



UNSC

The United Nations Security Council

Agenda: The Geopolitical Implications of Military Bases in Foreign Nations

Letters From The Executive Board

Director

Honourable Delegates (and all other honourable readers),

I'm Vedant Choudhury, a 10th grader at B.D. Somani International School, and your director for UNSC at BDMUN 2024. Welcome to a conference; rather a committee where I hope to foster spirited, insightful, and engaging debate. As an avid munner myself, I relish the experience of dialectically rigorous and heated discourse in every conference I attend. To me, every MUN is an opportunity to collaboratively (but argumentatively of course) solve some of the most pressing problems of today's time.

It's been 2 years since I first ventured into the world of MUN, and I believe I've had an affinity for it ever since. It was nerve-wracking; entering that large room filled with delegates, but the second I stepped up to deliver my first GSL, I took the conference right into my stride. I vividly remember that speech. I was in UNSC, talking about the Russia-Ukraine war as the delegate of Ukraine. "Russia were the oppressors, and Ukraine were the oppressed." This was my pivotal line, which I had pieced together in my head just a few minutes ago. When I sat down to the sound of some energetic table-banging, an éclair got thrown to my table. I remember that unmistakable, irrepressible feeling of pride as a young 7th grader, having impressed in front of much older and more experienced chairs and delegates. The initial intimidation and anxiety I felt soon gave way to a sense of optimism, bolstered confidence, and even joy! This was my stepping stone into the world of MUN, and since then I've never looked back.

On a more personal level, I'm a football fanatic (#ggmu for all you fellow football enthusiasts out there). I could spend an entire weekend just playing, watching, or analysing the game. I also consider myself a musician, and am incredibly immersed into the world of music. I play the piano, the guitar, sing, compose, and even produce music. On a silent, peaceful weekday or weekend night, you might even find me buried in a book, with 'The Giver', by Lois Lowry being one of the most insightful ones I've ever read. Couple this with my insatiable desire to learn the flags of all 197 countries (195 officially recognized by the UN, plus the Vatican and Palestine) through a game called sporcle (my high score is 173), and there you are. That's me. Feel free to

informally approach me any time outside of committee for esoteric discussions (or debates) on football, music, books, or even philosophy. I'll be happy to oblige.

I digress though, so back to MUN: It's not a chore, but a hobby that I actively partake in and enjoy. All delegates reading this: you would have likely encountered the topic of foreign military bases, or perhaps just foreign military presence in global news, especially as tensions rise over issues of sovereignty, security, and global stability. The presence of these bases often sparks debates about their role—whether as protectors or provocateurs—and raises concerns over human rights, environmental impacts, and local autonomy. However, it also guarantees host nations with foreign security, and boosts their economy. As delegates, it will be up to you to explore these complexities, aiming to create a framework that respects national sovereignty while addressing the need for global security, ultimately fostering peace, stability, and cooperation among nations. I would be looking for a fairly well-researched delegate, but one with impeccable paperwork, and most witty questions and comments, coupled with bold, impactful speeches. However, to all you newcomers (and even experienced debaters) out there, don't forget to have fun, and don't be overwhelmed by the prospect of this conference. After all, we're all here for an enjoyable experience! My advice would be to really put yourself in the shoes of your country, and embrace the spirit and mindset of the nation. Work hard, and find a moment of inspiration to produce that memorable, monumental, moment in committee. Keep in mind, though, that consistency is key, so you must strive to sustain your performance for the entirety of the conference.

I would like to leave you all off with some food for thought; some astute guidance that you should take to heart. As the authoritarian despot, supreme leader Kim Jong Un quotes: "A man who dreads trials and difficulties cannot become a revolutionary." So delegates, push through this trial, and capitalise on your opportunity to pioneer transformative change. Each time individuals from around the globe attempt to solve our world's most complex and multifaceted problems, diplomacy has and continues to thrive on ambiguity; however as delegates, confronted with the pressing question of foreign military bases, you must strive to provide pragmatic and actionable solutions. Your ideas have the power to change the lives of millions and reshape the geopolitical and military landscape of the globe.

Envision the future. Take the initiative. Be the revolutionary. Good luck delegates!

Vedant Choudhury (vedant.1213057@bdsint-students.org)

Director, United Nations Security Council

Assistant Director

Dear Delegates of the United Nations Security Council,

I am thrilled to welcome you to this year's session of the UNSC at BDMUN. As your Assistant Director, it's my pleasure and responsibility to support you throughout the conference, ensuring that each of you has a meaningful, engaging, and impactful experience.

This year, we have the unique opportunity to address the geopolitical impact of foreign military bases. These issues demand your thoughtful consideration, critical thinking, and collaborative spirit to develop solutions that not only address the root causes but also promote lasting peace and security on a global scale.

