War. On the occasion, General Heiberg, chief of the Engineers, remarked "The Saudis asked us to bring in our standards for construction and to set up a training program for Saudi engineers. In providing this huge amount of construction and in training the cadets to assume this mission, we have helped Saudi Arabia ensure peace through strength."[211] Heiberg concluded his comments by noting that "We have learned more about engineering and construction as a result of being here, and we have learned more about you as a people."[212] After decades of military construction and collaboration that netted the United States billions in contracting and training missions, the Corps redirected its efforts to other military

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[208] See the evolution of arms deals between the United States and Saudi Arabia over time here: Statista, "Value of Total United States Arms Agreements in Saudi Arabia from 1950 to 2017," last modified 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1211508/saudi-arabia-value-of-usa-arms-agreements/.

[209] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 516, 517.

[210] Though this was the case, several other Gulf states did in fact host U.S. bases during this period, though Saudi Arabia specifically declined, citing the desire to avoid Soviet-U.S. confrontation.

[211] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 581.

[212] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 581.

construction contracts to other Gulf countries, and to an expanded construction program throughout Africa. The official history notes that by April 12, of 1988, no engineers remained in the Kingdom, but "Nonetheless, the ties between the U.S. Army engineers and their Saudi counterparts remained vital and strong."[213] Two years later, over one hundred *units* of engineers would accompany hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops into the Kingdom landing on airstrips they built decades before.

Temporal classification of U.S. presence in within Saudi Arabia solely during the Dhahran era of the 1950s and 1960s, and then again in the 1990s, serve to underestimate the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in both constructing, and maintaining, both the physical infrastructure necessary for conducting wartime activities, as well as the no-less vital diplomatic and cultural role of maintaining political ties over the course of decades. Without the Corps serving these roles, the invitation to allow U.S. troops back on Saudi soil after the outbreak of the Gulf War would have been an unprecedented and radical departure from Saudi defense and military strategy.[214] The reality was that the decades of arms deals and the continued international collaboration between the Saudi state, the U.S. military, and private businesses, made such an invitation a less galling proposition for the ulma than it would have been without such strong pre-existing military and economic ties.

When Saddam Hussain attacked Kuwait in 1990 and King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud approved the presence of U.S. forces in the Kingdom — telling Defense Secretary Cheney, "Let's believe in God and do what has to be done … I don't care what other people say. The most important thing is to proceed to protect our country together with the Americans" — the Corps was ready. [215] Based on the "forty years of service in the region and twenty-five years of contract work in Saudi Arabia," when the time came to return, "personnel rushed into action to organize the construction and contracting necessary to support half a million coalition soldiers preparing to engage the enemy."[216] Speaking of the U.S. success during operation *Desert Shield*, Rachel Bronson notes that "The defense capabilities that the United States had been building in the region

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[213] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 582.

[214] Gresh remarks that the *speed* at which "Saudi Arabia decided to permit U.S. military bases on Saudi territory" was in fact, "unprecedented." Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 162.

[215] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 162.

[216] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 623.

since the 1980 Carter doctrine" played a major role in the conflict and that "The U.S. role was made immeasurably easier by existing Saudi military infrastructure, access to its airspace, and the long-standing history between the two states."[217] The former U.S. chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1985–1989 explicitly mentioned existing military infrastructure when commenting on the potential of fighting in Saudi Arabia in 1990: "It is very difficult to reach and it requires some kind of local access. Now, if we have that local access, if we have cooperation …then we can put force in there. We can draw a line."[218] He concluded "We can do whatever we want to if we have the political will."[219]

The nexus of security, economic, and corporate "interests" that the Corps helped construct between the Kingdom and the West was critical in the geopolitical calculus of one of the first post–Cold War conflicts. As Anthony Cordesman concluded in 1987, "While they [the United States and Saudi Arabia] differ in their trade and oil prices, they share a common commitment to private enterprise and to maintaining a stable balance of world trade."[220] That world trade was, in fact, clearly and unambiguously an American interest. Nearly half a century after the end of the Second World War, it was the U.S Army Corps of Engineers who had cemented their relationship. An unnamed senior U.S. official, in a news article from 1990, commented, "The response of the West will not be driven by the Saudis alone… We are talking about oil. Got it? Oil, vital American interests. There is no way we will let the Saudis go down the tubes."[221]

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[217] Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 200, 201.

[218] Thomas L. Friedman, "Battle for the Saudi Soil," *New York Times*, August 4, 1990, 1, 5, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1990/08/04/516790.html?pageNumber=1.

[219] Friedman, "Battle for the Saudi Soil."

[220] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Western Strategic Interests in Saudi Arabia (RLE Saudi Arabia)* (London: Routledge, 1987), 13.

[221] Friedman, "Battle for the Saudi Soil."

Section V: Conclusion: The Gulf War and Beyond

I'm not like a fool that says, "We don't want to do business with them,"
—U.S. President Donald Trump on Saudi Arabia after being questioned about the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the potential to cut arms trading.

For many authors, the first Gulf War that brought thousands of U.S. troops and several military bases to the Kingdom, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and the series of military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq that followed the attacks of Osama bin Laden on the twin towers all form a cohesive story about the notion of post–Cold War American empire. In the midst of a deluge of publications in the twenty-first century regarding the United States' role in the Middle East, many publications look at the storied relationship between the United States and its monarchical partner in the Middle East with an "oil for security" paradigm as the basis of the relationship. Those seeking to present a more nuanced and realistic history of the relationship between the two countries over the course of the twentieth century, such as Rachel Bronson's *Thicker Than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (2006), reject a simplified and amiable relationship.[222] But even more recent publications, like Geoffrey Gresh's *Gulf Security and the US Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (2016), noted by Masaki Mizobuchi as "currently the most important study for understanding base politics in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states," downplay these "inter-base" decades between the Dhahran access and the return of U.S. troops three decades later.[223]

Looking at the *absence* of U.S. foreign military bases in Saudi Arabia during the twentieth century, however, gives the opportunity to challenge several accepted notions regarding base *presence*. Widening the scope of inquiry from simply physical U.S. military bases to the role of quasi-military entities such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allows us to ask questions of how we conceive of power (militaristic, economic, and infrastructural) in the context of U.S. military

[222] Dan De Luce and Robert Windrem, "The Top 11 Favors the Trump Administration Has Done for Saudi Arabia," *NBC News*, July 25, 2019, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/top-11-favors-trump-administration-has-done-saudi-arabia-n1026926; Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*.

[223] Mizobuchi, "Strategic Asset or Political Burden?", 116. It is important to note that the Gresh does mention that ties still did exist between the U.S. and the Saudi government during these periods of turbulence between the states; however, his larger paradigm of internal/external threats determining base access ultimately overshadows the infrastructural role of the Corps in constructing other Saudi military fortifications or civilian infrastructure.

bases. U.S. Army Corps personnel living for decades in Saudi Arabia in buildings and villas leased or owned by the United States military subject to U.S. legal jurisdiction, conducting official military activities, in many ways are not unlike soldiers living with their wives in U.S.-owned apartment complexes outside of Seoul. In tracing the contours of the ways in which the "negotiation for and maintenance of foreign military bases illuminate the operation of US power," we cannot afford to omit the role of organizations such as the Army Corps of Engineers and their decades of informal diplomacy, military and civilian construction, and cultural ties to the Saudi monarchy in the projection of U.S. power.

Some writers, like Greash, Cooley, or Calder point to the large-scale political dimensions of these relationships, but big-power politics is, ultimately, conducted by individuals. In the region of the Middle East, and in Saudi Arabia in particular, the importance of individual friendships and social connections was far from insignificant in dictating political or international relations. The fact that the Saudi government asked — by name — for the six specific U.S. Corps engineers who worked in Dhahran to come back for future construction, or the fact that in 1988 the U.S. Corps of Engineers "installed the director of the Saudi General Directorate of Military Works, Col. Abdulaziz Al-Otaishan, as an honorary member of the Corps of Engineers regiment," marking "the first time such a distinction had been extended to anyone outside the United States," means we can hardly pretend that such connections had little to do with the "$355 million spent on the 133 design contracts" in the United States or the "U.S. specifications" in construction designs which "led to procurement of $1 billion worth of materials and equipment from the United States." [224]

The lack of large U.S. foreign military bases like those of Campy Humphreys in South Korea in countries such as Saudi Arabia or Colombia does not mean that these countries were not affected by the role of the U.S. military interests during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In fact, if anything, by looking more closely at the role of organizations such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or U.S. military contractors in South America or the Middle East, we gain a fuller understanding of the ways in which the U.S. manages to express power in militaristic, economic, and legalistic terms *without* the presence of brick-and-mortar military bases. These differences in the operation of U.S. power abroad reflect differences of historical context, but they play a vital role in the global and varied nature of U.S. power and the U.S. military. As Greash points out in the conclusion to his work on U.S. bases in Gulf security, "It is also speculated that

[224] Grathwol and Moorhus, *Bricks, Sand and Marble*, 582.

the Saud royal family feels protected enough for the time being from Iran by the ring of U.S. military bases that line the eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula in such countries as Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE."[225] Global military strategy for the United States does not operate within a vacuum, and the activities of the U.S. military or the bases in which they operate can hardly be said to be self-contained.

Looking at organizations within and alongside the U.S. military rather than just the bases they inhabit affords us the opportunity to challenge Cold War temporality. The fluidity and continuity of the actions of the U.S. military — especially in the Middle East — reflect the need for a more flexible temporal approach to conceiving of the Cold War. During the 1980s, the United States military had spent considerable time creating an extensive war plan for the scenario of a Soviet invasion of Iran. By 1989, the commander of CENTCOM (Central Command), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf "realized the Iraqis had replaced the Soviets as the major threat in the Persian Gulf."[226] As a result, Schwarzkopf directed his staff to adjust the current plan for the region "to reflect an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait."[227] Rather than a break in military thinking from a Cold War to a post–Cold War environment, the first Gulf War was fought from an original plan for the Soviet invasion of Iran. Other perspectives on military security, "national interests," and defense functioned in similar ways. To impose a bracketed sense of temporality on global affairs, and especially in the region of the Middle East, between 1945 and 1991, does little to reflect longer-term trends that predated the Second World War, or those events that stretched beyond the end of the Cold War.

The terms of the original 1965 Engineer Assistance Agreement between the United States and the Saudi Government were renewed and updated five times across several decades until the cessation of Corps activities in 1988, reflecting both its importance and utility in the eyes of both countries. The Agreement encompassed a wide range of activities but at its core, it "called for the United States to provide advice and assistance in designing and constructing certain facilities for

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[225] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 170.

[226] Janet A. McDonnell, *Supporting the Troops: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Persian Gulf War* (Alexandria, VA: Office of History, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1996), 3, https://www.publications.usace.army.mil/portals/76/publications/engineerpamphlets/ep_870-1-50.pdf.

[227] McDonnell, *Supporting the Troops*, 3.

the Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA) and for training Saudi engineers."[228] The terms of this agreement afforded a wide purview for both the United States and the Saudi government to dictate and modify terms of military construction which eventually resulted in billions of dollars' worth of military *and* civilian infrastructure.[229] This contrasted sharply from the more explicit and limited contracts that dictated the construction of the Dhahran Air Base in the 1950s and early 1960s. The Corps activity during the decades of "peace" between the 1960s and 1990s in Saudi Arabia reflect the ability of quasi-military organizations such as the Corps of Engineers to serve as tools of overseas U.S. foreign policy even in the absence of immediate or direct threats.

Just two years after the official conclusion of Corps activities, however, hard military power returned to the Kingdom, ready to utilize the infrastructure built over the course of decades by the Corps. Thousands of U.S. troops poured into the country to defend the nation from the threat of the Iraqi army, already massing on the border after sweeping through Kuwait in early August of 1990. These troops were used to defend Saudi Arabia, but also U.S. interests in the region for years after the threat of Saddam Hussein's military had been initially repelled. U.S. president George H.W. Bush emphasized the importance of the U.S. presence in a conversation with Saudi King Fahd on August 4, 1990, confirming that "the security of Saudi Arabia is vital — basically fundamental — to US interests and really to the interests of the western world."[230] These U.S. troops — numbering over 200,000 — were granted access to Saudi military facilities and bases that had been built by the Corps in the decades before the outbreak of the war. It was not until 2003, however, when Saddam Hussein was finally removed from power, that the Saudi monarchy terminated U.S. access to basing facilities in the country.[231]

By this point, though, the need for U.S. troop access to countries such as Saudi Arabia had waned given the massive military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Iraq alone, the Gulf Region

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[228] Jeffrey Craig Smith, *Mega-Project Construction Management—The Corps of Engineers and Bechtel Group in Saudi Arabia* (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1991), 40.

[229] Smith notes that "The total Saudi Arabian program, including KKMC, reached $17 billion and was completed in 1988." Smith, *Mega-Project Construction Management*, 42.

[230] National Security Archive, *Bush Telcon with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, August 4, 1990*, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Memcons and Telcons, accessed July 22, 2025, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/24310-bush-telcon-king-fahd-saudi-arabia-august-4-1990.

[231] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 164.

Division (GDR) of the Corps of Engineers engaged in construction projects of over $9 billion in just several years.[232] Amy Belasco notes in her work "*Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other global war on terror operations since 9/11* (2011), that "The scope of military construction raised concerns with some policy makers about whether extensive construction indicated DOD intentions to set up permanent U.S. bases in Iraq and in Afghanistan," and in consequence, "both defense appropriation and authorization acts include provisions that prohibit the United States from establishing permanent bases in either Iraq or Afghanistan."[233] These provisions made clear that previous defense relationships with other Gulf countries were going to remain vital to U.S. foreign policy goals and national interests in the region regardless of the outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Gresh highlights that even if changing internal and external security threats to the Saudi regime had significant impacts on decisions to allow "official" base access to U.S. troops from 1990 and beyond, the broader security relationship that the Corps had carefully constructed over the course of decades remained steadfast: "While the U.S. military may have closed its bases in 2003, it still retains an influential military presence in the Kingdom …The U.S. military continues to supply arms, equipment, and other technical support to the Kingdom, including building up a Saudi-U.S. drone program, maintaining the U.S. Military Training Mission, and even establishing a train-and-equip program for Syrian rebels in Saudi Arabia."[234]

As of November 1, 2023, "Saudi Arabia is the United States' largest foreign military sales (FMS) customer" with over "$100 billion in active FMS cases."[235] The extent of military, economic, and diplomatic connections between the two countries is best described by the U.S. State Department in their description of the relationship between the two countries:

> Saudi Arabia's unique role in the Arab and Islamic worlds, its holding of the world's second largest reserves of oil, and its strategic location all play a role in the long-standing bilateral

[232] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Twenty Years of Operations in Iraq," *Historical Vignettes: Military Construction in Combat*, no. 161 (April 2023), accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/Historical-Vignettes/Military-Construction-Combat/161-Twenty-Years-in-Iraq/.

[233] Amy Belasco, *Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11* (Washington, DC: DIANE Publishing, 2011).

[234] Gresh, *Gulf Security and the US Military*, 168.

[235] U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Relations With Saudi Arabia: Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet*, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, November 1, 2023, https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-saudi-arabia/.

> relationship between the Kingdom and the United States. The United States and Saudi Arabia have a common interest in preserving the stability, security, and prosperity of the Gulf region and consult closely on a wide range of regional and global issues. Saudi Arabia … is a strong partner in security and counterterrorism efforts and in military, diplomatic, and financial cooperation. Its forces work closely with U.S. military and law enforcement bodies to safeguard both countries' national security interests. The United States and Saudi Arabia also enjoy robust cultural and educational ties with tens of thousands of Saudi students studying in U.S. colleges and universities and scores of educational and cultural exchange visitors each year.

As we have seen with the Yongsan Garrison in South Korea, the example of Saudi Arabia within this research demonstrates that the *impacts* of U.S. foreign military bases are not exclusively military in nature, nor do those impacts cease to exist after their closure.

Though the activities of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers range from constructing highway systems in Turkey to building television networks in Saudi Arabia, the distinctive characteristic of their presence in the Kingdom was its sheer scale, and its role in facilitating a long-term capitalist relationship between the Saudi state and U.S. companies not replicated elsewhere during the Cold War period. The drastic and sudden increase in available funds linked to a rapidly developing petro-economy in the 1970s and 1980s meant that few (if any) other countries could have engaged in the billion-dollar military contracting programs helmed by the Corps. Koruzhde and Cox highlight that the militarization of the political and economic relationship during this period, through "arms sales, prolonged military training programs, material prepositioning and basing arrangements, joint exercises, and direct military interventions," was a vital and unique characteristic of the U.S-Saudi relationship. Though the military/private business/foreign government nexus described in this chapter occurred elsewhere during the Cold War, it was in Saudi Arabia where its effects were the most pronounced, and where their impacts have had the longest-lasting legacy on international relations.

FDR saw the U.S. role in global terms extending far beyond the end of the military conflict in Europe and Asia. His view of an American hegemony was both military and economic in nature. Few could have contemplated the strength and longevity of ties that were to emerge from his meeting with King Saud in 1945. But the case of Saudi Arabia shows the resiliency and adaptability of the U.S. military, in all its forms, to the extension of U.S. power in a wide variety of contexts.

Chapter V: Italy

We said yesterday that we were determined to see justice done and that we would use every appropriate means to that end … We will continue to take every appropriate measure available to us to deal with these dastardly deeds
—Statement by U.S. Principal Deputy Press Secretary Larry M. Speakes on the Achille Lauro Hijacking Incident, October 10, 1985.

Introduction

On October 10, 1985, one of the most bizarre of events of the Cold War transpired *between* allies — the United States and Italy — at Sigonella, on an Italian military base on the island of Sicily. Within a hijacked plane, four Palestinian terrorists remained huddled inside while a ring of Italian airmen pointed their guns not at them, but at a ring of U.S. special forces troops surrounding the Italians. A third and final ring of Italian *Carabinieri* then arrived and levelled their weapons *at the U.S. troops* as well.[1] Statements days later by Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi explained the standoff: "Immediately upon landing, the Egyptian Boeing was placed under guard by 50 Italian soldiers who had surrounded it. Fifty American soldiers in combat dress got out of the C-141 and also surrounded the Italian soldiers. They were part of the Delta Forces and were commanded by a general in radio contact with Washington. A commando was ready to intervene in order to take the passengers from the Boeing. The direct order from the White House was to get the terrorists."[2] A *New York Times* article published several weeks later reported that "United States officials…

[1] Larry M. Speakes, "Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on the Achille Lauro Hijacking Incident," October 10, 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/statement-principal-deputy-press-secretary-speakes-achille-lauro-hijacking-incident; Peter Brownfeld and Ginevra Baino, "The Sigonella Episode and the Limits of the United States-Italian Relationship," *Army Lawyer* 2021, no. 1 (2021): 61.

[2] Bettino Craxi, "Hostages and Hijackers: A Fragile Coalition Shatters. Excerpts from Address to Parliament," trans. *The New York Times*, *New York Times*, October 18, 1985, 8, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1985/10/18/088601.html?pageNumber=8.

reported that the confrontation ended only when President Reagan ordered the American troops to withdraw."[3]

Prior to landing in Sigonella, the Palestinian terrorists had hijacked an Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, while it was docked in Cairo. In the process, an American citizen aboard the ship was killed by one of the terrorists. The three governments of Egypt, Italy, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) proceeded to negotiate a deal which would require the terrorists to return to PLO headquarters in Tunisia.[4] The Egyptian plane with all of the Palestinian terrorists was then intercepted by U.S. fighter jets while it was en route and compelled to land at Sigonella, thus setting the stage for the dramatic standoff between Rome and Washington on October 10.

The crux of the issue centered on international law and the issue of jurisdiction. *The New York Times* identified on October 28, 1985, that the episode had the potential to "raise thorny legal questions, since the Sigonella base is partly a North Atlantic Treaty Organization installation and partly an Italian Air Force base."[5] Italian Prime Minister Craxi was adamant that "An Italian court will judge those responsible for the crimes committed on an Italian ship" and that rather than ceding jurisdiction to the United States, "The Italian Government could not act in violation of international legality or of Italian law."[6]

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[3] E. J. Dionne Jr., "Sicilian Prosecutors Examine Standoff at Air Base," *New York Times*, October 28, 1985, 9, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1985/10/28/111063.html?pageNumber=9.

[4] Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 61.

[5] Dionne, "Sicilian Prosecutors Examine Standoff," 9.

[6] Craxi, "Hostages and Hijackers," 8. The episode at Sigonella represented a significant and public act of defiance on the part of the Craxi government. But its significance within the wider U.S.-Italian diplomatic relationship is more complicated than simply representing a "new, different type of relationship ('more mature,' as one sometime reads) between Italy and the United States." As Leopoldo Nuti emphasizes, this relationship between the two countries must always be read against the backdrop of more global Cold War considerations: "it is significant that, at the time of the crisis, and not far from the Sigonella airport, the more than one hundred Cruise missiles deployed since the previous year stood as a pointed reminder of US–Italian cooperation. In other words, perhaps Craxi could afford to challenge what he regarded as the most unpalatable expressions of U.S. foreign policy because the underlying relationship with Washington was so firm." Leopoldo Nuti "The Richest and Farthest Master Is Always Best: US-Italian Relations in Historical Perspective," in *The Atlantic Alliance under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, ed. David M. Andrews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 188.

Figure 9 – Depiction of the standoff from the 1985 Italian documentary, "La Notte di Sigonella."[7]

Though it may have been the most dramatic, the episode at Sigonella in the autumn of 1985 was not the only legal dispute regarding U.S.-Italian jurisdiction during the Cold War, and it would not be the last. Ever since the signing of the NATO SOFA in 1951, the United States and Italy had

[7] *La Notte di Sigonella*, directed by Andrea D'Asaro (Rome: RAI, 1985), documentary film.

been at loggerheads over a series of international legal cases stemming from the status of U.S. soldiers operating on Italian soil.[8] Writing of the Sigonella incident in 2021, lawyers Peter Brownfeld and Ginevra Baino concluded that "A study of the relevant laws and precedent leaves doubts as to whether the United States [has] conducted itself in accordance with its rights and obligations," and that ultimately, "The U.S. claims of jurisdiction were weaker."[9] The tension regarding international treaty obligations, and especially regarding the adherence to standards set forth in the 1951 NATO SOFA between the United States and Italy during the Cold War, speaks to the importance of considering the legal dimension of U.S. military basing during this turbulent century.

Andrew Buchanan concluded that it was "the combination of military, economic and political power, that Roosevelt and Truman were able to succeed where Wilson had failed."[10] Certainly, economic or militaristic coercion were effective tools for the United States in the postwar period to sway different states to Western-style democratic, free-trade societies, and to a liberal vision in opposition to communism. However, these were not the only means. When it served their purposes, the U.S. was ready to also adapt international law to achieve its goals. The use of international law in fashioning this vision of the postwar global order was just as significant as the military, economic, or political functions of the United States after 1945. The polarizing standoff among NATO allies at Sigonella is one of the starkest examples of this approach.