Throughout this journey, I encourage each of you to stay focused on representing your assigned country's interests while remaining open to compromise and dialogue. The UNSC is known for its intensive debate, high-stakes decisions, and significant global impact. Your role in this committee requires you to think on your feet, understand the nuances of international diplomacy, and demonstrate leadership in proposing and supporting resolutions.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. I am here to help you navigate your research, understand the rules of procedure, and develop the skills necessary to make this a rewarding experience. Let's work together to make this session memorable, not only for the outcomes we achieve but for the camaraderie and growth that come with it.

Looking forward to an exciting, collaborative, and thought-provoking committee!

Warm regards,

Suhana Dabir (suhana.1718059@bdsint-students.org)

Assistant Director, United Nations Security Council

BDMUN 2024

Assistant Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to BDMUN! My name is Aarin Yusuf, and I am honoured to be your assistant director for the United Nations Security Council this year. I am excited to see the passion and dedication you bring to this challenging committee.

The Geopolitical Implications of Foreign Military Bases is a critical issue that shapes international relations, security dynamics, and sovereignty concerns around the world. As we explore this subject, I encourage you to consider the intricate balance between power, diplomacy, and the interests of nations, as well as the humanitarian and ethical implications involved.

In tackling this topic, my advice to each of you is to approach the debate with an open mind, listen to the perspectives of others, and think strategically about potential solutions. Remember, a successful delegate combines solid research with adaptability and diplomacy.

Wishing you the best of luck as you navigate intense discussions and negotiations. Let's make this conference both meaningful and memorable!

Warm regards,

Aarin Yusuf (aarin.1213095@bdsint-students.org)

Assistant Director, United Nations Security Council

BDMUN 2024

Introduction

As the establishment of foreign military bases has grown in importance as part of state foreign policy circa the last century, there is much debate as to whether these bases contribute to geopolitical tensions or increase security.

Do foreign military bases contribute to global geopolitical tensions, undermining spheres of influence and leading to issues like neocolonialism or economic blackmail, or are they still essential components of international diplomacy and mutually agreed foreign responsibilities to safety and stability?

The very first implementation of foreign military bases can be traced back to ancient Greece during periods of maritime warfare. During that period, they played a pivotal role in securing the strength and stability of Greek kingdoms by allowing the establishment of spheres of influence

around the world. After the 20th century, with the passing of World War I and II and the rise of the Cold War, the establishment of foreign military bases adopted the role that they are used for today. However, it could also be argued that the question of their necessity was brought up during the same period, since during the Cold War many argued that the USA's vast international footprint instigated conflict between them and the Soviet Union, thus increasing geopolitical tension and creating an environment of duress.

Nowadays, foreign military bases are part of a mechanism spanning continents, which works one hand to maintain the dominance of the great powers of the world, but also securing the independence of the smaller. Foreign military bases have become vital for the survival and necessity of NATO and the European Union, as well as the current developments between Ukraine and Russia. Their importance is clearly at play now with the latter conflict which has been an indication of how military bases may, in fact, damage foreign relations and increase conflict, thus causing great doubt of whether they truly ensure safety. The issue goes beyond just military conflicts, such as economic threats causing host nations to be forced to comply with countries that are providing them funding for bases, extraterritorial legal protection for military or government personnel and also the economic damage caused by extended periods of military presence and weapons testing. Today, military bases overseas are controlled by legally binding agreements reached between the host and base nations, such as SOFAs (Status of Force Agreements), and DCAs (Defence Cooperation Agreements). Depending on their size and infrastructure, they can be used as administrative, communications, military, and intelligence support.

Overall, this committee seeks to discuss whether foreign military bases cause geopolitical tensions or increase security and aims to provide pragmatic and diplomatic solutions to this very pressing matter through rapid and intense debate. Delegates must collaborate and come up with solutions that can benefit global security and allow for sovereignty.

Role of Foreign Military Bases

Foreign military bases have become a key element of military strategy employed by nations all over the world. In today's world, they are used to stage combat and non combat operations on foreign soil. A military base is a structure built by an army or one of its various branches to host military equipment and troops while also facilitating training and operations to achieve a country's national security goals. Military air bases are the hub from which distant destinations for military missions are reached. As such, they are vital for the reliable support and operability of armed forces. This makes them a target for symmetrical and asymmetrical attacks.

Countries' use of foreign military bases is primarily supported by strategic objectives. In the past, major powers built overseas military outposts for further territorial gains, control over distant resources for the economic advantage of the state, invasion plans, and competition with rival states.

Foreign military bases serve as the main framework of current military activities. Military installations typically facilitate projections of international power, project global spheres of influence and provide the logistical framework necessary for swift response to any important military operation. Such installations additionally host various active military personnel and weaponry, including nuclear deterrents. Furthermore, some overseas installations function as information gathering infrastructure and recon activities. Another role of overseas military installations is to discourage possible threats. Army installations function as physical indicators of national capability to combat possible threats by international aggressors. The goal of such installations is to combat international aggressors while also reassuring and increasing the safety and stability of allies. Moreover, foreign military bases act as a means of safeguarding national interests. The construction of military outposts is often driven by the necessity to protect one's own interests and function as a force of peace and stability.

While this sounds rather positive, military bases do have the potential to increase geopolitical tensions between countries, and there are many negatives as well. Some negative effects of foreign military bases are that they can lead to strained relations between the host country and the nation establishing the base, often fostering local resentment. The presence of foreign military personnel may also bring about cultural clashes and can be perceived as a violation of national sovereignty. Additionally, these bases may contribute to environmental degradation, as military operations can impact the local ecosystem through pollution and resource consumption. Hosting foreign bases may inadvertently make the host country a target in conflicts, as adversaries may see the bases as extensions of the foreign nation's power. Moreover, foreign bases can lead to economic dependencies, where the host country's economy becomes reliant on military spending and job creation linked to the base, potentially causing economic instability if the base were to close.

Historical Background

Foreign military bases have historically been vital tools for empires and nations seeking to secure influence, protect trade routes, and establish spheres of control far from their homelands. From ancient civilizations to modern global superpowers, these installations have facilitated projection of power and defence across borders. In the 20th century, with the two World Wars and the Cold

War, the significance and scale of foreign military bases grew rapidly, becoming integral fixtures of international security and diplomacy. This timeline outlines major developments in the evolution of foreign military bases around the world.

Early 20th Century and World Wars

1903 – U.S. Establishes Guantanamo Bay, Cuba: As part of the Platt Amendment, Cuba leases Guantanamo Bay to the U.S., marking one of the first long-term foreign military bases by a modern power.

1914-1918 – World War I: European powers, the U.S., and Japan establish temporary bases globally to secure supply lines and support military operations. These bases highlight the strategic importance of logistics and set a precedent for future conflicts.

1939-1945 – World War II: Allied and Axis powers set up extensive bases in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific as staging grounds. By the war's end, the U.S., UK, and USSR maintained overseas bases to protect their post-war interests, while Germany and Japan lost all foreign bases.

Cold War and the Rise of Superpower Bases (1945-1960s)

1945-1947 – Beginning of the Cold War: The U.S. and USSR retain and expand bases in Europe and Asia, respectively, as they vie for influence. Western bases in Germany and Soviet bases in Eastern Europe mark the divide.

1949 – Creation of NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization establishes a formal defence alliance, supporting U.S. and NATO bases across Europe. This leads to large installations in Germany, Italy, and the UK, serving as strategic hubs against Soviet forces.

1955 – Warsaw Pact and Soviet Bases in Eastern Europe: The USSR forms the Warsaw Pact and expands bases in Eastern Bloc countries such as Poland, East Germany, and Hungary, reinforcing control over its allies.

1959 – Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro seizes power, and Cuba becomes an ally of the USSR, marking a new Soviet foothold in the Western Hemisphere with bases and naval support.

Vietnam War Era and Anti-Base Movements (1960s-1970s)

1965-1973 – Vietnam War: The U.S. builds bases in Southeast Asia to support its war effort, with installations in South Vietnam and Thailand. Anti-base protests emerge in Thailand and the Philippines, signalling local resistance to foreign military presence.

1966 – France Withdraws from NATO Military Command: French President Charles de Gaulle removes NATO and U.S. bases from France, reclaiming sovereignty and underscoring political tensions over foreign installations.

1973 – End of Vietnam War: Anti-base sentiment rises globally, prompting the U.S. and other countries to reassess their overseas presence and close bases in Southeast Asia.

Middle East Strategy and Shifts in Foreign Policy (1970s-1980s)

1979 – Iranian Revolution: The U.S. loses its bases in Iran following the Shah's ouster, leading to increased focus on Gulf bases in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain as regional tensions escalate.

1980 – Carter Doctrine and Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF): The U.S. establishes RDJTF and expands bases in the Gulf region, reinforcing its presence to protect oil supplies and counter Soviet influence.

1983 – Lebanon Bombing: A suicide attack on U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut highlights the vulnerability of foreign bases to terrorist threats, prompting revised security protocols worldwide.

End of the Cold War and Strategic Reassessment (1990s)

1989-1991 – End of the Cold War: The dissolution of the USSR and German reunification lead to the closure of Soviet and NATO bases in Eastern Europe, as many installations are repurposed for peacekeeping missions.