Consistently treated as a separate section of academic analysis from the historical, economic, or political history of the Cold War period, the role of international law in safeguarding U.S. troops and personnel operating on foreign soil *together* with other aspects of U.S. power

[8] Giovanni Favero highlights that "Even though America has played a key role in assisting Italy in recovering from a complex situation of post-war political and economic crisis, the introduction of foreign-managed military bases in Italy has caused a great deal of debates and criticism at local and national level since the earliest U.S. operations, that for the most part have been running under the NATO flag. The most disputed issues concerning the Italian military bases have included the special jurisdiction and diplomatic protection for officers operating in the military bases." Marcello Bruno Martinelli, *The Impact of the NATO/US Military Bases in the Northeast of Italy* (master's thesis, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2013/2014), V, https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14247/411.

[9] Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 65, 68.

[10] Andrew N. Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy During Its 'Decade of War'," in *A Fascist Decade of War: 1935–1945 in International Perspective*, ed. Marco Maria Aterrano and Karine Varley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 39.

projection during the Cold War will be the focus of this chapter.[11] As Craig Jones concludes in his work *War Lawyers* (2020) "contemporary military violence is governed by law—and this means attending to the ways in which such violence is not only moderated by law but is also *enabled*, *legitimized*, *and extended* by it."[12] The development of international law, and in particular the role of SOFAs in this context, much like other aspects of U.S. foreign military bases such as the informal diplomacy conducted by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia, or the massive U.S. foreign military bases in South Korea on land development and urban architecture, helps deepen our understanding of the polyvalent expressions of U.S. power during the Cold War.

Like political or economic considerations, the role of U.S. SOFAs in differing national contexts, either in Korea, Japan, Germany or Italy, can reveal much about power hierarchies in the twentieth century. As Merry notes in *Getting Justice and Getting Even: Legal Consciousness Among Working-Class Americans* (1990), "Legal words and practices are cultural constructs which carry powerful meanings not just to those trained in the law or to those who routinely use it to manage their business transactions but to the ordinary person as well."[13] Just as military bases and their relevance, impacts, and effects routinely come into contact with the average citizen of a host country, the same can be said of the law. If the study of military bases or the realm of law are domains nominally reserved for those with specialized expertise, their impacts are hardly limited

[11] Exceptions notwithstanding, Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, David G. Victor, and Yonatan Lupu highlight that "For more than two decades, scholars have been calling for international lawyers and political scientists to collaborate … Yet the two fields are still notable for their distance." Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, David G. Victor, and Yonatan Lupu, "Political Science Research on International Law: The State of the Field," *American Journal of International Law* 106, no. 1 (2012): 48. Steininger, Silvia, William Hamilton Byrne, and Raphael Oidtmann note that international scholarship has been changing, and "since the 1990s" the field has "facilitated the engagement with 'new' approaches, that often draw from the social sciences." However, they also conclude that "there is still a lot of blank space to be discovered" and that "it would be important to map the engagement with international law in social science journals, to investigate whether this interaction is mutual." Silvia Steininger, William Hamilton Byrne, and Raphael Oidtmann, "The Blind Men and the Elephant: An Empirical Analysis of the Social Sciences in International Law," *Nordic Journal of International Law* 93, no. 1 (2024): 12, 37.

[12] Emphasis in the original. Jones further emphasizes that "war and law are not separate entities; rather, they co-constitute and animate each other in all kinds of ways" and further, that "the laws of war and state power are not—and have never been—discrete entities: state power gives shape to the laws of war (through treaty negotiation and customary practice) and the laws of war in turn give flavour to state power by constraining and enabling it. In short, the laws of war and state power are co-constitutive." Craig Jones, *The War Lawyers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xxxii, 1, 3.

[13] Sally Engle Merry, *Getting Justice and Getting Even: Legal Consciousness Among Working-Class Americans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8–9, quoted in David Nelken, ed., *Comparing Legal Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1997), 28.

to those communities. As a consequence, we should be more willing to incorporate their study more cohesively within other strands of academic analysis. Mathias M. Siems notes that such syncretic legal approaches "can lead to a more informed and more balanced judgment" and as a result, one "can gain a deeper understanding than someone who is only interested in the 'law as such.'"[14]

Indeed, it would hardly be possible to claim that the role of the United States during the Cold War in different regional and international contexts was limited in its effects to military, economic, or cultural fields. Base expert David Vine emphasizes that when analyzing the impacts of bases in Italy and elsewhere, "divisions are artificial. Each realm is clearly related to the others."[15] For example, as the previous chapter regarding Saudi Arabia illustrates, the United States Army Corps of Engineers managed to play a fundamental role in the development of the modern Saudi state regardless of their "United States Army" title, and even without access to U.S. bases. Law was no different.

Steven J. Lepper, former chief of the International and Operations Law Division in the Office of the Judge Advocate General for the United States Air Force, articulated the role of the law in this regard in his 1994 article "A Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction."[16] As a matter of internal policy for the US, Lepper noted that "in practice the maxim 'maximize jurisdiction' is the staff judge advocate's primary guidance" regarding international legal disputes.[17] Those efforts to maximize the extent of U.S. legal jurisdiction have not, however, gone uncontested by host countries. Lepper further noted that "New challenges constantly face the United States as its allies become more assertive and resist granting substantial concessions."[18] The tension continued for the next three decades.

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[14] Mathias M. Siems, "The Taxonomy of Interdisciplinary Legal Research: Finding the Way Out of the Desert," *Journal of Commonwealth Law and Legal Education* 7, no. 1 (2009): 12.

[15] David Vine, "A Pistol on the Table: Military Installations and the Bases of US Power in Italy," *Italian Quarterly* 54, nos. 211/214 (2017): 133.

[16] Steven J. Lepper, "A Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," *Air Force Law Review* 37 (1994): 169–90.

[17] Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 179.

[18] Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 187.

In one of the most valuable quantitative analyses regarding legal claims levied against U.S. soldiers abroad during the Cold War period, "Facing US extraterritorial pressure: American troops in foreign courts during the Cold War" (2022), Asif Efrat concludes that "The persistent goal of US authorities has been to secure extraterritorial jurisdiction over as many criminal cases involving American troops as possible and to evade local criminal responsibility for alleged offenders."[19]

International law is one of the few realms of law in which the success of legal norms has traditionally been viewed through the lens of compliance.[20] Absent an overarching legal

[19] Asif Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure: American Troops in Foreign Courts During the Cold War," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 1 (2022): 244.

[20] The role of compliance in either the "success" or "failure" of a given piece of international jurisprudence is a contested and controversial topic for legal scholars. Roda Mushkat asserts that "There is no single credible explanation for the diverse patterns of rule conformity observed in the global arena." Roda Mushkat, "State Reputation and Compliance with International Law: Looking Through a Chinese Lens," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 10, no. 4 (2011): 703. Andrew T. Guzman notes that "Most scholars and practitioners of international law believe that international law matters, by which they mean it affects the behavior of states" but at the same time, he highlights that there is still disagreement regarding theories of how and why states either choose to comply or disregard such law. Guzman further emphasizes that "not all international law is created equal. Some obligations are more binding than others, and states choose the level of their commitments against this background fact." Andrew T. Guzman, "A Compliance-Based Theory of International Law," *California Law Review* 90, no. 6 (December 2002): 1826–7. For a contrasting view to that of Guzman regarding the importance of compliance in international law see, Robert Howse and Ruti Teitel, "Beyond Compliance: Rethinking Why International Law Really Matters," *Global Policy* 1, no. 2 (2010): 127–36. Howse and Teitel note that this focus on compliance within international law "obfuscates the character of international legal normativity, tending to ignore the centrality of interpretation to the generation of legal meaning, as well as the horizontal relation between diverse norms and regimes ('fragmentation')." Howse and Teitel, "Beyond Compliance," 128. Adam Chilton and Katerina Linos pinpoint the principal issues related to compliance in their work, Adam Chilton and Katerina Linos, "Preferences and Compliance with International Law," *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 22, no. 2 (2021): 247–89: "There are few legislative or judicial bodies with exclusive authority over particular jurisdictions or subject matters, the subjects regulated by international law typically must affirmatively consent to be bound by it, and supranational authorities with the power to coerce states to comply with international obligations are rare." Chilton and Linos, "Preferences and Compliance," 247. Though some fields within international law, especially in the realm of international finance, have developed both governmental and non-governmental quasi-legal structures that more can more effectively monitor and enforce compliance, the push towards "global governance" or "global law," is still incomplete. For example, as Rajeshwar Tripathi notes, financial institutions such as the World Bank have been successful in finding answers to a lack of compliance regarding international law: "the World Bank's policies on good governance, whether designated as 'advice' or as conditions of financial aid to developing countries, have generated extensive codes of principles and rules for the organisation of procedures of domestic administration ranging from measures to combat corruption to practices of greater transparency and procedural guarantees for market actors. In this process a Global Administrative Law (GAL) is taking shape." Tripathi further emphasizes that "increasing economic integration—through rapid movements of capital, decreasing communication and transportation costs, increasing trade dependence and the greater interconnectedness of markets—has led to the emergence of global governance." Rajeshwar Tripathi, "Concept of Global Administrative Law: An Overview," *India Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2011): 356–7. However, trends within international law, compliance structures, and global administrative law, have not resulted in standardized changes across all legal disciplines. What is clear, and what is most centrally relevant to the research presented here, is that there are still ample methods and techniques for economically or militarily superior countries to unequally affect the currently international legal system. Though it would be extreme to agree with Rafael Domingo's assessment that "International law is in its death throes, and with it an outdated order will become extinct, giving way to a new paradigm of globalization," his assessment of several of the current issues within

mechanism of compliance, there has been (and still remains) ample room for nation states to skirt international treaty obligations given their relative strength (economic, military, or political) in the global system.[21] Efrat notes that "While many countries occasionally apply their laws extraterritorially," it was precisely this type of power within the international system during the Cold War that allowed the United States to wield extraterritoriality "far more consistently and extensively, taking advantage of its hegemonic status."[22] Running parallel to the construction of a liberal cultural and economic order after the Second World War was the physical and militaristic global infrastructure that supported such conceptual bedrocks of modern "Western" nation states.

But casting an even wider net across all of these perspectives was a conception of the rule of law that provided legitimacy to the endeavor. William H. Taft emphasizes that "in the years following World War II, the United States exerted its influence to negotiate treaties to create international obligations and set up institutions to manage international relations on an unprecedented scale."[23] Ugo Mattei and Laura Nader conclude that "Since the Nuremberg trials, Western notions of legality have characterized international law," and that this international legal system "has thus reproduced on a global scale a professional legal ideology of neutrality, democracy, and rule of law, claiming a façade of legitimacy to the exercise worldwide of unprecedented US political strength."[24] The case of Italy as a NATO ally serves us well in this

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international law are insightful: "international law as currently conceived is insufficient; it is lacking. Its capacity for action has been compromised by global terrorism, the hegemony of a sole superpower (the United States), and the rampant imperialism of various nations – China, Russia, India – that strive to recover their lost grandeur … we are faced with a crisis that stems from the very structure of international law, one based on political concepts that have become obsolete: sovereignty, territoriality, and the nation-state." Rafael Domingo, *The New Global Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 53–4.

[21] Some, such as Kal Raustiala and Anne-Marie Slaughter, have argued that the proliferation of international courts and organizational bodies after 1990 has heralded a change in the international system where "implicit in these moves to create new judicial institutions was a belief that legal decisions are distinctive; that law provides a way to engage complex political issues in a more neutral, less overtly power-laden, and perhaps more predictable manner." Kal Raustiala and Anne-Marie Slaughter, "International Law, International Relations and Compliance," in *The Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 2, https://ssrn.com/abstract=347260.

[22] Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure," 242.

[23] William H. Taft IV, "A View from the Top: American Perspectives on International Law after the Cold War," *Yale Journal of International Law* 31, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 503.

[24] Ugo Mattei and Laura Nader, *Plunder: When the Rule of Law Is Illegal* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 150, 153.

regard. David Vine argues that "U.S. bases became not just a major source of U.S. influence in Italy, but also a powerful tool through which U.S. officials influenced Italian politics and politicians and maintained Italy in a subordinate position within a global system of U.S. political-economic dominance," and it is in this context that we must consider the role of international law and U.S. bases as part of the complex extension of U.S. power in the post–World War II era.[25]

This power, leveraged through legal standards, treaties, and institutions meant that when "foreign legal authorities filed 361,487 criminal cases against US personnel" — *just between the years of 1954 and 1970* — "only 121,717 criminal cases (one-third) reached trial before host country courts."[26] As Indira Ratwatte notes, although "A SOFA…essentially sets out guidelines and procedures to be observed" that are mutually agreed upon to govern visiting forces, "one is aware that in geopolitics there are always the 'weaker' states and the 'stronger' States."[27]

The importance of taking a multifaceted approach to the understanding of these legal phenomena, of SOFAs and in particular the NATO SOFA, does not just aid in our understanding of Cold War history, politics, or international law from the twentieth century. Such an analysis is especially relevant for the future of political, military, and legal ties between the United States and NATO countries given that it was precisely the 1951 document, the original "North Atlantic Treaty Organization Status of Forces Agreement" (NATO SOFA) signed at the beginning of the Cold War, that the European Union determined in 2001 to be "the most substantial source of rules on which the status of military staff on secondment to the EUMS [European Union Military Staff], as well as the status of headquarters and forces made available to the European Union, could be modelled."[28] In other words, the ideological underpinnings of the Second World War global security network, of the latticework of U.S. foreign military bases, and the international legal framework that protected nearly two-thirds of them and their dependents from any kind of foreign criminal prosecution, would continue — in some form — into the twenty-first century. Aurel Sari further emphasizes the importance of this agreement as a template for future international law,

[25] Vine, "A Pistol on the Table," 135.

[26] Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure," 242.

[27] Indira Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," *KDU Law Journal* 1 (2021): 194, https://ir.kdu.ac.lk/handle/345/4492.

[28] Aurel Sari, "The European Union Status of Forces Agreement (EU SOFA)," *Journal of Conflict & Security Law* 13, no. 3 (2008): 357.

noting that "it cannot be overlooked that the NATO SOFA has attained a measure of legitimacy unmatched by any other status of forces agreement" and even more significantly, "There is considerable evidence in state practice that the NATO SOFA has become the yardstick against which other status of forces agreements are measured."[29] But serious and unanswered questions remain regarding the effectiveness of the NATO SOFA, and they lie outside the stricter confines of strictly a legal analysis.

Indira Ratwatte examines these questions in his article comparing the NATO SOFA to that of the Republic of Korea (ROK)-USA SOFA, emphasizing the unequal provisions contained in the latter, and concludes by noting that "if there is no parity of status, if power politics are utilized and inequality precedes the making of a SOFA, it fails to respect the Sovereignty of the host State, from its very inception."[30] Ironically, Ratwatte comes to this conclusion in the comparison between the relative parity of NATO SOFA member states, remarking that "The NATO SOFA seems a comfortable compromise between territorial Sovereignty and a crucial defence agreement," whereas the ROK SOFA represents a distinct imbalance between nations due to historical contingencies and developments.[31]

Though the majority of allied European countries may have differed from a small, underdeveloped, former Japanese colony such as Korea after 1945, one could hardly say that Western European countries were on any level of parity with the United States at Potsdam. The scale of destruction on the continent could hardly be overexaggerated. Tony Judt's, work, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2008), begins chapter one by remarking that "Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War offered a prospect of utter misery and desolation."[32] He noted that "Everyone and everything—with the notable exception of the well-fed Allied occupation

[29] Sari, "EU Status of Forces Agreement," 359.

[30] Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," 188.

[31] Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," 188.

[32] Judt continues his description in even more harrowing detail: "Photographs and documentary films of the time show pitiful streams of helpless civilians trekking through a blasted landscape of broken cities and barren fields. Orphaned children wander forlornly past groups of worn out women picking over heaps of masonry. Shaven-headed deportees and concentration camp inmates in striped pyjamas stare listlessly at the camera, starving and diseased. Even the trams, propelled uncertainly along damaged tracks by intermittently available electric current, appear shell-shocked." Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 13.

forces—seems worn out, without resources, exhausted."[33] By the time that the original document of the NATO SOFA of 1951 was signed between the United States and its European allies, the Marshall Plan had been put into effect (1948), but much Europe still had several decades of painful and staggered reconstruction to go through before achieving any semblance of economic, military or political parity with the U.S. (or other European states such as France, Britain, or West Germany.) Italy in particular, the subject of this chapter, was far from a partner on equal footing with the United States by 1951 despite its role as a key strategic partner with within NATO.

Alessandro Marrone and Alessandro R. Ungaro underscore the dominance of the U.S. in these postwar arrangements, noting that "The United States has been considered by the Italian Republic as the main contributor to European security during and after the Cold War" and that "Moreover, bilateral relations with Washington have been deliberately pursued by Rome as leverage to enhance Italy's status with more powerful European countries."[34] Buchanan notes that "American officials sought to engage American business interests, along with governmental and non-governmental agencies, in their effort to make Italy into a 'stable, peaceful, and constructive element among the nations of Europe' that was integrated into 'multilateral and nondiscriminatory foreign trade'" and that American exports to Italy rose from "an average of $141 million in the years 1926–1930 … to $456 million in 1951."[35]All of the increased economic, military, and diplomatic aid by the United States in the postwar period was occurring against a backdrop of a highly dangerous and volatile postwar peace. Francesca Grandi remarked on the situation in simple terms: "When World War II ended in Italy, the violence did not."[36] In fact, the situation was not just violent, like that of other nations such as Germany, France, or Spain, but Grandi notes that "the level of violence in postwar Italy was remarkable for peacetime."[37]

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[33] Judt, *Postwar*, 13.

[34] Alessandro Marrone and Alessandro R. Ungaro, "Relations between the United States of America and Italy in the Post-Cold War Period: A Defense-Industrial Perspective," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 88 (2014), 44, published November 24, 2014, accessed January 5, 2024, http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/7542, https://doi.org/10.4000/cdlm.7542.

[35] Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy," 35, 37.

[36] Francesca Grandi, "Why Do the Victors Kill the Vanquished? Explaining Political Violence in Post-World War II Italy," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 5 (2013): 577.

[37] Grandi, "Why Do the Victors Kill the Vanquished?," 577.

The level of disruption in postwar Europe meant that even though European countries were viewed somewhat differently than Asian countries by U.S. policymakers, soldiers, and the general public during the 1940s, they were decidedly *not* in positions to negotiate international legal documents on parity with the United States by 1951.[38] Though racial stereotypes and preconceptions of Korean or Japanese people as needing to be "guided" by a more benevolent and knowledgeable superpower such as the United States informed the postwar period in Asia, similar attitudes prevailed all over Europe as well — and in particular, in Italy. Kaeten Mistry notes that "Constructions of a childlike, immature population desperately in need of guidance defined the Italian character to US officials and society during liberation."[39]

Though European countries were able to sign an international legal document such as the NATO SOFA in 1951 which contained more preferential and equal legal footing than other allied countries such as South Korea during the postwar period, we should not mistake "more equal" with a notion of parity. In the context of postwar starvation, destruction, and the immediate and perceived threat of communist invasion, European countries signed the 1951 NATO SOFA under highly volatile circumstances. Ratwatte's assessment of the U.S.-ROK SOFA, that, "even if the text of the US-ROK SOFA is seemingly fair, practice has been far from it," the very same assessment could be leveled at the more "comfortable compromise" of the NATO SOFA.[40]

This chapter will focus on the "unbalanced treaties and agreements" signed between the United States and Italy in the immediate postwar period, with particular attention to the NATO

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[38] Stuart Croft describes the British situation immediately after 1945 as being centered around two distinct goals: "During the late 1940s, the British government wanted to achieve two related objectives in its relations with Western Europe. First, they wanted to secure economic recovery … Secondly, the government wanted to prevent any further extension of Soviet influence." For the British, arguably the European nation in the *best* postwar situation relative to other countries that were ravaged on the continent, U.S. assistance was simply a necessity: "In securing both these objectives, the long-term assistance of the United States was central to the British conception: only a major injection of American resources could ensure European recovery, and only American political and military strength could counterbalance the perceived preponderance of Soviet power on the continent." Like many other European countries in the late 1940s, by consequence, Britain's "European policy," was "indivisibly linked to its American policy." Stuart Croft, "British Policy Towards Western Europe, 1947–9: The Best of Possible Worlds?" *International Affairs* 64, no. 4 (1988): 618.

[39] He continues, "Italians were considered 'so woefully unequipped for democratic self-government that ongoing American tutelage was necessary.' An ideology of Italian frailty distilled the local characteristics while confirming the rationale for a 'muscular and beneficent expansion of American power.'" Kaeten Mistry, *The United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War: Waging Political Warfare, 1945–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 17.

[40] Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," 221.

SOFA of 1951, and the Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement of 1954, which largely dictate the legality and conduct of U.S. forces operating in Italy.[41] As Dario Fazzi emphasizes in his article "Imperial Constraints: Labor and US Military Bases in Italy, 1954–1979," "This legalized unbalanced relation [between the U.S. and Italy] played a pivotal role in the positioning of U.S. military forces overseas."[42] From a more narrow legal perspective, the NATO SOFA and other aspects of international law might be considered legal agreements that safeguard protections for receiving countries of foreign troops from misconduct, especially relative to even *more* unequal treaties. However, considered in a wider context, and using specific court cases in Italy through the Cold War period to the present day, this chapter will present these agreements as part of a different, yet highly significant expression of U.S. power related to U.S. foreign military bases.

The legal infrastructure that legitimates the existence and operation of U.S. bases on foreign soil is as much a product of the Cold War as are the bases themselves, but just as the impacts of the bases and their personnel maintain their influence in the post–Cold War era, the reverberations and implications of the legal dimensions of U.S. foreign military bases are equally — if not *more* relevant — for international law regarding jurisdiction and visiting force immunity in the twenty-first century. And despite the importance of U.S. bases and troops to Italy's postwar history, David Vine emphasizes that "Surprisingly, there is relatively little scholarship documenting the effects of U.S. bases and troops in Italy (particularly compared to research about bases in Japan, Germany, and South Korea)."[43] In light of the importance of the NATO SOFA as a template for legal scholars looking to create future nation-to-nation SOFAs, its Cold War origins as a product of maintaining a favorable and unbalanced tool of exerting U.S. power, even in allied countries, requires serious consideration.

This chapter consists of three principal sections. The first provides both an historical context for the U.S.-Italian political relationship prior to and during the Second World War. It also contains a brief overview of the legal context of visiting forces in international law — primarily centered around two legal concepts of the law of the flag and of territorial sovereignty — prior to the 1951 SOFA agreement. The second section considers two different international legal cases,

[41] Dario Fazzi, "Imperial Constraints: Labor and US Military Bases in Italy, 1954–1979," *Diplomatic History* 45, no. 4 (2021): 743–66.

[42] Fazzi, "Imperial Constraints," 749.

[43] Vine, "A Pistol on the Table," 133.

the standoff between U.S. and Italian forces at Sigonella as part of the Achille Lauro affair and the Cavalese cable car disaster of 1998, as they relate to U.S. foreign military bases between the signing of the NATO SOFA in 1951 and the present day. The details of each case will be evaluated for how they document the wider framework of U.S.-Italian power relations. The final section places the legal dimension of U.S. base access into context alongside the previously discussed aspects of Cold War basing in South Korea and Saudi Arabia.

Section I: Historical and Legal Context

The United States has security interests of primary importance in Italy and the measures to implement our current policies to safeguard those interests should be strengthened without delay.
—Report by the United States National Security Council "The Position of the United States With Respect to Italy," [Washington,] November 14, 1947.

Despite the growth of a closely linked economic and military relationship between the United States and Italy throughout the Cold War period, as early as 1945, it was clear to the Truman White House that other issues took precedence in Europe. The centrality of Germany loomed large, and it was not until the pivotal 1948 elections between the Christian Democrats (DC) and the communist party in Italy that U.S. foreign policy was spurred into action in the country. In the minds of U.S. policymakers, even before the pivotal NSC 68 explicitly defined U.S. foreign policy in global opposition to the Soviet model, the 1948 election presented the very real opportunity for Italy to break away from the Western liberal bloc, and through a popular election, choose communism.[44] Such an outcome was unacceptable for the United States because the fate of Italy had the potential to serve as a highly symbolic token in what rapidly was becoming a zero-sum game between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As with the discussion of the "loss" of China in the

[44] U.S. National Security Council, *The Position of the United States With Respect to Italy*, NSC 1/1, November 14, 1947, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Western Europe, Volume III* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v03/d440; For the text of the document see, United States National Security Council, *NSC 68*, doc. 85, 29. For secondary resources regarding the report, see: Paul Y. Hammond, "NSC-68: Prologue to Rearmament," in *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 267–378; Samuel F. Wells Jr., "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat," *International Security* 4, no. 2 (1979): 116–58; and S. Nelson Drew and Paul H. Nitze, *NSC-68: Forging the Strategy of Containment* (Darby, PA: Diane Publishing, 1994).

years after the Korean war, Mario Del Pero and Federico Romero note that "Italy became important not in itself but for what it represented: for its symbolic value in the larger scheme of things, as the 'loss of Italy' could do great damage to the credibility of the USA *vis-à-vis* its allies and enemies, emboldening the latter and demoralising the former."[45] As such, even though U.S. military officials immediately after 1945 "emphasised the strategic importance of the Italian peninsula," it was truly the 1948 election that brought the fundamental conclusion and bedrock of U.S. foreign policy in Italy: the U.S. could not afford to lose the country to communism.

As several authors of this period of Cold War history have emphasized, though U.S. foreign policy in Italy in the early postwar years was defined in terms of securing a strong political and economic relationship to the U.S., the *methods* of the Truman administration employed to achieve these overarching goals were far from cohesive.[46] Despite the lack of clarity, the United States managed to successfully implement a series of illegal and clandestine operations in the 1948 election which secured victory for the Christian Democrats, and "won" the country over to Western influence.[47] This success by the United States in Italy had several significant repercussions for the Cold War in Italy, but also globally.

The first result was that this was the first time that U.S. intelligence agencies such as the C.I.A. had succeeded in an operation to sway a democratic election in a foreign country.[48] As a

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[45] Mario Del Pero and Federico Romero, "The United States, Italy and the Cold War: Interpreting and Periodising a Contradictory and Complicated Relationship," in *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*, ed. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 19. On the "loss" of China, see Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[46] Mistry, *United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War*, 13. The Truman administration struggled to establish a clearly defined policy towards Italy. There was, of course, the general U.S. objective of a democratic, non-communist country tied to open markets through the Bretton Woods system, although the exact plan was open to debate. See, Marco Maria Aterrano and Karine Varley, "Introduction: A Fascist Decade of War? The Impact of the Italian Wars on the International Stage, 1935–45," in *A Fascist Decade of War: 1935–1945 in International Perspective*, ed. Marco Maria Aterrano and Karine Varley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 2. See also Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy," 28.

[47] There is a substantial amount of literature regarding the U.S. role in these operations. However, the extensive discussion of this period is not the focus of this chapter. For further reading, see Miller, "Taking Off the Gloves," and Robert A. Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

[48] It is important to note that the CIA operation was neither the only U.S. involvement in the elections nor the most "successful." A significant amount of scholarship has been written on the subject, and the degree to which the CIA directly swayed the results is also debated. Kaeten Mistry concludes that an over prioritization of the impacts of U.S. influence "ignores the role and objectives of indigenous actors" and that "Italians did much to encourage US involvement while simultaneously attempting to assuage the more excessive tactics." Kaeten Mistry,

result, this cloak-and-dagger use of intelligence agencies to affect similar election outcomes in foreign countries for decades afterwards would be reproduced with varying levels of success from Chile to South Korea.[49] More generally, as Kaeten Mistry notes, "The notion that American efforts had succeeded in Italy was unequivocal; one can dispute whether this was accurate but it was indisputably prominent in the minds of policymakers and commentators."[50]

Secondly, the electoral success of the Christian Democrats under prime minister Alcide De Gasperi heralded an influx of U.S. dollars and goodwill. The integration of Italy into the Western camp brought with it the interest and economic backing of both U.S. government and private U.S. business interests. Douglas J. Forsyth emphasizes that "The postwar relationship between the USA and Italy was forged in the context of Italy's political and military prostration and total economic dependence on the USA."[51] Despite the difficult position Italy was in after 1945, it is significant to note that even during this period of reliance on the United States, the relationship between Italy and the United States — contrary to Forsyth's claim — was far from a complete or total obedience to U.S. goals or interests. In fact, as Buchanan notes, "even as they worked to position themselves within the new framework of America's consensual hegemony, Italian leaders sought to reassert Italian sovereignty, often by exploiting divergences between Washington and London or tensions between different layers of American officialdom."[52]

A third and final change in Italy had parallels to the case in South Korea after the conclusion of the Korean war in 1953. After the war, U.S. troops were already in Italy. The twin pillars of U.S. foreign policy, military security against the spread of communism, and economic integration into the Bretton Woods system, were made all the more simple by the fact that since 1943 U.S. troops had already been stationed in Italy. After the cessation of hostilities both in Korea and in Italy, the United States military was already operating in the capacity of administrator of a

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"Approaches to Understanding the Inaugural CIA Covert Operation in Italy: Exploding Useful Myths," *Intelligence and National Security* 26, no. 2–3 (2011): 267.

[49] See, Blum, *Killing Hope*.

[50] Mistry, *United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War*, 5.

[51] Douglas J. Forsyth, "The Peculiarities of Italo-American Relations in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3, no. 1 (1998): 13.

[52] Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy," 36, 37.

"liberated" or "conquered" state.[53] As such, it was in a unique position to act as the herald of economic and militaristic transformation in both countries that fit comfortably within wider U.S. Cold War foreign policy goals. Italy saw 1.2 million homes destroyed during the war, as its population had seen the rise of fascism, the dissolution of Mussolini's regime, a civil war between 1943 and 1945, a failed bid for comprehensive land reform, and then finally a bitter and violent series of trials and reprisals — all in the period of a few years. As a result, the population "positioned themselves as reliable local allies of the emerging hegemon" after the war.[54]

The impacts of the short but highly transformative years between 1945 and 1949 were that by the time that the wider postwar policy of the United States for European economic reconstruction was rolled out, Italy was already primed to be an essential part of postwar Western Europe. As an original signatory of NATO in 1949, a recipient of significant portions of European Recovery Program (ERP/Marshall Plan) in 1950, a signatory of the NATO SOFA 1951, and then finally singing the Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement with the United States in 1954, Italy's early role in the evolution of the U.S. European Cold War politics would play a significant role in the later developments of U.S. influence in Europe and overall in the postwar era.[55]

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[53] For example, as Douglas J. Forsyth notes, "During the last two years of the conflict, the foreign trade of the Allied occupied areas of the peninsula was fully in the hands of the Allied military government." Forsyth paints the picture of the relationship in quite radical terms, further noting that "In its bilateral relations and within international organizations including NATO and the United Nations (UN), Italy followed the US lead on crucial foreign policy issues consistently, almost slavishly, throughout the postwar era" and that "The character of US intervention in domestic Italian affairs is more nearly comparable with US behavior *vis-à-vis* client states in the developing world than other members of the G7." Forsyth, "Peculiarities of Italo-American Relations," 13, 2, 3. Ironically, Edward D. Re described the situation in exactly the opposite terms in 1955 when he sought to emphasize the legal equality contained in the NATO SOFA: "America is dealing with partners and allies, not with conquered nations. After much deliberation, the NATO Status of Forces Agreement represents the solemn compact that has been agreed to by sovereign nations." Re, in the very same article, however, still expresses significant reservations about the fairness and equality of foreign courts and legal systems: "Surely, if an American serviceman about to be tried by a local court expresses the desire to be tried by an American court martial, everything diplomatically possible should be done by the American authorities to see to it that the receiving State waives its primary jurisdiction." Re, "NATO Status of Forces Agreement," 395, 392.

[54] Judt, *Postwar*, 82; Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy," 36.

[55] Indeed, as David W. Ellwood highlights in his chapter, "The Propaganda of the Marshall Plan in Italy in a Cold War Context," "the Marshall Plan in a country like Italy was never just an abstract affair of economic numbers to do with loans, grants, investment, production, productivity etc, even if these were its key operating tools … Hence the ERP [European Recovery Plan] effort aimed to get as close as possible to the people it was benefitting, at all levels of society, and particularly in the relations between the citizen and the state. The challenge was to channel attitudes, mentalities, and expectations in the direction Americans understood as an ever-greater prosperity for an ever-greater majority." David W. Ellwood, "The Propaganda of the Marshall Plan in Italy in a Cold War Context," in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945–1960*, ed. Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (London: Routledge, 2003), 187. The U.S. presence in Europe, and Italy in particular, was multilayered and operated in several different sectors of social life from cinema to military policy.

Thus, signing of a document such as the NATO SOFA in 1951 occurred within a context of nearly total economic and military dependence on the United States, not just in Italy, but in several other European countries as well. Though the relationship between the United States and European countries such as Germany, France, or Italy certainly lacked the dimensions of "unequal treaties" signed between European powers and Asian countries in the nineteenth century largely due to the lack of a direct colonial relationship, agreements such as the NATO SOFA were certainly not signed on an equal footing of all parties. Utilizing the methanological "tools" of empire studies suggested by Paul Kramer, such as tracing dimensions of power that "in which asymmetries in the scale of political action, regimes of spatial ordering, and modes of exceptionalizing difference enable and produce relations of hierarchy, discipline, dispossession, extraction, and exploitation," can help elucidate the dynamics at play with regard to negotiation and signing of the NATO SOFA in the postwar period.[56]

Matthew Craven notes in "What Happened to Unequal Treaties-The Continuities of Informal Empire," (2005) that "Even if colonialism, as an idea, was associated with the establishment of colonial settlements or the assumption of formal rule over territories in Africa and Asia, it could by no means easily be separated from the broader discourse of Empire."[57] Within the discussion of "informal empire" of the United States and its establishment during the key years following the Second World War, a significant element of that system remained both the securing of military bases on foreign territory, as well as integrating other countries into a consciously capitalist economic system helmed by the United States.

Craven notes that "Certainly if one is to think about the particular project of colonialism in terms of Western economic expansion (including the opening of new markets and investment opportunities) it is by no means obvious that one would take the view that formal decolonisation has brought to an end the practices that marked the imperial era."[58] Key elements to those "practices" of the imperial era, in their essence, were to secure economic access to different countries across the globe, accompanied by military access if necessary. As Paul K. McDonald

[56] Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1349.

[57] Matthew Craven, "What Happened to Unequal Treaties? The Continuities of Informal Empire," *Nordic Journal of International Law* 74, no. 3 (2005): 341.

[58] Craven, "What Happened to Unequal Treaties?," 341.

notes, "There are numerous examples of sovereign inequality — such as protectorates, military occupations, or foreign basing agreements — where the line between coercion and choice is ambiguous" but also, significantly, "a great power does not have to claim political sovereignty in order to exert substantial influence. Nor do imperial claims necessarily guarantee political influence. Indeed, in many cases, influence gained from informal mechanisms can even surpass that derived from formal claims of sovereignty."[59] In Italy, the legal underpinnings of the SOFA emerged to take on this role.

In the case of the NATO SOFA in Italy, the circumstances of the heavily reliant position of the Christian Democratic party on the United States for maintaining political power in a violent and uncertain postwar environment meant that they were hardly in a position to argue against treaties such as the Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement of 1954 which is thought by some to be illegal according to the Italian Constitution as a violation of sovereignty.[60] As we have seen with aspects of military basing politics across the world during the Cold War, from South Korea to Saudi Arabia, in the case of Italy it is important to remember MacDonald's conclusion that "Imperial dominance is rarely maintained by any one power resource whether military capabilities, economic wealth, or ideological influence."[61] He maintains that "political and economic capabilities often interact with one another in unexpected and counterintuitive ways both before and after imperial expansion."[62] In the case of Italy, securing military access in the form of NATO bases was a key element to this process, but it was just that — an element of many.

Aurel Sari is an international law scholar whose extensive research related to SOFAs concludes that, at their core, "status of forces agreements are the product of political bargaining."[63]

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[59] Paul K. MacDonald, "Those Who Forget Historiography Are Doomed to Republish It: Empire, Imperialism and Contemporary Debates about American Power," *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 51, 52.

[60] For more on the illegality of the BIA, see, Saiu, *Basi e strutture militari*. Indeed, even Del Pero and Romero describe the military relationship between Italy and the United States during this time as the U.S. being granted "quasi-imperial privileges." Del Pero and Romero, "United States, Italy and the Cold War," 22.

[61] MacDonald, "Those Who Forget Historiography," 66.

[62] MacDonald, "Those Who Forget Historiography," 66.

[63] Sari continues, noting that "More influential States are sometimes capable of securing for themselves conditions of stay which are more favourable than those they would be prepared to grant to foreign forces present within their own territory." Aurel Sari, "The NATO SOFA at Sixty: Heading for Retirement or Has Life Just Begun?" *NATO Legal Gazette*, no. 27 (April 27, 2012): 3, https://www.ismllw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Legal-GazetteIssueNo-27.pdf.

American soft power of music, movies, and fashion were joined in Italy with other more visceral elements of informal empire in the form of military bases and international treaties that legitimated their access. As Ellwood emphasizes in his chapter regarding the European Recovery Plan, U.S. officials in Europe "quickly decided that there was no conflict between the need for an increased focus on defence and the ERP objectives: it was just a matter of bending the existing policy goals to the new requirements. As the concept of 'Mutual Security' began to develop, so did the appropriate propaganda policy."[64]

Though far from being a colonial relationship, the U.S.-Italian alliance nevertheless grew as a complicated and not-easily-defined relationship between a country with a vision for a coalition of Western-minded states based on open markets and liberal ideals and backed by U.S. military power, and a nation seeking its own sovereignty within the coalition. At the same time the country was undergoing radical cultural, economic, and political transitions. Made destitute by a World War and not entirely prepared to acquiesce to the demands of a consumerism-based and productivity-obsessed patron from across the ocean, Italians made attempts to safeguard their economic and military security through the negotiation of their legal sovereignty. Despite its ostensible presentation of NATO as a coalition of willing, but sovereign states, the reality in Italy was, "the relationship remained highly unbalanced and asymmetrical" and as Buchanan notes, "in Italy, as elsewhere, American free trade liberalism arrived gun in hand."[65] This asymmetrical relationship affected the thought process that went into ratifying international treaties in 1951 and 1954 which Kaeten Mistry described as "marriages of convenience."[66] Despite the reluctance of a significant portion of U.S. officials to the inclusion of Italy into NATO, (Del Pero and Romero note that "from the US president to the senior members of the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, most US policy-makers opposed the admission of Italy"), it was the prospect of wider Cold War contingencies that drew in the United States.[67] Like in South Korea, and in Saudi Arabia, it was not so much what military or economic presence could portend or offer in the present, but the

[64] Ellwood, "Propaganda of the Marshall Plan," 193.

[65] Buchanan, "American Policy Towards Italy," 38.

[66] Mistry, *United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War*, 120.

[67] Del Pero and Romero note that "In the end, the decisive factors in the discussion were Italy's fragility and France's intense lobbying." Del Pero and Romero, "United States, Italy and the Cold War," 21.

concern over what they could offer in the future conflict against the Soviet threat. Del Pero and Romero conclude that "Italy was accepted, not for what it could bring to the alliance (relatively little, at least in 1949), but for what it lacked (political solidity) and what it risked losing—a solid anti-communist, Western leaning government—if its de facto application were rejected."[68]

After the United States had played a fundamental role in securing the success of Gasperi's Christian Democrat party in 1948 and the Truman White House included Italy as an original signatory of NATO in 1949, minds had been made up. A policy report from the United States Security Council published in 1954 confirmed that "Communism was rebuffed and a Center government established, due in part to large-scale economic aid and firm moral support from the United States" and that in the future, like in the past, "Italy's value to the West would be appreciably lessened under rightist or authoritarian regimes."[69] The report made clear that the existing U.S. foreign policy was to keep the country close to the West given that "it is clearly in U.S. interests to give maximum feasible support to a reinforcement of center strength as broadly based as is consistent with implementation of the reforms necessary to improve basic social and economic conditions in Italy."[70] It was not just a sense of altruism or a sense of Western solidarity, but the fact that "the Italian peninsula and Sicily constitute an area of great strategic importance as a base area for the air and naval forces of other NATO nations" was a major point of consideration for U.S. military officials after 1945.[71]

Italy, like many other European powers in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, was presented with two significant but interrelated decisions after 1945. The first, whether or not to participate within a wider cooperative European political and economic community, was not necessarily mutually exclusive with the second, which was to participate in a similar framework

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[68] Del Pero and Romero, "United States, Italy and the Cold War," 21.

[69] The report continues, however, that "Although a moderate rightist government would probably continue cooperation with the West, its domestic policies might aggravate internal frictions and ultimately strengthen the Communists." It is important to note that sources such as this reflect the United States' perception of the events that occurred in Italy, which may not have always reflected the more complicated reality on the ground. U.S. National Security Council, *U.S. Policy Toward Italy*, NSC 5411/2, April 15, 1954, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Western Europe and Canada, Volume VI, Part 2* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v06p2/d776.

[70] National Security Council, *U.S. Policy Toward Italy*.

[71] National Security Council, *U.S. Policy Toward Italy*.

presented by an Atlantic Agreement in the form of NATO. Though European and U.S. priorities differed (sometimes drastically) over the course of the Cold War, Osvaldo Croci emphasizes that "post-war Italian governments have viewed the relationship between Atlanticism and Europeanism in substantially the same manner and have pursued similar policies, even if they have sold them to coalition partners and the public differently."[72] We must understand the European and Atlantic relationships of countries such as Italy during the postwar period to be two fundamental and complimentary long-term foreign policy objectives.[73] Whereas the affiliation with the United States through the ratification of the NATO provided an umbrella of military security, the political, cultural, and economic opportunities offered by an integrated European community proved to be equally compelling. This geopolitical balancing act reaped tangible benefits for Italy in the long-term, with NATO membership helping to blunt the impacts of any kind of "Franco-German hegemony within the European Community" after the normalization of relations between France and West Germany following their signing of the 1963 Élysée Treaty, while also ensuring that Italy would always have a "seat at the table" when wider discussions of European security were broached by powers such as England, Germany, and France.[74]

After the 1948 election, the immediate threat of a communist Italy was quashed (though U.S. documents continue express anxiety over the outcomes of the 1953 elections) and the two countries settled into what was becoming the new European/U.S. political, economic, and militaristic nexus buttressed by NATO. Varsori and Zaccaria highlight that these "basic dialectics remained in play for subsequent four decades. Washington solicited its Italian partners to accept the duties which came with the benefits (economic aid and military protection) resulting from having become 'Atlantic.'"[75] A key element to this relationship, which periodically generated tension between the two states, though, has been the extensive use of U.S./NATO military bases on Italian territory and the accompanying privileges and immunities enjoyed by U.S. troops and

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[72] Osvaldo Croci, "Not a Zero-Sum Game: Atlanticism and Europeanism in Italian Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator* 43, no. 4 (2008): 153.

[73] Nuti and Andrews explain that "Atlanticism and Europeanism were … perceived as mutually reinforcing elements of a single policy that would allow Italy to recover its place in a new Europe while relying on the safety net offered by the relationship with the United States." Nuti and Andrews, "US-Italian Relations in Historical Perspective," 180.

[74] Croci, "Not a Zero-Sum Game," 142.

[75] Del Pero and Romero, "United States, Italy and the Cold War," 22.

their dependents under the regulations of the NATO SOFA signed in 1951. As subsequent events would demonstrate, the legal status that the U.S. managed to achieve in Italy under the NATO SOFA, continued to be tested by both allies especially around legal issues in this close, but unequal, relationship, generated by the presence of significant U.S. base presence in Italy.

Section II: Legal Context of the NATO SOFA

The development of the NATO SOFA represented a watershed in international legal history given its scope and its multilateral framework. Since its ratification in 1951, the NATO SOFA has not only been utilized as a blueprint for future multilateral international agreements and other bilateral SOFAs but has even been referenced by some authors as containing elements of customary international law.[76] The "success" and endurance of the NATO SOFA template in international law is largely attributed to its basic nature and its widespread applicability to different nation-to-nation relationships. Horst Kraatz notes that "Because SOFA consists only of general provisions that other agreements complement and supplement — agreements concluded directly between the respective participating states — SOFA facilitates a flexible application of its terms in accordance with its signatories' respective national requirements and interests."[77] Sari reflects on the longevity of the framework, noting that "The recipe seems to be simple enough: focus on getting the basic principles right and leave most of the details to be worked out later in supplementing agreements."[78] However, though the general nature of the NATO SOFA may lend itself to wide applicability by providing the opportunity to negotiate more specific country-to-country details between two parties at the same time, it is the general nature of the agreement that likewise holds the potential for conflicts over issues regarding sovereignty, immunity of forces, and criminal jurisdiction.

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[76] Sari expands on this point, highlighting that "understanding the NATO SOFA's contribution to the development of customary international law is not only critical to a better understanding of the general principles that govern the legal status of foreign military deployments under all circumstances, but it also provides a basis for questioning the legitimacy of attempts to extend the principle of complete reciprocity to entirely different operational circumstances." Sari, "NATO SOFA at Sixty," 6, 7.

[77] Horst Kraatz, "The NATO Status of Forces Agreement and the Supplementary Agreement," *Army Lawyer*, no. 11 (November 1990): 3.

[78] Sari, "NATO SOFA at Sixty," 8.

These more specific country-to-country agreements that dictated terms tailored to particular political or military situations, such as the "Agreement to Supplement the Agreement Between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Regarding the Status of their Forces with Respect to Foreign Forces Stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany" between the United States and West Germany in 1959, or the Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement between Italy and the United States in 1954, were still very much products of a Cold War context. As Andrew Yeo notes, "Host nations negotiating bilateral SOFAs with the U.S. in the aftermath of World War II undoubtedly lacked equal bargaining power against the U.S."[79] The International Security Advisory Board, a U.S. organization tasked with providing the Department of State information and policy recommendations, published in 2015 a "Report on Status of Forces Agreements" which specifically outlined the issues generated by the subsequent bilateral agreements negotiated under the umbrella of the NATO SOFA:

> SOFAs — because they entail, by definition, some compromise of the sovereign rights that host nations would otherwise have under the basic international law rule that foreigners present in a nation are subject to the law of that nation — often raise issues of national pride, internal controversy over cooperation with the United States, unwillingness to defer to U.S. interests, reluctance to agree to U.S. demands because of a reduced sense of dependency on the United States for security, resistance to foregoing significant tax revenue and regulatory authority, and competition with neighbors who are seen as having 'better' status agreements. Moreover, some other nations may be reluctant to agree to status provisions that protect only U.S. defense personnel and activities on their soil, while not giving reciprocal rights to their nation's defense personnel and activities in the United States.[80]

Notwithstanding more detailed country-to-country agreements between the United States and other NATO-member-states, provisions contained in the original NATO-SOFA of 1951 afford an extreme level of legal malleability for signatory states. It was under article VII(1)(a) of the NATO SOFA — that "the military authorities of the sending state shall have the right to exercise within the receiving state all criminal and military rules allowed by the law of the sending state over all

[79] Andrew I. Yeo, "Security, Sovereignty, and Justice in US Overseas Military Presence," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 51.

[80] International Security Advisory Board, *Report on Status of Forces Agreements* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, January 16, 2015), 3, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/236456.pdf.

persons subject to the military law of that state," — that the United States claimed primary jurisdiction over a fighter pilot whose jet severed a cable on a ski lift in Cermis, Northern Italy, in 1998, killing twenty.[81] The case, where the pilot was found "not guilty" by a U.S. court, reflects that imbalances still remain within the NATO-SOFA framework.

Such a case calls into question the reciprocity of legal language contained in the original NATO SOFA. Edward D. Re noted in 1955 that "since the treaty is reciprocal in nature, whatever duties and rights are spelled out for the troops and personnel of Nation 'A' stationed in the territory of Nation 'B' will also determine the legal status of the troops and personnel of Nation 'B' stationed in the territory of Nation 'A.' *The tenor of the Agreement, therefore, is clearly one of partnership and equality* whereby one party to the Agreement does not exact or expect what it does not itself concede or grant."[82] However, one cannot ignore that at the time of its signing, the United States was overwhelmingly the country with the most foreign troops stationed in NATO countries. By consequence, even if legal disputes arose regarding visiting forces and the reciprocal nature of the SOFA were to be invoked from a "sending state," that state would almost never be a foreign soldier or dependent operating in the United States. Being attentive to wider Cold War history and the economic, political, and military inequalities that cast a shadow Europe at the time, complicates any analysis of the NATO SOFA as a legally reciprocal document. In the words of the famous Rosco Pound, "The history of juristic thought tells us nothing unless we know the social forces that lay behind it."[83]

Though in *principle* the language of the agreement suggests a reciprocal treatment of military forces, in a *practical* sense, it was, during the Cold War period, and is contemporarily, overwhelmingly likely that issues necessitating the use of the NATO SOFA will have to do with U.S. soldiers in other NATO countries rather than NATO soldiers within the United States. The Cold War military infrastructure which saw the bulk of NATO forces stationed in Europe, closer to the Soviet threat, meant that the growth and development of international law that oversaw these deployments, including the NATO SOFA and the Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement, nominally struck a tone of reciprocity, parity, and equality. When viewed through an historical context,

[81] Steven E. Stuehser, "Military Jurisdiction under SOFA: Clarity or Confusion," *New England International and Comparative Law Annual* 4 (1998): 247.

[82] Re, "NATO Status of Forces Agreement," 350. Emphasis added.

[83] Roscoe Pound, "Law in Books and Law in Action," *American Law Review* 44 (1910): 34.

however, the signing of such agreements occurred in circumstances of domestic and international instability, violence, and uncertainty, which dictated the presence of U.S. soldiers in Europe in the first place. Absent from the discussion of the suggested or supposed equality of agreements such as the NATO SOFA in an international legal context are realistic considerations of where NATO troops and forces are deployed under such a legal umbrella. There have never been any NATO military bases in the United States since the founding of the alliance.

Ultimately, even outside of the potential for issues stemming from the NATO SOFA itself, subsequent U.S./Italian international agreements that followed the NATO SOFA have caused decades of legal and political strife between these NATO allies. Matteo Dian concludes that "The bottom line is that the Italian legal framework overseeing the use of the bases, as well as the bilateral agreements with the U.S., remain affected by a low level of transparency" and "it appears clear that both countries have given very broad interpretations to the letter of the agreements, diminishing the level of the host country's oversight, while allowing the U.S. an almost unrestricted use of … bases."[84] Like NATO itself, the SOFAs that govern jurisdiction speak a language of equality and reciprocity that mask an underlying disparity in sovereignty over legal conflicts in host countries. Just as law has the ability to create sets of normative standards which can protect "weaker" states from "stronger" ones, it can also serve to mask very real inequalities between states that fundamentally affect how and when such standards are applied, and under what circumstances.

Two legal concepts — The law of the flag as well and the concept of territorial sovereignty — represent two contrasting principles within the field of international have profoundly affected the legal evolution of SOFAs since the 1940s.[85] The first attempt at striking a balance between these two theories related to international criminal jurisdiction for visiting troops was the Brussels Treaty SOFA, signed in 1948. The international legal antecedent to the NATO SOFA, the Brussels Treaty SOFA, was designed "to define the legal status of forces operating in the context of the Brussels Treaty for collective self-defence concluded between Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in 1948."[86] This document provided the most tangible legal

[84] Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 51.

[85] Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," 198.

[86] Sari, "NATO SOFA at Sixty," 5.

template for the wider application of the NATO SOFA in 1951, and a full understanding of these SOFAs requires a background understanding of the two competing theories that precede them.

At its core, the law of the flag, first asserted by the United States Supreme Court in *Schooner Exchange v. McFaddon* in 1812, maintained that "a receiving state gives up its territorial jurisdiction when a foreign military force passes through its territory."[87] The core principle of exclusive jurisdiction over troops "passing through" foreign territory in the *Schooner* case was both upheld and expanded in the 1872 *Coleman v. Tennessee* case which maintained that exclusive jurisdiction lay not only with the sending state in this instance, but also in cases where foreign troops were "stationed" in the foreign territory.[88] The law of the flag naturally presupposes a power imbalance between the "sending" and "receiving" states, especially in the context of maintaining jurisdiction over troops "passing through" another sovereign territory and in consequence, "Historically, the law of the flag principle has been utilized by influential nations."[89] In drafting the NATO SOFA, domestic legal precedents such as the *Schooner* and *Coleman* cases weighed heavily in both language and content in the new 1951 document.

Steven J. Lepper notes that this domestic ruling by the John Marshall court in 1812 had significant impact on international law abroad and even had a fundamental role in the development of customary international law regarding foreign criminal jurisdiction. Lepper concludes that "Customary international law thus evolved to the point where license to enter foreign territory carried with it an express or implied right to maintain military discipline free from the territorial sovereign's interference."[90] In particular, article VII, paragraph 3(a)(ii) of the NATO SOFA maintains that the "sending state has primary jurisdiction over offenses arising out of the performance of official military duties."[91]

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[87] Kimberly C. Priest-Hamilton, "Who Really Should Have Exercised Jurisdiction over the Military Pilots Implicated in the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 65, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 608. *Schooner Exchange v. McFaddon*, 11 U.S. (7 Cranch) 116 (1812); *Coleman v. Tennessee*, 97 U.S. 509 (1872).

[88] Priest-Hamilton further mentions that "Finally, in 1902, the Supreme Court issued its last opinion regarding the status of forces before implementing NATO SOFA. In *Tucker v. Alexandroff*, the Court reaffirmed the holdings of *Schooner* and *Coleman* by specifically recognizing the importance of each state maintaining military discipline over its own troops." Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 608; *Tucker v. Alexandroff*, 183 U.S. 424 (1902).

[89] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 608.

[90] Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 171.

[91] Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 174.

A number of international disagreements have arisen related to the ambiguity of the language contained in article VII, however, as to what actions are understood to be within the scope of "official military duties."[92] It is significant to note that as Priest-Hamilton emphasizes, "the United States became a member of NATO SOFA, arguably not anticipating that its military forces abroad would ever really be subject to another country's criminal jurisdiction."[93] Not surprisingly, the legal history in the United States has nearly always reflected an insistence on exclusive jurisdiction over U.S. troops abroad.[94] The legacies of this jurisprudential history underscore several different legal disagreements regarding U.S. troops operating in Italy (and other NATO SOFA signatories) in the postwar period.[95]

The concept of Westphalian territorial sovereignty is voluminous, more or less "almost identical with the full-scale history of international law itself" and as such, will not be discussed in detail.[96] For the purposes of this research, however, the concept is relevant insofar as it relates to the role of the operations of international law and foreign criminal jurisdiction. Prior to the NATO SOFA, concepts of territorial sovereignty generally maintained that the receiving state enjoyed "a general right of jurisdiction over members of a military force on the premise that it would be unacceptable to prohibit a sovereign state from punishing an offense committed on its

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[92] Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 175.

[93] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 617.

[94] Gordon B. Baldwin, writing in 1958, noted that of the "38,314 cases throughout the world in which American military personnel were subject to trial in a foreign criminal court" between the years of 1953 and 1957, only "305" were eventually sentenced and spent time in foreign prisons. He further notes that as of 1956, only 88 remained in prison. Gordon B. Baldwin, "Foreign Jurisdiction and the American Soldier," *Wisconsin Law Review* no. 1 (January 1958): 55.

[95] It is important to note that is a significant portion of legal literature regarding the role of the law of the flag as it relates to international maritime law. Significant portions of the legal concept — to this day — influence and dictate international maritime law. Though maritime law will not be discussed within this work, it bears highlighting that the fact that the legal concept itself still occupies such a significant and relevant place within international law more generally — Eric Powell comments that "Centuries-old maritime jurisprudence continues to guide the law of the sea today" — lends credence to the application or insistence of the concept within the NATO SOFA framework, and in particular the ways in which it strengthens U.S. claims on "official duty" contained in Article VII. Eric Powell, "Taming the Beast: How the International Legal Regime Creates and Contains Flags of Convenience," *Annual Survey of International & Comparative Law* 19 (2013): 263. For more on the role of the law of the flag in maritime law, see Guy Manchuk, "The Law of the Flag and Maritime Criminal Jurisdiction: A New Rule to Replace an Outdated, Inconvenient Doctrine," *Tulane Maritime Law Journal* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 221–84.

[96] Masahiro Miyoshi, "Sovereignty and International Law" (paper, Aichi University, Japan, 2012), 2.

territory."[97] However, as Michael Akehurst highlights, exceptions and disagreements frequently arise related to criminal jurisdiction and territorial sovereignty and in contrast to the view that receiving states enjoy a "general right of jurisdiction."[98] Akehurst contends that "a State which permits a foreign force to enter its territory will be regarded as *impliedly* permitting the commander of the force to impose disciplinary sanctions on his troops." [99] Though there still exists a large corpus of legal literature regarding the specificities of the scope and strength of territorial sovereignty in international law, we can definitively conclude that "It is widely accepted today, that in the absence of a treaty (such as NATO SOFA), jurisdiction over foreign forces lies exclusively with the receiving state" and that though different states may recognize or debate differing levels of territorial sovereignty (or integrity), the concept itself has become a cornerstone of customary international law.[100]

An interplay between these international legal concepts was reflected in the 1948 Brussels Treaty signed between Western European countries for the purposes of economic, political, and militaristic cooperation and integration in the face of an increasingly antagonist Soviet threat. The treaty's impact was short-lived, however, given that just a year later twelve European countries alongside the United States established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which codified many of the pre-existing concepts and principles into a broader multilateral framework.[101] The NATO SOFA, signed two years later in 1951, contains the military details of the organization. From a legal perspective, the Brussels Treaty of 1948 also contained significant prototypes for the

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[97] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 609.

[98] Michael Akehurst, "Jurisdiction in International Law," *British Year Book of International Law* 46 (1972–1973): 151.

[99] Akehurst, "Jurisdiction in International Law," 151. Emphasis added.

[100] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 609. See in particular Article 2 (4) in the United Nations Charter specifying the "Prohibition of threat or use of force in international relations." United Nations, "Chapter I: Purposes and Principles," *Charter of the United Nations*, June 26, 1945, accessed July 23, 2025, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/purposes-and-principles-un-chapter-i-un-charter. Though some level of consensus has been reached regarding jurisdiction in the absence of SOFAs, Edmund H. Schwenk reminds us that "The term 'jurisdiction' is one of the most ambiguous terms in Anglo-American law" and that "numerous questions have been left open and should be solved either by supplementary agreements or by negotiations on a case-by-case basis." Edmund H. Schwenk, "Jurisdiction of the Receiving State over Forces of the Sending State under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," *The International Lawyer* 6, no.3 (1972): 526, 540.

[101] It is significant to note that because of how quickly the NATO SOFA developed, the Brussels Treaty never actually came into force.

NATO SOFA years later regarding attempts to reemphasize the importance of territorial sovereignty while downplaying the law of the flag.[102] The eventual 1951 NATO SOFA kept pace with these legal changes contained in the Brussels Treaty by emphasizing the importance of territorial sovereignty, generally favored by "weaker" nations, while containing limits on the concept of the law of the flag like declining the idea of exclusive and total jurisdiction over the troops moving through, or stationed in, foreign countries.

But despite advancing notions of territorial sovereignty and legal reciprocity, we cannot forget the wider historical context in which the NATO SOFA was both developed and agreed upon. For example, analyzing the British perspective on the origin of the Brussels Treaty, Stuart Croft notes that a conflation of factors centered around the importance of wider European economic recovery, domestic economic stability, and security, "clearly reflected this Cold War background."[103] Within a wider political context, the Brussels Treaty was significant insofar that it signaled to the Truman White House that the European states were willing to participate, on a multilateral level, both economically and politically, in an international and cooperative system. Croft highlights that this perspective of the European countries played a significant role in securing the creation of NATO one year later, noting that just a year prior to the Brussels Treaty, British requests for "an American commitment to Europe" were flatly denied by Truman. He notes that "the impression was clearly given that if … plans for union were given effect, and European self-help was evident, there would be a reassessment."[104] That reassessment swiftly followed the signing of the Brussels Treaty with discussions between European negotiators and U.S. officials just months later producing the foundational documents for NATO.

From the European perspective, the prospect of a community of European states with shared economic and security goals was logical given the potential Soviet threat. The prospect of sacrificing further autonomy and sovereignty to an Atlantic security pact was more controversial. But ultimately, the fact that NATO's conceived purpose stretched beyond simply a coordination of military and defense capabilities proved to be an important element in the ratification process.

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[102] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 614.

[103] Stuart Croft, "British Policy Towards Western Europe, 1947–49: The Best of Possible Worlds?" *International Affairs* 64, no. 4 (1988): 622.

[104] Croft, "British Policy Towards Western Europe," 622.

Helene Sjursen concludes that, according to the 1956 "Report of the Committee of Three on non-military cooperation in NATO," "politics and security were interdependent and also that the challenge to NATO was not exclusively military. Consequently … the success of the military alliance depended on the political cohesion of an Atlantic community."[105]

This ostensible commitment to the coordination and respect between nations within the wider "Atlantic community" was a respectable goal in the early years of the Cold War, and there is no doubt that provisions such as Article 4 — that "parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened" — were powerful incentives for European countries that had just endured several years of worldwide conflict, to ratify the agreement. However, even if organizations such as NATO were envisaged as insisting on such norms of international behavior, the reality after the fact was oftentimes far more inconsistent. As the Clive Rose, former British ambassador to NATO, remarked in 1983, "These are admirable guidelines. If they had been scrupulously followed by all members during the subsequent 26 years, the history of the Alliance would no doubt have looked different."[106]

In analyzing the origins of the principal legal concepts contained in the NATO SOFA related to international criminal jurisdiction, it becomes clear that the concepts of territorial sovereignty and the law of the flag loomed large in the postwar drafting of the agreement. On the one hand, the Brussels Treaty attempted to mediate the implicit power imbalance inherent in the law of the flag principle by favoring jurisdiction as it related to territorial sovereignty. On the other hand, provisions contained in the NATO SOFA, particularly that of Article VII regarding exemption of prosecution by the receiving state for troops conducting "official duties," has led some to conclude that "American forces are in fact 'extraterritorial' (and *de facto* following law of the flag principles), rather than subject to foreign criminal jurisdiction (with certain exceptions)."[107] Two key conflicts would bring these nascent differences to the fore: the armed showdown between allies at Sigonella, and the tragedy if civilian deaths at the hands of a U.S. pilot at the small skiing town, Cermis, in Northern Italy.

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[105] Helene Sjursen, "On the Identity of NATO," *International Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2004): 691.

[106] Clive Rose, "Political Consultation in the Alliance," *NATO Review* 31, no. 1 (1983): 2.

[107] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 626.

Section III: Sigonella – 1985

Did the Egyptians assist in any way in this operation?
—Reporter Question at the White House Press Conference of October 11, 1985.

No. As I say, we did this all by our little selves.
—Reply by President Reagan

On October 10, 1985 and without the knowledge or consent of Egyptian or Italian authorities, U.S. fighter jets intercepted a commercial Egyptian aircraft in the Mediterranean after it was denied permission to land in Tunis, Tunisia, and compelled it to land at a NATO-operated military base in Sigonella, Italy.[108] The goal of the interception was to then transfer members of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) who were on the plane into U.S. custody and to bring them to the United States to stand trial for the hijacking of an Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, and for the murder of a U.S. citizen.[109] After the Egyptian aircraft landed, Italian and U.S. security forces engaged in an armed standoff in which U.S. forces attempted to claim jurisdiction over the hijackers in order

[108] Don C. Piper, "Documents Concerning the Achille Lauro Affair and Cooperation in Combatting International Terrorism," *International Legal Materials* 24, no. 6 (1985): 1516; The Italian ship was in Egyptian territorial waters at the time of the hijacking and was eventually moored at Port Said. As Liput notes, "Under United Nations Treaty, Egypt's contiguous zone is recognized as extending twenty-four nautical miles from its shores, and thus Egypt may validly assert jurisdiction over that area as an extension of its territory." On October 9, 1985, the Egyptian government allowed a PLO intermediary, Mohammad Abu Abbas, to "remove" the hijackers from the ship in order to be brought back to PLO headquarters, operating in, Tunis, Tunisia at the time, to stand trial for the hijacking. It is important to note that Abbas himself was a well-known and wanted terrorist leader at the time of the incident in 1985. Andrew L. Liput, "An Analysis of the Achille Lauro Affair: Towards an Effective and Legal Method of Bringing International Terrorists to Justice," *Fordham International Law Journal* 9, no. 2 (1985–1986): 328, 355.

[109] Liput, "Analysis of the Achille Lauro Affair," 330, 337. The extradition request was eventually denied by Italian authorities based on Article VII of the U.S.-Italian extradition treaty. Brownfield and Baino explain that "According to Article VII of the Extradition Treaty, however, extradition may be refused if 'the person caught is being proceeded against by the requested Party for the same acts for which extradition is required.' Because the acts committed by the terrorists aboard the Achille Lauro were punishable under Italian criminal law, in so far as Italy had intended to exercise and effectively exercised jurisdiction against the terrorists, it could legitimately refuse extradition." A significant element of the U.S justification for the unilateral diversion of the aircraft was the denial of Egyptian authorities to comply with an extradition treaty signed between Egypt and the United States in 1875. However, some authors have highlighted that the extradition 1875 treaty held questionable validity due to its ratification during a period of Ottoman rule in Egypt and thus represented a treaty between the then-nonexistent Ottoman Empire rather than the modern Egyptian nation-state. Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 63, 64. It is also important to note that the hijackers were principally members of the PLF; though the leader of the group, Abu Abbas, was both a member of the PLF *and* the PLO. Publicly, the PLO leadership denied direct involvement

to take them to the United States to stand trial, while the Italian government headed by Prime Minister Craxi claimed legal jurisdiction over the hijackers according to international law and the NATO SOFA. The United States, which had a valid extradition treaty signed with Italy, filed formal requests for the extradition of the hijackers in order to try them in the United States. These requests were denied, with Craxi emphasizing that extradition "would not be legal without Italy's judiciary reviewing the extradition request." [110]

After landing at Sigonella, U.S. requests for extradition of the hijackers were denied by Italian authorities who claimed jurisdiction to try the individuals under a series of international legal justifications. Because the aircraft that the hijackers had landed at Sigonella was a commercial Egyptian plane, the Italian prime minister, Bettino Craxi, requested permission from Egypt to arrest the four hijackers.[111] This request was granted and the four hijackers were tried in Italian courts, eventually serving "long prison sentences" for their crimes.[112]

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[110] These legal arguments included claims over jurisdiction related to maritime law and piracy, the passive personality doctrine, and the United States-Italy Bilateral Extradition Treaty of 1983. For more on arguments related to maritime law and piracy, see: Malvina Halberstam, "Terrorism on the High Seas: The Achille Lauro, Piracy and the IMO Convention on Maritime Safety," *American Journal of International Law* 82, no. 2 (1988): 269–310. For more on the passive personality doctrine, see John G. McCarthy, "The Passive Personality Principle and Its Use in Combatting International Terrorism," *Fordham International Law Journal* 13, no. 3 (1989–1990): 298–327 and Geoffrey R. Watson, "The Passive Personality Principle," *Texas International Law Journal* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 1–46.

[111] Because the aircraft that the hijackers had landed in Italy was a commercial airliner, it enjoyed extraterritorial status under customary international law, and thus the individuals on board enjoyed certain legal immunities. That the aircraft did indeed enjoy extraterritorial status according to international law, such as the International Convention on Civil Aviation of 1944, has been disputed, however; see, Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 64. For example, Jeffrey Allan McCredie argues that "In the broadest sense, the use of force by the United States to divert the Egyptian jet was an act of anticipatory self-defense" and that "It cannot be said that the United States violated Egypt's 'territorial integrity' or 'political independence' by intercepting the jet. At best, Egypt's jet was inconvenienced for a few hours." Jeffrey Allan McCredie, "Contemporary Uses of Force against Terrorism: The United States Response to *Achille Lauro*—Questions of Jurisdiction and Its Exercise," *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* 16, no. 3 (1986): 458, 465.

[112] One of the most controversial aspects to the conclusion of the Sigonella Affair had to do with the fate of the well-known terrorist leader and PLO intermediary, Mohammad Abu Abbas. Abbas, the suspected "mastermind" of the hijacking, was also included in the extradition request filed by the United States, however, he and his PLO colleague were provided safe passage out of Italy "via a chartered flight to Yugoslavia" just two days later on October 12. The Italian government justified these actions by citing both the extraterritorial nature enjoyed by Abbas and his colleague on the Egyptian plane, as well as the fact that Abbas ostensibly possessed a diplomatic passport at the time from Iraq. Finally, Italian authorities rejected the immediate extradition request by the U.S. citing that "the United States had not presented sufficient evidence of the involvement of Abbas and his colleague in the crimes charged. Later, Abbas and his colleague would be tried *in abstentia* for their crimes and sentenced to life in prison. Years later, in 2003, Abbas was captured by U.S. forces in Iraq and died in their custody. Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 64. Frank J. Paison notes that "The Egyptian Embassy in Rome declared that the Palestinians were guests of the Egyptian government and consequently held diplomatic immunity (Abbas was carrying an Iraqi diplomatic passport) and that Egypt considered itself responsible for their safety along with that of its own crew

Within legal literature, the *Achille Lauro* affair has been principally analyzed for its implications for the development of international law regarding terrorism.[113] However, the existence of the U.S./NATO base at Sigonella was a vital factor in the events that transpired and the dispute between Italy and the U.S. over jurisdiction can be viewed within the scope of other expressions of U.S. power centered around U.S. foreign military bases. As Cooley notes, "the Sigonella affair was a blatant breach of the base host's [Italy] domestic sovereignty and served as a dramatic illustration of some of the legal ambiguities that have characterized the status of U.S. forces in Italy."[114] The physical and legal infrastructure of NATO bases that the United States had built in places such as Italy after 1945, have aided in the ability for the United States to erode the legitimacy of international law both in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. While no clear consensus emerged from the legal commentary during the 1980s regarding the actions of the United States in the Sigonella affair, what one can definitively conclude is that the actions that transpired (like nearly all within international law), were far from exclusively "legal" in nature, and were in large part political. As Tracey E. Madden emphasizes, "While one can argue that the United States' show of force in dealing with the terrorists in the *Achille Lauro* affair was a necessary deterrent against future acts of terrorism, this argument involves an intrusion of political issues into the question of the legality of the United States' actions."[115]

The physical and legal framework that the United States built in Europe at the end of the Second World War centered around foreign military bases and served a myriad of purposes, from

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members." He further argues that there was a political dimension to the decision because the *Achille Lauro* was still docked in Egypt: "It became clear that the *Achille Lauro* and its passengers and crew still docked at Port Said (minus only its American passengers) would not be free to sail away until the Egyptian plane was released." Frank J. Piason, "Italian Foreign Policy: The *Achille Lauro* Affair," *Italian Politics* 1 (1986): 151.

[113] See especially, Gerald P. McGinley, "The Achille Lauro Affair — Implications for International Law," *Tennessee Law Review* 52 (1984–1985): 691–738. McGinley touches on several different legal dimensions and does not provide an in-depth analysis of U.S. action in particular. However, he does note that "at no point did United States officials claim that the act of forcing the Egyptian aircraft to land was justified under international law. Moreover, no other government has acceded to the legitimacy of the act in law." McGinley, "Achille Lauro Affair," 721. See also Antonio Cassese, *Terrorism, Politics, and Law: The Achille Lauro Affair* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

[114] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 205. For a more narrative-focused account of the event, see Michael K. Bohn, *The Achille Lauro Hijacking: Lessons in the Politics and Prejudice of Terrorism* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2004).

[115] Tracey E. Madden, "An Analysis of the United States' Response to the *Achille Lauro* Hijacking," *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 8 (1988): 148.

housing nuclear ballistic missiles to providing jobs for local communities. But their presence also afforded ample opportunities, as at Sigonella, to skirt or re-evaluate international legal norms that they would not have been able to do without the access to such facilities. Gregory V. Gooding understood, in 1987, the implications of U.S. actions in this case as holding the potential for fundamental change in future: "More than being merely an effort to change the rules regarding the apprehension of criminals outside a state's territory, the *Achille Lauro* incident manifests a position developing within the United States which denies the proscriptive competence of international law over a broader range than had heretofore been asserted."[116]

Less than twenty years later, authors such as Margaret L. Satterthwaite highlighted the role of U.S./NATO military installations, such as Aviano Air Base in Northern Italy, for the use of highly controversial actions such as extraordinary rendition: "Investigations … as well as regional organizations including the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, have documented the involvement of DOD agencies in extraordinary rendition operations through the use of military aircraft and airbases, such as Aviano and Ramstein airbases in Italy and Germany."[117]

Without the existing infrastructure to support the logistics of these operations, from Sigonella to Aviano, the United States would not have been able to exert the force that it has over the development of international law in the way that it has historically or contemporarily. In fact, as Cooley highlights, the end of the Cold War even further intensified this trend: "the coming to power of left-led coalitions in the 1990s had no practical impact on the countries' [Italy and Japan] permissive attitudes toward U.S. basing and indeed helped to further institutionalize the U.S. military presence by bestowing on it the left's official acquiescence."[118] In consequence, it is important to properly contextualize these legal changes against the backdrop of U.S. foreign military bases and their wider impacts due to the highly politicized nature inherent in international law, and for the level of continuity of U.S. policy into the post–Cold War era.

The *Achille Lauro* affair that culminated in the armed standoff at Sigonella was one of the most significant legal and military conflicts between the governments of the United States and

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[116] Gregory V. Gooding, "Fighting Terrorism in the 1980's: The Interception of the *Achille Lauro* Hijackers," *Yale Journal of International Law* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 177.

[117] Margaret L. Satterthwaite, "Rendered Meaningless: Extraordinary Rendition and the Rule of Law," *George Washington Law Review* 75, nos. 5–6 (August 2007): 1344.

[118] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 209.

Italy during the Cold War. For Italy, a country that, in the words of Douglas J. Forsyth, offered "almost slavish support" for U.S. security policies during this period and beyond, it represents a high watermark for tension between the NATO allies.[119] But as Emidio Diodato and Federico Niglia describe, the twin pillars of Atlantic support in the form of NATO, alongside the ardent support for European integration, had initially limited the role of Italy to effect significant change within the international system. Over time, however, successive Italian governments began attempting (with varied success) to take a more active role in regional, Mediterranean affairs: "During the Cold War, Italy prospered under the umbrella of the U.S.-led world and was actively engaged in the process of European integration. The inclusion in the Western defensive system partially hindered the Italian ambitions to act as an independent international player, especially in the Mediterranean."[120]

Though Italy may have been limited in the Cold War period in regard to the development of a coherent and independent foreign policy — compare its position to the relative military independence enjoyed by France, or the development of the Germany's *Ostpolitik* — the decades of military and political cooperation paid dividends by the 1980s. Croci Osvaldo notes that such cooperation "not only generated trust but, even more important, bought what could be called a 'margin of independent manoeuvre', even if limitedly to issues peripheral to American interests but of importance to Italy."[121] In this way, Italy gradually, over the course of the Cold War, began to develop independent relationships with a significant number of Arab nations, and to assert its position in regional affairs. The extent of Italy's independence in international affairs was soon to be tested, however, by the standoff in Sigonella.

The events of Sigonella represented the difficulty of mediating the desires of Italy's benevolent Atlantic partner with its own desires of pursuing foreign policy mediation with countries such as Libya, Egypt, and the PLO leadership. As Osvaldo explains, "Having shown

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[119] Forsyth, "Peculiarities of Italo-American Relations," 17.

[120] Emidio Diodato and Federico Niglia, *Italy in International Relations: The Foreign Policy Conundrum* (Cham: Springer, 2017), 102. Croci Osvaldo echoes this assessment, noting that "The two pillars of Italian foreign policy since World War II have been reliance on the Atlantic Alliance and support for European integration, the latter understood as a process firmly entrenched within the former. Whenever these two lodestars tended to diverge, Italian governments always tried to bring them back on the same course." Osvaldo Croci, "The 'Americanization' of Italian Foreign Policy?" *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 18.

[121] Croci, "'Americanization' of Italian Foreign Policy," 20.

their Atlantic loyalty, Italian governments could enjoy diplomatic and commercial relations with Soviet bloc countries including Cuba. They could open and maintain a 'constructive dialogue' with what the USA considers 'rogue states'" and even, "go as far as staging a confrontation with US troops for domestic public consumption at Sigonella."[122]

But just as the events at Sigonella represented significant changes for the Mediterranean regional system, and especially domestic Italian politics, it also heralded changes within international law. The legal analysis of the Sigonella affair has often centered on the effects of the event on the development of international law related to terrorism. The events of Sigonella *began* as events related to international terrorism, hostage taking, and extradition. However, because of the presence of the U.S./NATO military base in Sigonella, these issues morphed into an emotionally, militaristically, and politically charged standoff between U.S. and Italian forces. Andrew L. Liput noted in the same year as the crisis, 1985, that "traditional legal processes have failed to control terrorism because of the increasing politicization of international legal processes" and that "This politicization has allowed nations to manipulate international legal processes to suit national political exigencies."[123] The U.S. presence at a NATO base such as Sigonella afforded the opportunity for the Reagan administration to *further* politicize the functioning of international law to suit "national political exigencies" to the detriment of the goal to *de-politicize* aspects of international law such as extradition.[124]

The net outcome of the events of the U.S.-Italy standoff at Sigonella was to erode the importance of international law in several different ways and to ultimately reinforce to the international community that international law can be ignored if the reason is "moral" enough.[125] Gregory V. Gooding notes, "in analyzing this view of the U.S. action — 'it violated international law but it's O.K.' — the conclusion that the result was praiseworthy is much more important than

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[122] Croci, "'Americanization' of Italian Foreign Policy," 20, 21.

[123] Liput, "An Analysis of the Achille Lauro Affair," 366.

[124] Liput provides a legal framework for this goal in his article, Liput, "An Analysis of the Achille Lauro Affair," on 365–72.

[125] McGinley concludes that the U.S. actions compelling the jet to land were clearly unlawful: "Under the circumstances it is hard to believe that any state would consider in the future such action to be lawful and permissible." McGinley, "The Achille Lauro Affair—Implications for International Law," 691.

the caveat that the law was technically broken."[126] Stretching even beyond the suggested acceptance of the international community to the shifting winds regarding the adherence to international legal norms, Sigonella also signaled to the rest of the world that the United States was prepared to unilaterally infringe on or alter aspects of the international legal system that it itself created after 1945 to suit its own needs. Not only did this unilateral action undermine the notion of compliance within the general international legal order, but it further emphasized that international treaties such as the NATO SOFA could be violated at will within the context of "national security" concerns.[127] Gooding highlights the implications of these changes: "the *Achille Lauro* incident cannot be understood fully if considered to be simply a response to terrorism; it is more fundamentally part of a general claim by the United States regarding the limits of international law. While the U.S. was primarily responsible for the creation of the post–World War II international legal regime, it has now determined that the constraints imposed by this regime on the unilateral use of force are largely unacceptable. The U.S. claim is not a rejection of international law in general, but a limitation of it to areas not affecting 'our nation's security.'"[128]

In this sense, the events at Sigonella must be understood in relation to domestic Italian politics, the bilateral relationship between Italy and the United States, the multilateral position relative to NATO obligations, broader Cold War context of Middle Eastern politics, as well as changing international legal norms. As a result of these conflicting motivations, the legal situation presented by the hijacking — involving the United States, Italy, Arafat's PLO (and the PLF), Tunisia, Iraq, and Egypt as interested parties — meant that the legal recourse for justice in the death of an American citizen was as far from apolitical as possible. As Frank J. Paison notes, "All of the blame for the Achille Lauro affair is not one-sided."[129]

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[126] Gooding, "Fighting Terrorism in the 1980's," 172, 173.

[127] Indeed, as some authors after Sigonella argued, the notion of "Self-help" which the U.S. utilized in this instance was an example of deliberately and consciously violating international law. However, some, like Andrew J Calica, believe such transgressions ultimately *aided* in the comity of nations: "So long as countries remain committed to international comity, criticism of the use of forcible abduction will constrain the practice and prevent it from completely eroding the foundations of existing international agreements and institutions, yet effectively tolerate it where abduction is efficient." Calica, Andrew J. "Self-Help Is the Best Kind: The Efficient Breach Justification for Forcible Abduction of Terrorists." *Cornell International Law Journal* 37, no. 2 (2004): 418.

[128] Gooding, "Fighting Terrorism in the 1980's," 178.

[129] Piason, "Italian Foreign Policy: The *Achille Lauro* Affair," 161.

Emotionally charged decisions, like those taken by the U.S. authorities to compel the Egyptian aircraft to divert to Sigonella, present legal conundrums that emphasize U.S. disregard for international law, while at the same time reaffirming that Italy was not — in 1985, or in fact, beyond — willing to affect the basis of its larger security relationships: "The Americans affirmed that the taking of the plane was 'right' and 'legal'; the Italians observed that it might have been 'moral' but not within international law."[130] As Virgilio Ilari noted just two years after the Sigonella episode, the geopolitical needs of both parties demanded that the feathers ruffled by the event not proceed to any further separation: "The relationship with the United States remains essential for defensive purposes, but the Italian bases are equally indispensible to American national interests in the Mediterranean."[131]

Whereas Sigonella marked a high in tensions between the United States and Italy during the Cold War, it also reflected Italy's limits as a major player in the Mediterranean regional system, immediately heralding a domestic political crisis for the Craxi government. As Silvio Labbate emphasizes, "The Mediterranean has always represented a main source of opportunity and challenge for Italy's domestic and foreign policy."[132] Labbate highlights that Sigonella, among a series of other international incidents within the same time period, severely limited Craxi's ability to achieve foreign policy goals in the Mediterranean and advance budding relationships with Arab nations.[133] As reflected in the Italian publication *Europeo*, public perceptions of the Craxi government's handling of the Sigonella affair ultimately failed to reinforce an image of domestic sovereignty as it had hoped.

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[130] Piason, "Italian Foreign Policy: The *Achille Lauro* Affair," 154, 161.

[131] Virgilio Ilari, "The New Model of Italian Defence: Doctrinal Options, Issues and Trends," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1987): 87, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932728708456615.

[132] Silvio Labbate, "Italian Mediterranean Policy in the Early 1980s in the Light of National Archive Documents," *The International History Review* 42, no. 5 (2020): 1021.

[133] Labbate, "Italian Mediterranean Policy in the Early 1980s," 1022, 1023.

Figure 10 – "Good-Bye Bettino," cover of L'Europeo, October 19, 1985. Ronald Reagan depicted spanking Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi following the Sigonella standoff.[134]

[134] *L'Europeo*, cover illustration, "Good-Bye Bettino," October 19, 1985, accessed via American Foreign Service Association, "The Achille Lauro Affair (1985)," accessed July 24, 2025, https://afsa.org/achille-lauro-affair-1985.

From a legal perspective, Sigonella provides a complicated international legal case that lends credence to Efrat's argument that "governments more easily yield to US extraterritorial pressure when they can keep this under wraps."[135] Though one could argue that Craxi's insistence that the terrorists be tried in Italian courts — against the strong protestations from the Reagan administration — represented the strength of the Italian state to resist overreach by U.S. bullying in international politics, details of the event paint a different, and more revealing, picture.

Cooley notes that "Both Italian defense officials and high-ranking military officers who were involved in the episode insist that the United States had mistakenly assumed Sigonella was an American facility when in fact it was a sovereign Italian installation used by NATO."[136] After operating in the country for over three decades and across several different institutions, the fact that U.S. officials were still ignorant of the jurisdiction, functioning, and ownership of facilities such as Sigonella speaks volumes and reflects a simple conclusion: regardless of any SOFA agreement, in the eyes of the United States, NATO bases in Italy were simply U.S. bases. The notion that, from a legal perspective, the NATO SOFA reflected "parity" or "complete reciprocity" among the signatory nations was one, that in 1985, was clearly not shared by the highest officials in the U.S. government.

Even as recently as 2017, David Vine has highlighted that "Some claim that there are no U.S. bases in Italy. Since around the time Italy joined NATO, Italian and U.S. officials have agreed to call U.S. bases in the country, 'NATO bases.' Locally, many refer to the bases this way."[137] But he maintains that despite the linguistic differences and "official" NATO jurisdiction, the facilities function in the eyes of U.S. authorities much like they did during the 1980s: "In some sense it is technically true that there are no U.S. bases in Italy, because the bases occupied by U.S. troops are officially NATO bases under the NATO status of forces agreement. However, U.S. facilities and personnel dominate almost every 'NATO base.' As in other countries, word choice has long been a tactic to normalize the presence of U.S. bases and avoid the kind of antibase opposition that

[135] Efrat continues, "In public, by contrast, they tend to assert their own jurisdiction." Though Efrat's argument is concerned with U.S. troops committing crimes abroad, the logic of the argument appears true in this case as well. Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure," 253.

[136] Cooley, *Base Politics*, 206.

[137] Vine, "A Pistol on the Table," 138.

foreign military installations often inspire."[138] As we have seen in Saudi Arabia, the absence of "official" U.S. basing agreements did not always limit the United States in conducting affairs abroad to suit U.S. interests.

Though the Craxi government's relationship with the United States quickly rebounded after the event — Paison noted in 1986 that "There was virtually unanimous agreement on both sides of the Atlantic that the Achille Lauro did not produce a long-term negative impact on Italian-American relations and now they are back to where they were prior to the unfolding of events on October" — the international legal situation presented by Sigonella represented a series of overreaches by the U.S. on Italian sovereignty. Internal Italian reports reflect this conclusion as well.

Brownfield and Baino highlight that "At the time [1985], an internal Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs legal analysis cited the NATO SOFA and the 1954 Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement and concluded two things: 1) the United States' use of NAS Sigonella as a landing ground for forcing down the Egypt Air plane was 'inappropriate' and 2) there were legal grounds to complain to NATO or U.S. authorities."[139] They further note that "Even assuming that the United States enjoyed jurisdiction over the terrorists, there is the question of whether unilateral use of force was permissible under international law."[140] The reality of the Sigonella affair was that in two separate instances — in forcing the Egyptian plane to divert its course in the air initially to Sigonella, and then without any access or approval by the Italian state, followed the flight to Rome with U.S. military aircraft within Italian airspace — the United States government violated international law within the NATO SOFA framework.[141] Some, such as Tracey E. Madden, maintain that there is little room for ambiguity in the situation: "The United States' military actions

[138] Vine, "A Pistol on the Table," 138.

[139] Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 63.

[140] Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 62.

[141] However, some, like Andrew L. Liput, do note that the forced diversion of foreign aircraft "had precedent" within international law at the time. He explains that "In the Achille Lauro affair, it appears that the United States did not have enough time to make a formal request for extradition of the Palestinian hijackers" from the Egyptian state who "thus had the obligation under the Hostage Convention to either prosecute them, or to detain them for a time adequate to provide the United States with an opportunity to institute formal extradition procedures." However, "Egypt did neither" and by consequence, "the United States attempted to abduct the hijackers." Liput, "An Analysis of the Achille Lauro Affair," 328, 332.

in trying to gain physical custody of the hijackers violated international law. It was not legal for the United States to force the Egyptian aircraft carrying the hijackers to land in Sicily."[142]

Though Craxi demanded the terrorists be processed in Italy according to international law and the NATO SOFA, before this could even happen, the Reagan government had unilaterally decided to pursue extra-legal recourses to divert the plane. Larry Speakes, press secretary for the Reagan administration, responded to the question of "when Americans are overseas and under duress for something, like terrorism, what is the authority of the United States to act in their behalf?" by stating, "Well, under international law you can't wait until you have exhausted local recourse, and so you do that, and you work with the governments, as we did yesterday."[143] He went on to say, however, that "When you have done that you can act as a government to protect your citizens overseas, to include the use of force if necessary."[144] Some within the legal community, such as Jeffrey Allan McCredie, agreed with such notions, noting that "By encouraging nations to take enforcement actions against international terrorism, the United States has contributed to the reaffirmation of principles and purposes of international treaties and of the rule of law."[145] Gooding, in contrast, concludes that this "denial of international law's relevance over so great an area" is not only negative, but in fact is "necessarily destructive of the legal regime itself."[146]

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[142] She further notes that "It seems quite clear that the United States' grounding of the Egyptian aircraft was in violation of international law. Therefore, it is understandable that the United States has never claimed that its actions were valid or legal under international law." Madden, "U.S. Response to the *Achille Lauro* Hijacking," 147, 148.

[143] Piper, "Achille Lauro Affair," 1522.

[144] Piper, "Achille Lauro Affair," 1522.

[145] McCredie, "Contemporary Uses of Force against Terrorism," 467.

[146] Gooding continues, noting that "The *Achille Lauro* incident-whether seen as limited to the modification of the norm against the interception of civilian aircraft, or more broadly as indicative of a claim regarding the limits of international law-will ultimately have undesirable consequences for world public order." Gooding, "Fighting Terrorism in the 1980's," 179. In contrast to Gooding's analysis, some, like Andrew J. Calica, argue that such breaches of international law are effective remedies to situations such as what occurred at Sigonella: "U.S. self-help was necessary in the *Achille-Lauro* incident in order to fill a void in international law" and "international relations suffered no permanent harm, as evidenced by the tone of the Security Council discussions and the fact that the United States was not required to pay damages." He concludes that "In summary, efficient breach, in the form of reprisal, quashes an immediate threat without causing derogation or collapse of the existing system; the injured nation redresses a harm that the UN cannot, and the UN operates effectively to maintain harmony." Calica, "Self-Help Is the Best Kind," 418, 420, 421. However, in the context of the development of international law in the decades following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Gooding's conclusion appeared to be more apt than Calica's given that the events of Sigonella have, in the words of Brownfield and Baino (writing in 2021), "contributed to the current shift towards a less restrictive approach to unilateral use of force in the war on terror under international law" Brownfeld and Baino, "Sigonella Episode," 65.

Others, such as Michael J. Bazyler were even more forceful in their denunciation of U.S. actions: "an important premise must be kept in mind: political ends do not justify illegal means. If we are to fight terrorism, it must be through legal means; law, and especially international law, provides a framework for any response to terrorist acts. A government which chooses to fight terrorism with terrorism runs the risk of outdoing the terrorists by destroying the fabric of the state itself."[147] Bazyler concludes, forcefully, that "focusing merely upon politics, without considering international law, in determining how to fight terrorism can lead only to world anarchy."[148]

International crises such as Sigonella reflect the reality that even as the political, economic, and militaristic bilateral relationship between Italy and the United States grew and deepened over the course of the Cold War, by 1985, this relationship was still highly asymmetrical, especially in the realm of law. As Joseph W. Brown concludes, the functions of foreign military bases are valuable precisely "because they enable states to extend their power, deter their enemies, and influence their allies in ways that they cannot from within their national borders."[149] The exertion of U.S. power through foreign military bases (or "NATO" bases) in places such as Italy, remain one of the enduring effects of the wider global security community created by the United States during the Cold War. The use of these spaces in Italy, during and after the Cold War, for purposes outside of their proscribed mandates, has been legally questionable. From using NATO bases to house U.S. nuclear weapons in the 1980s, to using such facilities for non-approved military missions in countries such as Libya, Serbia, and Kosovo, and Iraq, to utilizing them to transport individuals for extraordinary rendition, such facilities have served to be launching pads for the erosion of international legal norms.[150]

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[147] Michael J. Bazyler, "Capturing Terrorists in the 'Wild Blue Yonder': International Law and the Achille Lauro and Libyan Aircraft Incidents," *Whittier Law Review* 8, no. 3 (1986): 687, 689.

[148] Bazyler, "Capturing Terrorists in the 'Wild Blue Yonder'," 689.

[149] Joseph W. Brown, *The Politics of Foreign Military Basing* (PhD diss., Duke University, 2020), 12, https://hdl.handle.net/10161/20927.

[150] For more on the use of NATO/U.S. bases for housing nuclear missiles as well as U.S. strikes in Libya and the Balkans, see Dian, "U.S. Bases in Italy," 39-55. For more on the role of NATO/U.S. bases in the invasion of Iraq, see WikiLeaks cable from 2003, U.S. Embassy Rome, where the U.S. embassy in Rome reported in May of 2003 that "The GOI [government of Italy] may have been overly skittish … but in the end our needs were accommodated" and that "Italy answered the call to assist the coalition win the war in Iraq. The GOI made a strategic choice to keep its policy aligned with the U.S. and stuck to it, despite intense internal political pressure to fold." WikiLeaks cable from 2003, U.S. Embassy Rome, *Review of Italy's Contributions to OIF*, Cable 03ROME2045_a, May 12, 2003, *WikiLeaks*, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/03ROME2045_a.html.

These military installations aided in establishing, and in particular the *Achille Lauro* affair, a highly significant precedent in international law for both the seizure of international civilian aircraft and the unilateral use of force that went against accepted international legal norms at the time. As a direct consequence, legal arguments based on the malleability of the legal status or function of foreign bases has contributed to the perception of spaces outside of the territorial United States in the twenty-first century as "locations where the United States may act as it pleases; informal promises between countries replace the absolute prohibition of certain transfers; and the war paradigm is used to deprive individuals of the protection of the law."[151] A declassified cable from the U.S. embassy in Rome from 2008 confirms that reinforcing a "broad" reading of the legal purview of what Italian NATO bases may be used for by U.S. forces is a deliberate goal:

> The U.S. has traditionally interpreted this language broadly to mean that U.S. forces may be used for non-NATO operations (such as Iraq or humanitarian missions in Africa) as long as the GOI [Government of Italy] gives its consent. Italian military and political authorities have generally accepted this interpretation and granted their consent in a relatively informal manner. However, it is likely that if the language were to be made public, political parties that oppose U.S. military presence in Italy and U.S. military involvement overseas would pressure the GOI to take a more restrictive reading of the language by demanding that no non-NATO actions be undertaken without extensive formal negotiations with the GOI.[152]

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[151] Margaret L. Satterthwaite, "Rendered Meaningless: Extraordinary Rendition and the Rule of Law," *George Washington Law Review* 75, nos. 5–6 (August 2007): 1333. Though not discussed within this chapter due to length constraints, the *Achille Lauro* affair also is an important case for tracing the evolution of U.S. judicial opinion on the concept of *male captus bene detentus* (wrongful capture, valid detention) which states that "a person being tried for an offense against the laws of a State may not oppose his trial by reason of the illegality of his arrest." Roland Glenn T. Tuazon, "Wrongful Capture, Proper Detention: Challenging the Doctrine *Male Captus, Bene Detentus* in International Law," *Ateneo Law Journal* 56, no. 1 (2011): 39. In other legal opinions prior to that of the *Achille Lauro* incident, Jeffrey Allan McCredie notes that "In the past United States courts have held that the concept of male captus bene detentus' is an acceptable method of asserting criminal jurisdiction over individuals, provided those individuals are entitled to a fair trial." McCredie, "Contemporary Uses of Force against Terrorism," 454. However, though the practice has been used extensively (mostly by the United States and Israel) – most famously in the trial of Adolf Eichmann – Roland Glenn T. Tuazon insists that "in considering both International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, MCBD [male captus bene detenus] expressly controverts recognized obligations such as respect for due process and proscription of arbitrary detention. Due to these, and the foregoing reasons, MCBD's international customary status may be sufficiently questioned." Tuazon, "Wrongful Capture, Proper Detention," 94. Other commentators have argued against the use of the practice under international law especially given the increase in the use of "extraordinary rendition" by the United States after 2001 to combat international terrorism. For further reading, see: Tineke Poort, "Male Captus, Bene Judicatus: Disguised Extradition and Other Practices," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 1, no. 1 (1988): 65–77; Christophe Yves Marie Paulussen, *Male Captus Bene Detentus? Surrendering Suspects to the International Criminal Court* (PhD diss., Tilburg University, 2010; Antwerp–Oxford: Intersentia, 2010); and Chike B. Okosa, "Illegal Extra-Territorial Abductions and Reconceptualising *Mala Captus, Bene Detentus*," *De Juriscope Law Journal* 3, no. 1 (2023): 23–44

[152] U.S. Embassy Rome, *Italy's Role in Regional Security*, Cable 08ROME1322_a, May 23, 2008, *WikiLeaks*, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08ROME1322_a.html.

Though one could see the events that occurred at Sigonella in 1985 to be an assertion of Italian territorial sovereignty and jurisdictional authority, one would have to simultaneously ignore the already transgressive and illegal actions taken by the United States that led to the crisis in the first place. The events at Sigonella serve as an example of how, in the words of Ugo Mattei and Laura Nader, "the US government has inaugurated a soft strategy to weaken the bite of international legality" by insisting on the importance of acting through unilateral force contrary to international customary law.[153]

Forcing the aircraft to land at a shared NATO facility at Sigonella without the consent of the host country and violating "Italian airspace by tailing the plane with yet another United States military aircraft" as the aircraft was transported to Rome, fundamentally failed to adhere to NATO framework outlining the importance of maintaining "democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."[154] Craxi's insistence on maintaining jurisdiction over the hijackers may have publicly represented an assertion of national sovereignty within international law, but it came at the cost of being complicit in eroding other aspects of international law, such as the U.S. insistence in utilizing unilateral force to fight terrorism, and further contributing to the legitimacy of the highly controversial practice of *male captus, bene detentus*.[155] Though still a "NATO" base in the eyes of Italians, Sigonella remained a clear and significant outpost of U.S. influence in the region.

Section IV: Cavalese Cable Car Disaster – 1998

The skies are not for the most powerful or for the most aggressive
—Reverend Lorenzo Casarotti – 1998

The plane … is complicated to fly
—A fellow veteran EA-6B pilot 1998

[153] Mattei and Nader, *Plunder*, 150.

[154] Antonio Cassese, "The International Community's 'Legal' Response to Terrorism," *International & Comparative Law Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1989): 602.

[155] Latin for the phrase, "Wrongly captured, properly detained." For more on the concept of *male captus, bene detentus*, see John Dugard et al., "Cases and Comments," *South African Journal on Human Rights* 7, no. 2 (1991): 199-226 and Colin Warbrick, "Judicial Jurisdiction and Abuse of Process," *International & Comparative Law Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (2000): 489–96.

On February 4, 1998, the wing of a U.S. fighter-jet flying a training mission near the small town of Cavalese, Northern Italy, severed a ski lift cable as it rocketed past the ski resort at over 500 miles-per-hour. A group of twenty skiers in the cable car — a multinational group of Italian, German, Polish, and Belgian tourists along with the lift operator — crashed to the ground. None survived. John Tagliabue, writing for *The New York Times*, reported on the carnage at the scene: "With cranes and helicopters, rescue teams worked to remove bodies from the wreckage of the cable car. By late this evening, scraps of yellow steel lay scattered over a snowy meadow amidst fir and larch trees. Pools of blood could be seen in the light of floodlights that illuminated the site. A pile of twisted and broken skis, ski poles, boots goggles and gloves, some smeared with blood, had been collected by rescuers."[156]

The tragedy drew harsh criticism from those who lived in the region, as well as others in the Italian government. *The New York Times* reported two weeks later that Luigi Olivieri, a member of the parliament from the region, noted that "the rules for low-altitude flying" are 'systematically and clamorously disregarded,' by both Italian and other NATO planes."[157] For years, local residents had "complained about low-flying military jets that roar through the valley, shaking homes, rattling nerves and, in one case, severing a power line."[158] Another parliament member, Marco Rizzo, made a statement on the day of the incident concluding that "'The presence of United States bases in Italy makes no sense and is only interference."[159]

The 1998 disaster at Cavalese not only drew attention for the shocking death toll, but also for the fact that all U.S. servicemembers involved in the accident were ultimately acquitted by a U.S. military court one year later on all charges related to the incident. The Italian prime minister in 1999, Massimo D'Alema, referred to the incident as a "massacre" and the *Washington Post Foreign Service* reported that politicians and newspapers in Italy soundly "condemned the verdict

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[156] Mark Thompson, "The Skies Are Not for the Most Powerful," *Time*, February 8, 1998, https://time.com/archive/6918147/the-skies-are-not-for-the-most-powerful/; Tagliabue, "20 Die in Italy," 4.

[157] John Tagliabue and Matthew L. Wald, "Death in the Alps: A Special Report: How Wayward U.S. Pilot Killed 20 on Ski Lift," *New York Times*, February 18, 1998, 1, 6, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1998/02/18/629146.html?pageNumber=1.

[158] Tagliabue and Wald, "Death in the Alps," 1.

[159] Tagliabue, "20 Die in Italy," 4.

as a whitewash and charged it was a symbol of American power and arrogance."[160] The *Corriere della Sera*, the largest newspaper in Italy, ran a front page article on the rulings, declaring that the decision was, "almost an act of war within our country" and that "If Clinton wants good relations with Italy and the unconditional use of its military bases, [the United States] should recognize [Italy's] sovereignty and not treat it like an imperial province." [161] The mayor of the town of Cavalese, Mauro Gilmozzi, articulated what many across Italy found to be the crux of the issue relating to the acquittal verdict: "It's obsolete, unfair and unbelievable that a Marine should be judged by his fellow pilots — of course they're going to be more sympathetic to him … How can you say it's nobody's fault? If it's not his, then whose is it?"

[160] Daniel Williams and Sarah Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot," *Washington Post*, March 6, 1999, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/daily/march99/italy6.htm.

[161] Williams and Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot."

Figure 11 – One of the Alpe Cermis cable cars near Cavalese, Italy. This kind of cable car was in the 1998 disaster where twenty people lost their lives.[162]

[162] Godfrey Holmes, "Cavalese Cable-Car Disaster: It's 20 Years Since a US Aircraft Killed 20 People in the Dolomites and Still No One Accepts Responsibility," *The Independent*, February 3, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/cavalese-cable-car-disaster-us-aircraft-deaths-trentino-20-1998-italy-dolomites-lake-garda-responsibility-air-force-a8184771.html.

The question of jurisdiction in 1998 Cavalese case was, to U.S. officials, cut and dry. The four marines on the aircraft had been conducting an authorized NATO training mission and were thus operating under the "official capacity" of their positions within the military organization, thus giving the United States exclusive jurisdiction over their own troops under article VII paragraph 3(a) (ii) of the 1951 NATO SOFA.[163] However, for Gilmozzi, such a conclusion meant that the acquittal indicated that "killing 20 people means absolutely nothing."[164]

Two issues related to the NATO SOFA fundamentally affected the outcomes of the Cavalese disaster. The first was the definition of "official duty" designation under the NATO SOFA which, to this day, remains a point of contention and argument between member-states and lacks an agreed-upon legal definition. The second has to do with disputed factual details of the Cavalese case. Italian authorities maintained that the flightpath of the jet "was a deviation from the planned route and unnecessary on a day when postcard-perfect weather made the authorized route easily passable" whereas the Pentagon insisted "that the Prowler was on the authorized flight path."[165] If the U.S. pilots were *not* following an approved flight plan and operating the aircraft according to predetermined regulations related to elevation and speed, then an argument could be made that the "official duty" designation did not apply, and thus Italy should have exercised primary jurisdiction as the receiving state.

The Cavalese tragedy points to both the ambiguity regarding the definition of "official duty" contained within the NATO SOFA and jurisdiction. Much as with the case of Sigonella, these legal issues highlight the political and historical contexts of U.S.-Italian relations during the twentieth century, reflecting the fluid and dynamic relationship of power and legal authority under the SOFA and related agreements between the United States and Italy. As Priest-Hamilton notes, "jurisdictional issues are ultimately determined by the position, particularly the bargaining power, of the sending state and the receiving state."[166] The outrage in Italy over the incident conflicted

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[163] Annalisa Ciampi notes that "A request by Italian authorities for the four members of the crew to be tried in Italy was rejected by the United States." Annalisa Ciampi, "Compensating Victims of the Cermis Cable-Car Accident Under NATO Status of Forces Agreement," *The Italian Yearbook of International Law Online* 9, no. 1 (1999): 113.

[164] John Hooper and Julian Borger, "Italian Rage at US Pilot's Acquittal," *The Guardian*, March 5, 1999, https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/mar/05/johnhooper.julianborger1.

[165] Tagliabue and Wald, "Death in the Alps," 1.

[166] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 634.

with the broader, officially sanctioned history of the U.S.-Italian security relationship in the post–World War II era.

An article in the *Washington Post* from 1999 noted that in the wake of the accident, "Officials said [Prime Minister] D'Alema reviewed options before his meeting with Clinton and rejected unilateral cancellation of a 1952 treaty that gives the Americans and other NATO allies the right to judge military criminal suspects at home" and that "D'Alema …also ruled out a closure of any bases used by U.S. forces."[167] Long standing legacies of the postwar power imbalance between the United States and Italy (and other European countries) enshrined in the NATO SOFA, which led to issues like those in outcome of the 1998 Cavalese Case, tested, but did not change the nature of the relationship. In a leaked diplomatic cable from the U.S. embassy in Rome from 2003, just five years after the disaster, the U.S. embassy concluded that "Recognizing that Italy can appear frustratingly arcane and Byzantine, we are convinced that it is an excellent place to do our political-military business, as long as a healthy degree of patience is thrown into the mix."[168] It appeared that the public outrage regarding the disaster, ultimately, did little to tarnish the decades of security cooperation between the NATO allies.

Commenting on the acquittal of the pilot Captain Richard Ashby in 1999, John Eaves, a lawyer for the family of the German victims, responded by noting that the relatives "do not understand the verdict. If he's not responsible, who is?"[169] The historical power differentials contained in the NATO SOFA pointed ultimately to the answer offered by the acquitted Ashby during his military trial in North Carolina: "he conceded that 'mistakes were made.' He admitted that he had not paid close attention to his radar equipment and acknowledged that many flight maps did not include every potential obstacle on the ground."[170] He admitted ultimately, "There's a difference between responsibility and criminal responsibility."[171] Ashby fingered the pulse of precisely the ambiguous legal space occupied by the U.S. interpretation of the NATO SOFA.

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[167] Williams and Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot."

[168] U.S. Embassy Rome, "Review of Italy's Contributions to OIF."

[169] Williams and Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot."

[170] Williams and Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot."

[171] Williams and Delaney, "Italians Incensed by Verdict for Marine Pilot."

The NATO SOFA outlines provisions for both exclusive and concurrent jurisdiction over criminal acts. Exclusive jurisdiction over crimes committed occurs in two specific circumstances. "When an offense is punishable by the sending state but not the receiving state," the sending state maintains jurisdiction.[172] In the inverse situation, "when the offense is punishable by the receiving state but not the sending state, the receiving state has exclusive criminal jurisdiction."[173] All other criminal proceedings operate under a framework of concurrent jurisdiction. The majority of criminal cases that occur under the NATO SOFA are cases with concurrent jurisdiction, as the crime that has been committed exists in both the sending and receiving country, and thus both countries have a vested interest in prosecuting those responsible.[174] These incidents tend to be the routine crimes committed by service personnel with little to connection to their official roles such as theft, rape, or assault.[175]

While there are specific guidelines set forth by the NATO SOFA which articulate which country will have the right to exercise jurisdiction under the concurrent jurisdiction scheme, one significant exception is singled out: the "Offenses Committed in the Performance of Official Duty" clause. Priest-Hamilton notes that "It is well established that the courts of a receiving state are not competent to try offenses committed by foreign servicemen in the performance of their official duty" and in consequence, the sending state reserves the right to criminal jurisdiction in these cases.[176]

Unfortunately, the "official duty" clause within the NATO SOFA in dictating jurisdiction fails to clarify the scope or specific definition of "official duty."[177] This ambiguity understandably, has led to disputes between states whenever the U.S. claims that crimes committed by soldiers

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[172] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 618.

[173] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 618.

[174] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 621.

[175] Crimes committed by family members accompanying U.S. soldiers abroad also represent a legal grey area legally within the framework of the NATO SOFA. See Gregory A. McClelland, "The Problem of Jurisdiction Over Civilians Accompanying the Forces Overseas—Still with Us," *Military Law Review* 117 (1987): 153–218.

[176] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 622.

[177] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty regarding the Status of their Forces*, June 19, 1951, last updated October 14, 2009, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17265.htm.

were done under the umbrella of "official duty," thereby claiming jurisdiction, opening the door to politization of the legal process. It is significant to note that during the drafting process of the NATO SOFA, several states, and Italy in particular, pushed to include more specific language regarding the definition and scope of "official duty," to include that the action "was done within the *limits* of that official duty."[178] In the absence of an official definition and scope, contrasting interpretations have developed depending on differing state priorities where "the United States argues, virtually any offense committed by its military surrounding the duties of the United States military is committed in the performance of official duty."[179]

Unquestionably, as Joop Voetelink emphasizes in *Status of forces: criminal jurisdiction over military personnel abroad* (2015), "The balance of power between host States and sending States is particularly important" when equitably drafting SOFA agreements.[180] In the case of the NATO SOFA, provisions that were perhaps appropriate for the Cold War context have been brought into the twenty-first century where the "most important elements of the *NATO-SOFA*, including the provisions on criminal jurisdiction, have been incorporated in the *EU-SOFA* almost literally (Articles 17 and 18)."[181] However, the issues posed by the "official duty" stipulation of article VII of the NATO SOFA, which directly contributed to the political outcry in 1998 in Cavalese, remain fixed in international jurisprudence.[182] As Michel W. Reisman and Robert D.

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[178] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 624.

[179] Priest-Hamilton, "Jurisdiction over the 1998 Italy Gondola Accident," 624.

[180] Voetelink, *Status of Forces*, 42, 43.

[181] Voetelink, *Status of Forces*, 101.

[182] Will H. Carroll, a former Deputy Chief of the International Law Division, Office of The Judge Advocate General, HQ USAF, wrote an article broaching the specific issue of attempting to define the scope of "official duty" and noted that it was "for the purpose of providing to the Judge Advocate on the spot some of the sound and tested observations and interpretations in rationale based on experience of others in meeting that unique and unexpected situation." Carroll notes that "Various legal theories have been advanced as to the meaning of the term 'in the performance of official duty'" and Carroll looks at both the working papers associated with the creation of the NATO SOFA which contained disagreements over the wording of "official duty" from members of the Canadian, Italian, and French representatives who believed the wording (still) in the agreement was too vague. He further makes note of "certain public statements on the subject by high level legal authorities" from the United States regarding the agreement that shed light on the issue and even considers a 1965 agreement regarding military bases between the U.S. and the Philippines for further clarification. Carroll outlined several conclusions arguing that "4. Not every act committed "while on duty" should be considered as committed "while in the performance of official duty" and that "5. The commission of an offense does not, of itself, remove a case from the official duty category. To hold otherwise would result in few, if any, cases of this sort within the primary jurisdiction of the sending state." 289 Finally, Carroll confirms that in 1970, "Although the idea of the sending state exercising primary jurisdiction over so-called 'official duty' cases existed in a vague sense prior to World War II, it remained for the postwar status of

Sloane highlight, elements contained in the NATO SOFA have been "transposed to the post–Cold War context" such as "the jurisdictional and compensatory regimes it established" and as a result, have caused international tension and further politicization of the legal process.[183] As a result they "may no longer suffice in every situation to preserve the delicate political preconditions NATO states once took for granted."[184]

In addition to the ambiguity of the language regarding article VII of the NATO SOFA contributing to the politicization of the legal interpretation of the "official duty" clause, in the case of the 1998 Cavalese disaster, this was not the legal issue at the forefront of discussion. Rather, the question that held significant implications for the jurisdiction of the case was if Ashby and others had been complying with direct orders in terms of speed, elevation, and flightpath of the training run.

Of particular concern was the elevation of the jet at the time that it severed the cable car line. After an accident two years prior in 1996 involving the same model of jet in Arizona resulted in a crash killing four, "the Pentagon ordered that all Prowler flights must fly at least 1,000 feet above the ground."[185] By contrast, in Cavalese, "engineers at the ski-lift company" stated that "the pair of cables hung between 260 and 330 feet off the ground."[186] In 2017, International Civil Aviation Organization published a report on a series of aerial collisions/accidents to provide policy recommendations. The organization concurred with the assessment from engineers of the ski lift company that the jet was flying too low. They wrote of the 1998 Cavalese incident that "Twenty people died when a United States Marine Corps EA-6B Prowler aircraft, while flying lower than

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forces agreements to JAG L. Rev., Fall–70 develop the concept of 'offenses arising out of the *acts or omission* of members of a visiting force done in the performance of official duty,' and for the day-to-day cases under these agreements to give meaning and vigor to the concept. It is a new and dynamic legal concept for the military lawyer which invites study and further commentary from those who, through the cases, are moulding this concept into a firm legal principle." Ultimately, no firm conclusion was reached as to this definition, but it is clear that from the U.S. perspective, there exists a wide scope to the interpretation of the "official duty" concept. Will H. Carroll, "Official Duty Cases under Status of Forces Agreements: Modest Guidelines toward a Definition," *United States Air Force JAG Law Review* 12, no. 4 (1970): 289.

[183] W. Michael Reisman and Robert D. Sloane, "The Incident at Cavalese and Strategic Compensation," *American Journal of International Law* 94, no. 3 (2000): 505.

[184] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 505.

[185] "How Wayward Pilot Sliced Cable," *Tampa Bay Times*, February 18, 1998, updated September 12, 2005, https://www.tampabay.com/archive/1998/02/18/how-wayward-pilot-sliced-cable/.

[186] "How Wayward Pilot Sliced Cable," *Tampa Bay Times*.

regulations allowed in order for the pilots to 'have fun' and 'take videos of the scenery,' cut a cable supporting a gondola of an aerial tramway, causing it to plunge 260 feet to the ground."[187] A further complicating factor that was discussed at length in the subsequent court-martial trial was that Ashby and the crew were utilizing maps provided by U.S. authorities, rather than Italian or NATO provided cartographic information because "Pentagon officials trust American mapmakers more than the agencies that draw local maps" and that the maps that were utilized by the U.S. crew at the time of the accident did not even include the ski lift despite its construction in 1966 — 29 years before the incident.[188]

The issue of speed was also a concern for the eight-man (seven Americans and one Italian) investigation team regarding the accident. They concluded that "[t]he aircrew aggressively maneuvered their aircraft, exceeded the maximum airspeed and flew well below 1000 feet."[189] In 2011, an article by Maurizio Molinari and Paolo Mastrolilli published in *La Stampa*, reported that a declassified Marine Corps document published just a month after the incident acknowledged "The cause of this tragedy was that the Marine aircrew flew much lower than they were authorized to fly, putting themselves and others at risk" and that General Peter Pace, the then-acting Commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic/Europe/South, "concluded that the cause of the accident was crew error."[190] The U.S. found itself in the awkward position of maintaining that the crew were operating in an official capacity of duty, while simultaneously admitting that the servicemen in question were *not* operating according to official protocols.

The dispute over the willful destruction of a videotape that had recorded portions of the flight and would have provided vital information for the court-martial trial merely added to the

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[187] International Civil Aviation Organization, *MIDANPIRG AIM Sub-Group, Third Meeting (AIM SG/3), Cairo, Egypt, 15–18 May 2017, Agenda Item 4: AIM Planning and Implementation in the MID Region: "AIM-Related Accidents and Incidents*, (Information Paper AIM SG/3-IP/3, 7 May 2017), International Civil Aviation Organization, https://www2023.icao.int/MID/Documents/2017/AIM%20SG3-MIDAD%20TF4/IP%203.pdf

[188] ICAO, *MIDANPIRG AIM Sub-Group, Third Meeting (AIM SG/3): "AIM-Related Accidents and Incidents"* (IP 3).

[189] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 507.

[190] Maurizio Molinari and Paolo Mastrolilli, "Exclusive: Classified Documents Show U.S. Full Responsibility for 1998 Italy Ski Gondola Disaster," *La Stampa* (English edition), July 14, 2011, https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/la-stampa-in-english/2011/07/14/news/exclusive-classified-documents-show-u-s-full-responsibility-for-1998-italy-ski-gondola-disaster-1.36950959/.

layers of ambiguity and conflict not only around jurisdiction, but ultimately around culpability and responsibility. According to testimony contained in the court-martial trials, Ashby's co-pilot and navigator Captain Joseph Schweitzer had filmed portions of the flight on a personal device within the plane prior to the impact of the cable. Whereas prosecutors maintained that Ashby had destroyed the tape "because he feared it would be used against them to show they were acting recklessly during the flight," Schweitzer testified that he had destroyed the tape (by throwing in a bonfire after their flight) out of fear that "the Italian news media would use a shot of him smiling into the camera … with footage of the twisted gondola lying on bloody snow."[191] Though acquitted of twenty counts of manslaughter by a military court, Ashby was sentenced to six months imprisonment and a dishonorable discharge from the Marine Corps for obstruction of justice.[192] In the Kafkaesque legal landscape made possible by the NATO SOFA, while Ashby was not found guilty of manslaughter, he was nevertheless guilty in the cover-up of the crime he was acquitted for.

The circumstances presented by the acquittal of manslaughter charges in Ashby's court-martial, presented alongside the *conviction* of a charge of obstruction of justice related to the very same case, present a legal paradox. As Schweitzer's lawyers emphasized in his court-martial (in which he was dishonorably discharged, but served no jail time), it "didn't make sense that you'd proceed with a charge of obstruction of justice when there's no underlying crime."[193] Whereas U.S. military courts concluded, in the face of acknowledgement by the investigative team and even in public statements — by the President of the United States — that the United States was culpable for the disaster, the individuals involved were acquitted of twenty counts of manslaughter at the very same time they were found guilty of destroying evidence. To this day, current regulations of

[191] Richard A. Serrano, "Pilot in Ski Gondola Accident Convicted in Tape Destruction," *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1999, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-may-08-mn-35068-story.html; Matthew L. Wald, "Jury Sentences Marine in Ski-Lift Incident to Dismissal," *New York Times*, April 3, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/03/us/jury-sentences-marine-in-ski-lift-incident-to-dismissal.html.

[192] The BBC further noted that "The jet's navigator, Captain Joseph Schweitzer, 31, pleaded guilty to obstructing justice and was dismissed from the service" and that "Investigators never saw what was on the tape, but Ashby and Schweitzer maintained that it had not contained any incriminating information." "Cable Car Disaster Pilot Jailed," *BBC News*, May 11, 1999, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/340507.stm.

[193] Misti E. Rawles, "Congressional Oversight: The New Mortal Enemy of Military Justice?" (LL.M. thesis, United States Army Judge Advocate General's School, April 2000), Defense Technical Information Center, ADA 439865, 87, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA439865.pdf.

the NATO SOFA, which outlined the procedural and jurisdictional standards for the Cavalese case, are still in effect.

After court proceedings had concluded, few concerned parties linked to the disaster were satisfied with the outcome. The United States Department of Defense insisted on a strict reading of the NATO SOFA provisions regarding compensation for disaster such as the Cavalese incident, and even "vigorously opposed" legislation, introduced by Senator Charles S. Robb of Virginia in 1999, to provide further compensation to the families of the victims.[194] Their rationale was that "the precedent that would be set by making payments in settlement of these claims outside of the NATO process would not, in the long run, be in the best interests of the United States or of other NATO countries."[195] Reisman and Sloane conclude that "The Department of Defense, which defended the exclusivity of the SOFA procedure in the Cavalese incident and resisted, on principle, any deviation from it, might wish to incorporate such changes in the overall political context into its future calculation."[196] Despite the perspective that "the United States continues to view foreign legal systems with suspicion and is adamant that US service members should not come under their jurisdiction," the current jurisprudential system laid out by the NATO SOFA resulted in soldiers being guilty of obstructing justice even in Ashby's case where, according to U.S. military courts, there was "no underlying crime."[197]

The 1998 Cavalese disaster, the ambiguity of the "official duty" designation in the NATO SOFA, the investigation of whether or not Ashby and his crew were following orders correctly under the "official duty" framework, the destruction of the videotape and obstruction of justice charge, and finally, the strict adherence to the compensation scheme outlined in the NATO SOFA, all point to fundamental flaws contained in the current iteration of the multilateral agreement. As Steven E. Stuehser notes in the article "Military Jurisdiction under SOFA: Clarity or Confusion," it has become clear that "popular politics can and will play a role in determining which military and constitutional law will be applied to … soldiers stationed abroad."[198] The troubling issue of

[194] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 511.

[195] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 511.

[196] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 513, 514.

[197] Efrat, "Facing US Extraterritorial Pressure," 255.

[198] Stuehser, "Military Jurisdiction under SOFA," 252.

the Cavalese disaster and its outcomes, especially related to the issues of jurisdiction, procedure, and compensation, is that — according to the content of the treaty — it was executed *correctly*.

According to the content of the agreement as it is outlined at present, it is possible for a U.S. solider to cause the deaths of a multi-national group of twenty civilians in a foreign country, and only receive punishment (six months in prison) not for their deaths, but rather for successfully destroying evidence that could have proven even further wrongdoing related to the very same case. In these circumstances, and under the current NATO SOFA framework, the United States does not need to leverage its political, economic, or military superiority to affect the outcome of disasters such as these because decades of strict international jurisprudence and precedent have made it unnecessary. Despite reservations, countries such as Italy were not in a position in 1945 to reject U.S. economic aid or military protection. A leaked confidential cable regarding multilateral NATO discussions between the United States and European countries in 2002 noted that the Italian defense minister, Antonio Martino, "admitted that Europe has had a free ride from the US for the past 50 years."[199]

Because these imbalances were enshrined into the NATO SOFA framework during an historical Cold War context, a U.S. president can openly proclaim — like Bill Clinton did in 1998 — that "the United States must clearly and unambiguously shoulder the responsibility for what happened [at Cavalese]" while at the very same time encourage the U.S. Congress reject "a bill that would have set up a $40 million compensation fund for the families of the victims."[200]

Though the United States fulfilled its compensation obligations laid out under article VIII of the NATO SOFA framework which dictates that where "one sending State alone is responsible, the amount awarded or adjudged shall be distributed in the proportion of 25 percent chargeable to the receiving State and 75 percent chargeable to the sending State," it placed the onus on the Italian state to pass legislation for the compensation to the families of the deceased during the accident.[201] Whereas the United States was obliged then to pay 75 percent of the $1.9 million (determined by the Italian state) to the families of each victim, the Italians thus were obliged to pay 25 percent of

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[199] U.S. Embassy Rome, *Ambassador Burns Briefs Italians on NATO Issues*, Cable 02ROME721_a, February 13, 2002, *WikiLeaks*, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/02ROME721_a.html.

[200] Molinari and Mastrolilli, "Exclusive: Classified Documents."

[201] Reisman and Sloane, "Incident at Cavalese," 509.

the sum themselves for a U.S. fighter jet crew of four to which killed twenty people while operating outside the scope of their official duties.

The circumstances in Europe at the conclusion of the Second World War clearly necessitated some form of oversight for the hundreds of thousands of foreign troops that were operating across a myriad of ill-defined borders. The resultant NATO SOFA was a crucial document for establishing accountability and a measure of jurisdictional reciprocity which "underscores the equal position of the Member States."[202] As the Cavalese incident underscores, however, that "jurisdictional reciprocity" is an uneven one at best.

To understand the shortcomings of the document that resulted in the unsatisfying conclusions to the Cavalese proceedings, it must be placed within the wider context of U.S. desires to secure a postwar economic and anti-communist coalition of Western states. In order to create this coalition, the United States did not rely on a single strategy, but a combination of many, rooted in economic initiatives such as the ERC, but grounded by organizations such as NATO. Decades after the conclusion of the Cold War, like other aspects of U.S. defense policy related to U.S. foreign military bases, the efficacy of maintaining defense strategies rooted in Cold War thinking is clearly being tested in combating "unknown contingencies" or international terrorism. As Natalino Ronzitti emphasizes in "US Military Bases in Italy: In Keeping with International Law? Still Needed?," "With the end of the Cold War, the role of US bases in Italy has changed," and in consequence, "a frank and non-ideological discussion should be started on the usefulness of having US military bases on Italian territory."[203]An even more modest call would be to re-evaluate the current NATO SOFA as it relates to international criminal jurisdiction, and finally address the ambiguity contained in the "official duty" clause first raised by several different member-states over 70 years ago.

Furthermore, though examples like Sigonella and the Cavalese disaster illustrate the shortcomings of the NATO SOFA to address issues in Italy, issues stemming from the document appear routinely in other NATO countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany. As Andres

[202] Voetelink, *Status of Forces*, 92.

[203] Natalino Ronzitti, "US Military Bases in Italy: In Keeping with International Law? Still Needed?" *The International Spectator* 43, no. 2 (2008): 93, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720802057141.

Gronimus notes, the NATO SOFA reflects the "entrenched customs of the occupation period."[204] Major Mark D. Welton, serving in the Judge Advocate General Corps of the United States Army and Senior Instruction of the International Law Division wrote in 1988 that "For the Federal Republic of Germany, the assertion of full sovereignty within the framework of the Supplementary Agreement as well as the NATO Status of Forces Agreement is an especially difficult problem" and that both "were a product of the occupation period."[205] His conclusion is especially prescient to the discussion of the larger architecture of U.S. power during and after the Cold War period at the core of this dissertation: "Both sides *must look beyond the text of the agreements to their broader historical and political context* in order to maintain a legal and political environment in the years ahead that will help achieve the goals of all the parties."[206]

Though some, like Aurel Sari, may claim that "the NATO SOFA has served as an effective legal framework for the deployment of large numbers of military forces and associated personnel without a single amendment to its terms," as the events of the Cavalese disaster clearly illustrate, "the provisions of the SOFA and the Bilateral Infrastructural Agreement testify to the U.S. preponderance of power" at the very same time.[207] In 1953, just two years after the agreement, Murray L. Schwartz brought attention to the point that "the Agreement relinquishes no inherent rights of United States forces abroad, but rather affords them more immunity in the NATO countries than they would have had but for the Agreement."[208] Based on the outcomes of the what transpired in places such as Sigonella in 1985 and Cavalese in 1998, one can conclude that such an assessment is still valid decades later.

In light of the disasters detailed here — in addition to others like the 1980 Bologna train station bombing or the "Strategy of Tension" more broadly implemented by the CIA — the argument could even be made that the presence of U.S. forces in Italy have been directly linked to

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[204] Andreas Gronimus, "Allied Security Services in Germany: The NATO SOFA and Supplementary Agreement Seen from a German Perspective," *Military Law Review* 136 (1992): 66.

[205] Mark D. Welton, "The NATO Stationing Agreements in the Federal Republic of Germany: Old Law and New Politics," *Military Law Review* 122 (1988): 115.

[206] Welton, "NATO Stationing Agreements," 116.

[207] Sari, "NATO SOFA at Sixty," 8; Fazzi, "Imperial Constraints," 749.

[208] Schwartz, "International Law and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement," 1111.

the deaths of more Italians than any other foreign forces over the course of the Cold War period.[209] In contrast to the undefinable or quantifiable metric of deterrence constantly referenced by military strategists, the presence of U.S. bases in Italy *has and continues to have* measurably negative effects for the Italian population from the twentieth century onward. Perhaps even more glaringly, the Article 5 provision of the NATO agreement outlining a strategy of Mutual Defense, invoked only once in history *by the United States* after the attacks of September 11, essentially renders the physical presence of bases moot given the modern capabilities of the United States to wage war anywhere in the world within 24 hours.

One of the pilots of a U.S. B-2 bomber who recently flew a 37-hour non-stop mission from U.S. soil to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities commented that "It is kind of weird to get dressed in your own bathroom and then go into combat."[210] But this kind of extensive combat mobility is far from futuristic. In the same *New York Times* article Greg Jaffe highlighted that "The first 30-plus hour B-2 missions took place during the 1999 war in Kosovo. At the time, the idea of flying a combat sortie and returning home in time to pick up the kids from soccer practice was still novel and a bit surreal for those flying."[211] As a product of the postwar era, the legal framework of the NATO SOFA has allowed U.S. troops to skirt responsibility for actions during "official duty" despite their lethal consequences. One wonders if such a legal framework would remain in place if Italian soldiers stationed in South Carolina or California accidently killed U.S. citizens during NATO training missions, while demonstrating that their military could conduct bombing runs across the world from their homes in Milan.

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[209] For more on the general strategy, see Daniele Ganser, "The 'Strategy of Tension' in the Cold War Period," *Journal of 9/11 Studies* 39 (2014): 1–19 and Anna Cento Bull, *Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Nonreconciliation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

[210] Greg Jaffe, "For B-2 Pilots, a 37-Hour Nonstop Mission to Iran and Back," *New York Times*, June 24, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/24/us/politics/b2-pilots-iran.html.

[211] Jaffe, "For B-2 Pilots."

Section V: Conclusion

In 2012, member of the Italian Constitutional Court of Italy, Sabino Cassese, published a "A manifesto" for "New paths for administrative law."[212] Though referencing the changes to administrative law, Cassese articulated several broader conclusions regarding the development and role of law for the twenty-first century. He noted that "Legal scholarship developed as a tool to educate practitioners, mainly lawyers and judges. Legal education must now achieve more than that, as it should also serve policymakers, arbitrators, and managers …. Today, the demands upon it have diversified and require new techniques of analysis, and not one method alone."[213] Just as it is becoming increasingly evident that the study of law cannot proceed into the twenty-first century without more methodological variety — "There is no exclusivity, but rather methodological pluralism (legal, economic, and political analyses of the law)" — we must also be willing to engage with the inverse process of utilizing law to give color to historical developments.[214]

A significant part of utilizing law in an interdisciplinary approach is taking the time to assess not only the normative framework provided by the "letter of the law," i.e., the "law as it is written," but to look at concrete examples of its function in practice. The cases of Sigonella and Cavalese discussed in this chapter reflect that the legally reciprocal aspirations of the NATO SOFA signed in 1951 cannot be divorced from their historical context. Rather, they point to the enduring prominence of U.S. power leveraged through legal means. Cassese's call for the use of a "total law" approach for understanding jurisprudence in the twenty-first century includes the combination of "the study of the law as contained in books (i.e., statutes and statutory instruments)" but also "law in action, of legal conventions, legal practices and customs, history, and legal myths."[215] The functioning of the NATO SOFA of 1952 within the wider context of U.S. basing during the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries in Italy pushes this framework even further outside of the realm of even differing legal methodologies and into an even broader

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[212] Sabino Cassese, "New Paths for Administrative Law: A Manifesto," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 10, no. 3 (2012): 603–13.

[213] Cassese, "New Paths for Administrative Law," 612.

[214] Cassese, "New Paths for Administrative Law," 612.

[215] Cassese, "New Paths for Administrative Law," 612.

interdisciplinary understanding of U.S. power; the implications and impacts of which *also* supersede a more limited legal framework.

In his chapter "Domestic environmental policy and Status of Forces Agreement U.S. military presence and new water pollution risk in Germany," Keisuke Mori looks at the operation of domestic German law within the framework of the NATO SOFA and reached the same conclusion presented in this chapter: "the importance of paying attention to the *operation* of laws. A comparison of legal norms alone is not sufficient as it will overlook not just the way in which a law is put into practice and operated, but also the contingencies brought about by political maneuvering by many actors in parliaments and elsewhere in the political sphere before the law is finally interpreted." [216] Much like analyses of provisions within the NATO SOFA and Italian law, Mori emphasizes that "a comparison of the legal provisions of each country's SOFA are not meaningless, but are partial, and so is looking at the operation of laws in individual countries separately."[217] Lauding the ostensible parity of countries within a legal framework according to a strict reading of the provisions contained in the NATO SOFA ignores that in practice, individual and unilateral actions contrary to established international law — such as when President Reagan diverted a commercial passenger plane to Sigonella in 1985 — reflect vastly different power differentials among "equal" parties.

One may be tempted to dismiss the incidents at Sigonella or Cavalese as aberrations and exceptions to a legal framework that has largely maintained peace between NATO allies for several decades. However, to do so would be to ignore that in many instances within international law, it takes only a single incident in order to establish a new legal precedent that can and *will* be referenced and utilized as justification for similar action in the future. In the case of Sigonella, only a single year later in 1986, Israeli authorities unilaterally intercepted a commercial Libyan plane in an attempt to seize supposed terrorists aboard. One Israeli official commented on the incident afterwards, remarking, "When you do an exceptional thing like this … you had better get results, given the political and diplomatic repercussions" and "What can I say? … We went fishing, and we didn't catch the fish. The people we thought would be on board were not there. It is a pity

[216] Keisuke Mori, "Domestic Environmental Policy," 89.

[217] Keisuke Mori, "Domestic Environmental Policy," 89.

because we were going after some biggies, and if we would have caught them the world would have applauded."[218]

The logic employed by such an opinion reflects the fallout and implications of the episode at Sigonella for how the international community understands and accepts the use of unilateral force that breaks international law. Andrew J. Calica notes that regarding the Israeli action in 1986, "This time, the U.S. government, perhaps in response to its experience in the *Achille-Lauro* affair, refused to accept a Security Council Resolution condemning the interception of the aircraft as wrongful *per se*."[219] Abba Eban, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the Israeli Parliament summed up the Israeli perception of the incident in relation to international law, stating "If that person were on the plane, the free world would hail our action. Since the effort failed, I assume there will be criticism on the grounds of the need to respect the law. It is easier for me to describe that paradox than to solve it."[220] The legal implications of the Sigonella affair, it appears, extended even further into the twenty-first century by enshrining a precedent for intercepting civilian aircraft in efforts to combat terrorism, and for the use of unilateral force in international relations.[221]

In addition to the impact on international legal precedent, it is important to highlight that incidents like those at Sigonella and Cavalese do not represent exceptions within either the NATO

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[218] Thomas L. Friedman, "Israelis Intercept a Libyan Civil Jet and Then Let It Go," *New York Times*, February 5, 1986, 2, 9, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1986/02/05/847386.html?pageNumber=2.

[219] Calica, "Self-Help Is the Best Kind," 422.

[220] Friedman, "Israelis Intercept a Libyan Civil Jet," 2.

[221] For example, Calica, writing in 2004, argued that "the Israeli episodes represented harmless failures; indeed a deterrence argument might even label them as successes. Under the efficient breach theory, the Israeli abductions fall within the bounds of acceptability. The government, intending to defend its security, targeted threats from noncooperative states, thus preserving international order by recognizing and punishing the breach. Therefore, lack of success is not fatal to a self-help attempt under the efficiency justification." Calica, "Self-Help Is the Best Kind," 424. In regard to the lasting legacy of the *Achille Lauro* affair in international law related to terrorism, especially after 2001, Rosario Domínguez-Matés notes that "Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the international community in general and the United States of America in particular have been forced to consider the possibility of terrorist threats or attacks at sea." In consequence, he notes that "The United States of America has become the main bastion for promoting preventive and suppressive measures in this sphere" but in doing so, it "oscillates between seeking international cooperation … and entering into bilateral agreements with certain groups of countries outside the sphere of international organisations or even acting on its own. This multilateralism versus unilateralism dichotomy has raised questions on the significance of such measures and whether they conform to existing norms of international law." Rosario Domínguez-Matés, "From the Achille Lauro to the Present Day: An Assessment of the International Response to Preventing and Suppressing Terrorism at Sea," in *International Legal Dimension of Terrorism*, ed. Pablo Antonio Fernández-Sánchez (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2009), 213–14, https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004170537.i-514.66.

SOFA or other bilateral SOFA agreements between the United States and other countries but are in fact the *norm*. Countless examples of military accidents, rapes, murders, and other crimes can be seen in the court-martial cases and jurisdictional "waivers" issued to the United States by foreign countries. From environmental issues in countries as diverse as Germany, South Korea, and the Philippines, to accidental deaths in places like Okinawa or Italy, these two legal cases in Italy serve as examples of how both the NATO SOFA and other bilateral SOFA agreements function *as they were intended*. Instead of aberrations or exceptions that should be seen as the "cost of doing business" to secure multilateral security, the current iterations of the NATO SOFA (among others) contain within them mechanisms for securing U.S. jurisdiction over troops despite any rhetoric of reciprocity. In 1958, Howard S. Levie described the main method for achieving this goal:

> First, it is provided that when a person subject to United States military jurisdiction is to be tried by a receiving state, the military commander concerned shall 'examine the laws of such state with particular reference to the procedural safeguards contained in the Constitution of the United States' and if, as a result of such examination, he determines that under all the circumstances there is danger that the accused will not be protected because of the absence or denial of such constitutional safeguards, he is directed to request the receiving state to waive its primary right to exercise jurisdiction and to permit the United States to exercise jurisdiction in the case.[222]

Combined with the standard U.S. policy of requesting a waiver for nearly every single crime committed under the auspices of a SOFA agreement (the NATO SOFA included), the result has been that tens of thousands of waivers have been granted over the course of the Cold War period to U.S. soldiers.[223] Furthermore, such waivers routinely result in the outcomes like those of the court-martials for the pilots involved in the Cavalese disaster.

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[222] Howard S. Levie, "The NATO Status of Forces Agreement: Legal Safeguards for American Servicemen," *American Bar Association Journal* 44, no. 4 (April 1958): 322.

[223] Lepper notes that "The U.S. military's experience in Europe suggests that many receiving states will waive their primary jurisdiction unless they have particularly important reasons for asserting it. The United States, in contrast, rarely waives its primary jurisdiction," and "While this does not mean that waivers are never appropriate or that the United States must always secure a waiver of foreign jurisdiction, in practice the maxim 'maximize jurisdiction' is the staff judge advocate's primary guidance." Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 179.

Combined with ambiguity contained in the "official duty" clause enshrined in Article VII of the NATO SOFA, the extensive use and success of the jurisdictional waiver system has, over a period of decades, reinforced the notion that among NATO allies, rhetorical notions of jurisdictional or legal reciprocity obscure a different reality. These examples highlight the importance in evaluating and understanding, in the words of Mori, the *"operation*" of laws rather than simply their content. On a wider and more systemic level, we should remember that the NATO SOFA is widely perceived to "to reconcile the opposing principles of the law of the flag and Territorial sovereignty" and to provide a more equitable agreement of the stationing of troops on foreign soil among "equal" nations.[224] But across the globe, a myriad of different SOFAs exist between the U.S. and other foreign states which contain incredibly varied legal standards, oftentimes affording the United States even more legal privileges than those contained in the NATO SOFA.

At first glance, the exercise of U.S. power represented by the infrastructural role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia, the architectural and urban impact of U.S.-basing-suburbia in South Korea, or the legal inequality contained in the NATO SOFA pale in comparison to more overt military exercises linked to U.S. foreign military bases. However, as Gretchen Heefner concludes, "The American defense apparatus is a massive transnational network," one that "deploys people, goods, and ideas around the world, often in unanticipated ways."[225] If we only look at the most glaring scandals or drastic impacts linked to foreign military bases, we often forget the systemic and subtle ways in which behaviors, legal norms, and relationships have developed over time and over the course of the twentieth century. South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy are all geopolitically and economically powerful countries within the international community in the twenty-first century, but they have also all been shaped in different and varied ways through a network of overseas U.S. military bases within their borders.

Even if the consequences of U.S. military basing presence are not explicit, we cannot forget that "everywhere it has gone, the [U.S.] military has rearranged land and environments; displaced people; shifted economies and cultures; muddied politics."[226] In the case of Italy, the United States

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[224] Ratwatte, "Status of Forces Agreements and State Sovereignty," 202
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[225] Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion," 56.

[226] Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion," 56.

has contributed to changes in all of these areas and more. David Vine concludes that "there may be no more significant a source of U.S. influence in the country in the post–World War II era than the U.S. military base.[227] As this chapter reflects, many of the international legal frameworks related to overseas basing — many of which are still used to this day — are distinctly products of the Cold War era. Their legal structure was designed to maximize jurisdiction over U.S. troops stationed abroad and to secure a level of military access to foreign installations not equaled on U.S. soil. One can only maintain that documents like the NATO SOFA reflect legal reciprocity and fully respect national sovereignty if the text of the agreements is analyzed exclusively, and the historical conditions of their creation and of world history are omitted from analysis. The truth is that as in Korea and in Saudi Arabia, the influence of U.S. bases in Italy has repercussions on domestic politics far beyond their geographic borders.

[227] Vine, "A Pistol on the Table," 133.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

I think we have too much infrastructure overseas and too much permanent infrastructure
—Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley on U.S. foreign basing in 2020

$35.9 Billion
—Amount of money appropriated in the U.S. Department of Defense Budget for Military Construction and Facility Housing programs and Facilities Sustainment Restoration and Modernization (FSRM), 2024

$961.6 Billion – Over 1$ Trillion
—The approved U.S. Department of Defense budget for the 2026 Fiscal Year

When Clausewitz commented that "war is a continuation of politics by other means," he emphasized the need to closely examine the complex interplay of how nations extend, import, and maintain their influence, outliving the fluid boundaries of a geopolitical perspective. This study demonstrates the need to consider all of these aspects of the projection of U.S. power overseas to fully comprehend the complexity of these "other means" in shaping the post–World War II era. Cold War conflicts drove the normalization of concepts such as militarization into popular culture and society, and terrorism has subsequently contributed to "permanent war" in the twenty-first century, revitalizing and retrofitting this Cold War–era military infrastructure for "modern" purposes. U.S. foreign military bases are some of the most important symbols of both the continuity of U.S. grand strategy to maintain global influence abroad, but also how such methods and goals have evolved and grown into the twenty-first century.[1]

[1] U.S. Department of Defense, "Background Briefing on FY 2026 Defense Budget," June 26, 2025, https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4228828/background-briefing-on-fy-2026-defense-budget/. By comparison, the 2025 budget was $849.8 billion. U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request*; The second presidential term of Donald Trump (2025 – present) has cast doubt over the efficacy of the wider U.S. grand strategy of global geopolitics and security. Dombrowski highlights that Richard Haass, the former president on the Council of Foreign Relations, has described Trump's governing style to "ah-hocracy," and has also noted that Donald Trump's populist governing style is at odds with even the concept of a grand strategy, remarking that "Populist grand strategies are unstable and perhaps even impossible." Peter Dombrowski, "Trump, Project 2025 and American Grand Strategy," *Survival* 66, no. 6 (2024): 28, 26–7, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2024.2432191.

In 2001, George Bush commented on the attacks of September 11, describing them as the beginning of "a new and different war."[2] In some ways, this may have been accurate. However, as a 2003 WikiLeaks cable illustrates, the war in Iraq was conducted from familiar territory: "Over 1,000 missions were successfully completed … at … Sigonella … and Aviano supported the largest combat movement of C-17S in history from Italian soil."[3] The case of U.S. military bases provides an excellent prism to expand the methodological and temporal boundaries of analysis that have, at times, unnecessarily restricted our considerations for how U.S. power has evolved in the way that it has over the course of the post–World War II era.

The case of Yongsan Garrison and its history as a site of Japanese colonialism beginning in the twentieth century and its transition to U.S. ownership after 1945 is a case in point. Placing the analysis of the military base in a broader temporal perspective reveals the importance of looking beyond traditional Cold War date ranges both before and after the Korean conflict. Adopting the methodological perspective of architecture and urbanism helps us understand the ways in which the development and growth of U.S. military bases have played a fundamental role in South Korean land development into the present day and have contributed to the contemporary housing crisis in the region. The case of Yongsan also shows how the process of foreign military base closures brings to the surface issues such as legal culpability for environmental contamination and the highly political and uncertain nature of converting sites of military bases into civilian and urban architecture — items rarely considered in standard treatments of Cold War histories of the Korean peninsula.

A similar challenge to a traditional Cold War temporality, the role of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and their activities in Saudi Arabia between the decades of the 1940s to the 1990s, reflects the infrastructural power of the United States military in the Middle East. The case of the Corps in Saudi Arabia emphasizes the importance of re-evaluating historical periodization and temporality by demonstrating that even in the absence of access to an official military base, the U.S. military significantly contributed to the development of the modern Saudi state between the periods of "official" access to the Dhahran Air Base in 1962 to the return of U.S. forces *en masse* in 1990. The actions of the Corps highlight the importance of the role of unofficial

[2] White House and U.S. Department of State, *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days* (Coalition Information Centers: Washington, London, Islamabad), June 2002, https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm

[3] U.S. Embassy Rome, "Review of Italy's Contributions to OIF."

diplomacy conducted by soldiers, engineers, and their families during these periods in growing and developing political relationships between the United States and Saudi Arabia. The wide array of cultural, political, and infrastructure projects pursued by the Corps emphasizes the need to re-evaluate our definition and understanding of military "power" to include a wider array of activates beyond the presence of physical military bases.

In a similar manner, the case study of Italy demonstrates the need to consider international law, and in particular the NATO SOFA, within the wider context of the exertion of U.S. power abroad. Assessing the NATO SOFA alongside historical and political Cold War context allows insights into the imbalance of power relations, defined in economic, political, military, and legal terms, between European countries and the United States. The two high-profile incidents of Sigonella and Cavalese illustrate how the NATO SOFA functions in practice, detailing how, despite the "reciprocal" nature of wording of such international agreements, the United States has used foreign military bases as platforms to erode the legitimacy of international law.

These three case studies, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy, demonstrate that the network of U.S. foreign military bases across the world are more than the sum of their parts. The ways in which we analyze and place the history of U.S. foreign military bases within Cold War history has implications for how we assess their effectiveness today as well as how we understand the breadth and scope of U.S. power abroad. For many historians, the importance of ruptures or continuity within the historical record demand significant attention. They can aid in our understanding of the world around us and provide temporal boundaries to ground our analyses of historical events and changes. However, these temporal and academic choices have significance beyond organization; they affect the way that we conceive of the world around us and how it has changed over time. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza emphasize that "as we consider the Cold War in public, private, political, *and* cultural terms, we also need to rethink the supposed end of the Cold War."[4] Uncritical acceptance of temporal boundaries regarding historical periodization quietly reinforces a master narrative of change that may not be true for all individuals, communities, nations, or experiences.

Just as cartographers draw lines on a map to allow them the ability to fix a boundary between political or cultural entities, historians use a similar shorthand: the French Revolution was

[4] Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza, eds., *De-centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 7. Emphasis in the original.

from 1789–1799. World War II ended in 1945. The Cold War ended in 1991. These are all universal reference points in the historical record. But just as these dates and their centrality ground our understanding of world history, they simultaneously present a homogenized and incomplete vision of world affairs. In 1991 the dissolution of the Soviet Union rocked the political foundations of the world, but that fateful year did nothing to shake the foundations of U.S. bases in Korea, Okinawa, Djibouti, or Italy. Viewing global and Cold War history through the lens of foreign military bases opens the door to a more nuanced approach than the standard view of a binary Cold War between superpowers that began, ended, and remains, a relic of the twentieth century. This study shows that, in fact, the picture is closer to Joseph W. Brown's understanding that "American grand strategic behavior over the last 30 years demonstrates a high degree of *continuity,* at least with regard to its foreign basing network."[5] Reconceptualizing the temporal boundaries of what we consider as part of the Cold War allows us to more clearly see the ways in which U.S. power abroad did not disappear into "peace dividends" often referenced by Bush and Thatcher. As Heefner noted in 2022, "Anyone expecting immediate and quick realignment of US forces after the collapse of the Soviet Union was disappointed."[6]

Using U.S. foreign bases as a focal point and methodological lens, this research demonstrates that "Lasting evidence of the 'cultural Cold War,' as well as lingering practices that originated as weapons of superpower politics" very much "still shape contemporary political discourse."[7] From the U.S. bases with golf courses and water slides on the Korean peninsula to the "NATO" bases at Sigonella or Vicenza in Italy to the massive fortifications like King Khalid Military City in Saudi Arabia, the evidence suggests a far more nuanced perspective of the continuity of Cold War history beyond 1991. For some historians, the Cold War ended in 1991. The size and scope of the U.S. foreign military bases that still span the globe might argue otherwise.

This research also argues for the decentralization of U.S-Soviet binary analyses to the Cold War. Through the use of interdisciplinary and global approaches, all three case studies considered in this work reflect the fact that though the United States has utilized different methods to exert

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[5] Brown, *Politics of Foreign Military Basing*, 232. Emphasis added.

[6] Heefner, "Overseas Bases and the Expansion," 75.

[7] Pieper Mooney and Lanza, *De-centering Cold War History*, 7.

power in differing contexts, these processes were, and are, both contested and evolving. In fact, as the case of Saudi Arabia suggests, the U.S. presence and influence in the Kingdom during the twentieth century has contributed significantly to Saudi financial dominance in U.S. markets in the twenty-first, emphasizing the importance of both expanding temporal boundaries of analysis of Cold War phenomena, but also the importance of evaluating several case studies in conjunction.

If one is singularly focused on cases with extensive and large-scale U.S. base presence such as South Korea, Japan, or Germany, and draws more general conclusions from these experiences, the ability for a more nuanced understanding of the varied types of base relationships is lost. A approach that considers distinct geographic, methodological, and national case studies together, contributes to the growing body of Cold War literature from the 2010s which is increasingly assessing the conflict "as a globally interwoven space and period of conflict."[8] Individual case studies of military bases within their national and regional context are valuable pieces of scholarship, especially as we consider these national cases in conjunction for what they can reveal about the scale and scope of U.S. military involvement in different parts of the world. As Albert Manke, Kateřina Březinová, and Laurin Blecha conclude, "multipolar and decentralized approaches allow us now to make the complexity of this conflictual period more tangible."[9]

Because the work represented here discusses countries such as Saudi Arabia, that are not traditionally analyzed within base studies, and because it adopts different methodological lenses such as urban architecture and law to analyze countries with already established scholarship on base politics, it fits neatly within the niche of recent work done by Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi in their edited volume *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of US Overseas Bases* (2020). Their work evaluated bases within "the context of a certain country or area" through the use of different national case studies to reflect "the diversity of base politics" and at the same time to highlight "the dynamism of military bases from the viewpoint of the entire global disposition of bases."[10] The work presented in this research builds on this premise and

[8] Albert Manke, Kateřina Březinová, and Laurin Blecha, "Conceptual Readings into the Cold War: Towards Transnational Approaches from the Perspective of Latin American Studies in Eastern and Western Europe," *Estudos Históricos* (Rio de Janeiro) 30 (2017): 206.

[9] Manke, Březinová, and Blecha, "Conceptual Readings into the Cold War," 206.

[10] Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi, "Conclusion," in *Exploring Base Politics: How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases*, ed. Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi (New York: Routledge, 2020), 182.

extends both its geographic and methodological foundations to better understand both bases themselves and the Cold War at the same time.

Part of the reason why interdisciplinary perspectives and global approaches are fruitful for research of this kind is that in utilizing such methods, we are able to see that concepts such as military power are too narrowly conceived in the current literature regarding U.S. basing. For example, recent works such as Jonathan Stevenson's *Overseas Bases and US Strategy: Optimising America's Military Footprint* (2022) begin by remarking that "Since the United States became an extroverted world power during and after the Second World War, overseas military bases have been the bedrock of its nuclear and conventional deterrents and its ability to project military power and exert political influence."[11]

A significant portion of base literature is centered around these ideas of *military* power as it relates to troop strength or munitions levels and how effectively such forces could conceivably respond to a given threat. This portion of research is concerned with policy proscription and international relations. The other major camp of research is centered around the *political* nature of overseas basing, including analyses of basing negotiations, base protests and resistance, the impacts of bases on local economies, and more recently, environmental impacts of such facilities. Current literature on overseas U.S. basing is actively expanding the scope of focus in terms of geography and methodology, and in turn conceptualizations of U.S. power abroad are expanding into different fields.

The research in this study presents three examples which contribute to this expanding focus and re-evaluation of the extent of U.S. power through foreign bases in the twentieth century. In Saudi Arabia, infrastructural power and informal diplomacy were vital to overall U.S. grand strategy in securing and maintaining a pro-U.S. ally in the Middle East. In Korea, the ability to retain large portions of land in one of the most densely populated countries in the world for U.S. bases illustrates a power over the growth and development of the South Korean state in architectural and economic terms. Finally, in Europe, the U.S. power over the operation of international law intersects with the role of U.S. foreign military bases in ways that are not immediately obvious. The culmination of these examples points to the need to continue to question rigidly defined categories of methodological analysis.

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[11] Jonathan Stevenson, *Overseas Bases and U.S. Strategy: Optimising America's Military Footprint* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 9.

The topic of U.S. foreign military bases is one that is not likely to wane in importance in the near future given the DoD's insistence on keeping "pace" with Chinese foreign investments in Africa and the Pacific region. The perennial focus on "modernization" and "force readiness" reflected in the approved 2026 DoD budget ($961.6 billion) means that the funds invested in "Base Realignment and Closure" can simply never keep pace with new construction year after year.[12] Future research will likely have to consider the increasing Chinese interest in expanding overseas influence through infrastructure development, economic investment, and military base construction.[13]

An article from the *Global Times* from November 8, 2023, discussed a recent publication by the U.S. think tank *Foreign Affairs* which argued that "China's investments in strategic overseas ports have potential dual-use, specifically for commercial and military purposes" and that "China's heavy investment in the world's most-connected ports highlights its strong influence over the supply chains of global trade."[14] It concluded that China's goal did not "lie in building newer and bigger naval bases but in its varied degrees of investment and ownership in the world's busiest and most-connected ports, which underpin the global flow of goods."[15]

Despite this argument, recent literature in the field of base studies suggests that China and Russia have begun to expand their desires for overseas military bases in the twenty-first century.[16] Just like the United States understood at the conclusion of the Second World War, China appears to understand that economic and military access are two sides of the same coin. The construction of foreign military bases, and their connections to sovereignty, economic access, and international politics intersect in highly relational ways. Future research should consider the growing desire of

[12] U.S. Department of Defense, "Background Briefing on FY 2026 Defense Budget."

[13] The most important Chinese initiative in recent years has been the "Belt and Road Initiative." For a general overview of the key details of the project, see: Yiping Huang, "Understanding China's Belt & Road Initiative: Motivation, Framework and Assessment," *China Economic Review* 40 (2016): 314–21.

[14] Guo Yuandan and Liu Xuanzun, "Latest US Hype on China's Overseas Military Bases 'Self-Contradictory, Untenable,'" *Global Times*, November 8, 2023, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1301477.shtml.

[15] Guo and Liu, "Latest US Hype on China's Overseas Military Bases."

[16] Brown notes that China and Russia have, in the twenty-first century, been "competing with the United States for basing access and that each state had developed a unique approach to constructing its foreign basing network." Brown, *Politics of Foreign Military Basing*, 232.

other global and regional powers to gain military access and assess the ways in which these have developed both over the course of the Cold War period, and into the present day.

Research on SOFAs between the United States and foreign countries has yielded valuable information for how different legal regimes have developed between different states. However, there has been little research comparing countries with an official SOFA, with that of a country that has a less-official legal arrangement with for military access. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, which have had an extensive military relationship with the United States for many decades, still lacks any form of SOFA.[17] Comparisons of legal status between those offered by SOFAs with other formal or informal legal agreements between the U.S. and host states would provide further depth to our understanding of both power relations between states, but also the unique trajectory and development of domestic and international legal regimes.

These issues also suggest the need for us to expand both the geography and the methodological approach to the projection of geopolitical power. As one example, Colombia has had an extensive history and relationship with the United States both during and after the Cold War, and the long-standing legacy of military relationships between the U.S. and Colombia offer the opportunity to apply differing methodological frameworks to understand the extent and scope of U.S. military impacts in different parts of the world.[18] In particular the economic,

[17] For example, as Lepper notes, "Although the United States has had a long, friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Government has steadfastly refused to negotiate a SOFA. The only agreements that govern this relationship are a 1953 agreement and a 1977 exchange of diplomatic notes." Lepper, "Primer on Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction," 181.

[18] For several good starting points regarding the U.S. military presence and involvement in Colombia both during and after the Cold War, see the following: Stokes, "Why the End of the Cold War Doesn't Matter;" Doug Stokes, *America's Other War: Terrorizing Colombia* (London: Zed Books, 2005); James Robinson, *"A Normal Latin American Country? A Perspective on Colombian Development*" (unpublished manuscript, 2005), https://scholar.harvard.edu/sites/scholar.harvard.edu/files/jrobinson/files/jr_normalcountry.pdf; Jennifer S. Holmes, Sheila Amin Gutierrez De Pineres, and Kevin M. Curtin, "Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis," *Latin American Politics and Society* 48, no. 3 (2006): 157–84; James Trapani, "Seeing 'Reds' in Colombia: Reconsidering the 'Bogotazo', 1948," *Esboços: Histórias em Contextos Globais* 23, no. 36 (2016): 352–72; Tobias Franz, "Plan Colombia: Illegal Drugs, Economic Development and Counterinsurgency – A Political Economy Analysis of Colombia's Failed War," Development Policy Review 34, no. 4 (2016): 563–91; and Andrew Thomson, *Outsourced Empire: How Militias, Mercenaries, and Contractors Support U.S. Statecraft* (London: Pluto Press, 2018). The report published in 2015 by the Colombian Historical Commission regarding political violence and the role of the United States in the country before, during, and after the Cold War is another valuable resource: Renán Vega Cantor, *Injerencia de los Estados Unidos, contrainsurgencia y terrorismo de Estado* (Bogotá: Informe de Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015), accessed at https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r33458.pdf.

environmental, and legal impact of U.S. basing presence or negotiation on indigenous communities around the world would provide yet another dimension to the study of U.S. basing.[19]

Scholars such as Cynthia Enloe also argue for the need to bring attention to the importance of looking at international politics through a feminist lens. We should be adopting similar understandings and focuses to the study of U.S. basing in our attempts to comprehend the complexity of the projection of U.S. power overseas. Enloe's methodological and conceptual perspectives on the study of politics apply directly to wider definitions of U.S. power abroad and to foreign basing that dynamic: "If we don't take women's experiences — in all their diversity seriously, …we risk, I think, underestimating how much of our lives are indeed political. We thereby risk being globally naive. That is, we are naive if we underestimate how much effort and how many political resources are invested every day in shaping international politics. Underestimating the amounts and kinds of power operating in the world is the hallmark of *non*feminist analysis."[20] In regard to the study of U.S. foreign military bases, underestimating the "amounts and kinds of power" at play in the history and current presence of these facilities both undercuts the extent of their impacts, and their influence in the world today.

All empires, informal or otherwise, by definition consist of the export of some combination of control — military, economic, legal, political, and cultural. The Romans built roads. The British established trade routes. If trade followed the flag, it also brought in its wake contested areas of law, politics, and governance. While not all these fluid areas of influence may always rise to the level of Clausewitz's focus on war as the "continuation of political intercourse by other means," these cases show that the projection of U.S. power around the globe is underpinned by a complex and comprehensive system with local variations replete with contrasting and contested goals between national and local communities. Trying to understand how the evolution and network of U.S. power exists around the globe today requires both a reflection of its origins but also the purpose that it serves today in the twenty-first century. The militarization of contemporary society coupled with a never-ending fear of an impending "unforeseen contingency" in the form of modern terrorism has breathed new life into the Cold War network of overseas bases. David Vine concludes that "the base world is a perfect, if horrifying, symbol of how the military-industrial complex is

[19] For example, a recent work that discusses the role of indigenous communities in base protesting is Vine, "No Bases?".

[20] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 354.

like Frankenstein's monster, taking on a life of its own and gaining 'unwarranted' influence thanks to the spending it commands."[21]

The irony of Frankenstein is that he was brilliant at creating a living creature from many disparate parts. Once they were joined together, they took on a life, no longer under the control of their creator. It is indeed a cautionary tale for the global network of bases that the United States has created; but in this story, there is no end in sight. In the words of Mary Shelley, "Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change."[22]

[21] Vine, *Base Nation*, 331.

[22] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1888), 278, accessed via Internet Archive, https://ia803405.us.archive.org/12/items/shelley-1888-frankenstein/Shelley_1888_Frankenstein.pdf.

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