1991 – Closure of U.S. Bases in the Philippines: Amid anti-base sentiment, the Philippines opts not to renew U.S. base leases, signalling a shift toward rotational deployments instead of permanent foreign installations.

1992 – Environmental Accountability: Rising concerns about environmental degradation prompt governments, particularly the U.S., to adopt standards for minimising environmental impacts at overseas bases.

Post-9/11 Era and Expansion of Middle East Bases (2001-2010s)

2001 – 9/11 Attacks: In response to global terrorism, the U.S. and NATO allies increase military presence in the Middle East, establishing bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar, with a focus on counter-terrorism.

2002 – Guantanamo Bay as Detention Facility: Guantanamo Bay becomes a detention centre for terror suspects, sparking international debate on human rights and the use of foreign bases for extrajudicial detention.

2003 – Iraq Invasion and Base Expansion: Coalition forces set up numerous bases in Iraq, leading to scrutiny over the cost and impact of long-term occupation.

Shift to Asia and Growing Regional Tensions (2010s-Present)

2012 – Pivot to Asia: The U.S. announces a strategic pivot to Asia, strengthening alliances with Japan, Australia, and the Philippines in response to rising Chinese influence.

2014 – Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreements: Countries like the Philippines sign agreements with the U.S., allowing for rotational access rather than permanent installations to counterbalance regional threats.

2015-Present – China's South China Sea Militarization: China begins constructing artificial islands with military infrastructure, intensifying U.S. and regional nations' concerns over territorial sovereignty and security in Asia.

Recent Developments and Heightened Geopolitical Tensions (2020s)

2022 – Russian Invasion of Ukraine: NATO increases its troop presence in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland and the Baltics, rekindling Cold War-style tensions over NATO's eastern expansion.

2022 – Quad and AUKUS Alliances: Deepening cooperation among the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India (Quad) and the AUKUS alliance highlights the Indo-Pacific's growing significance, with discussions of new bases and joint deployments to counter China's influence.

International Law, Policies, and Agreements on Military Bases

Status Of Force Agreements (SOFAs)

Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) are treaties that define the legal status of foreign military personnel stationed in a host country. These agreements typically outline the rights and responsibilities of the foreign troops, including jurisdictional issues, criminal accountability, and the extent of local laws applicable to them. Additionally, they affect status, entry and departure from the host nation, military training within host nation territory, taxation, import and export laws, driving privileges, employment, mail, schooling, housing and much more.

SOFAs are crucial in maintaining a balance between the host nation's sovereignty and the operational needs of foreign forces, ensuring that both parties understand their legal obligations and protections while fostering cooperation in defence matters.

An example is the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, which was originally signed in 1951, provides the basis for the legal status of military, U.S. civilian employees and dependents who are stationed on orders in NATO partner countries.

Individuals carrying an official ID card issued by the sending state, and are responsible for learning and obeying local laws, registering vehicles with the relevant army or military, and having a SOFA certificate in their passport to prove their entitlement to live and travel within the host nation.

Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs)

Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs) are bilateral or multilateral treaties that establish frameworks for military collaboration between states. These agreements often cover a range of activities, including joint training exercises, intelligence sharing, and logistical support. DCAs aim to enhance interoperability between armed forces and strengthen strategic partnerships, thereby contributing to regional stability and security. They can also facilitate the establishment of military bases and sharing of other infrastructure necessary for defence operations.

An example is the bilateral DCA between Sweden and the United States, which entered into force on 15 August 2024. This paved the way for even closer cooperation, both bilaterally and within the framework of NATO and its agreements.

Sovereignty and Non-Intervention Principles in the UN Charter

The principles of sovereignty and non-intervention are fundamental tenets of international law, enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Sovereignty refers to the authority of a state to govern itself without external interference, while the non-intervention principle prohibits states from intervening in the internal affairs of other states. Article 2(1) of the UN Charter emphasises the equality of all member states, asserting that each has the right to self-determination and governance free from outside influence. This principle is reinforced by Article 2(4), which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, thereby establishing a legal framework that upholds state sovereignty.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has consistently affirmed the non-intervention principle as part of customary international law. In its ruling in *Nicaragua v. United States* (1986), the ICJ underscored that "the principle forbids all States or groups of States to intervene directly or indirectly in the internal or external affairs of other States." This case highlighted that any form of coercion—whether military, economic, or political—constitutes a violation of this principle, emphasising that states must respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Finally, while exceptions exist—such as for actions authorised by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII for maintaining international peace—the general prohibition against intervention remains a cornerstone of international relations.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Geneva Conventions

International Humanitarian Law (IHL), primarily embodied in the Geneva Conventions, governs conduct during armed conflicts to protect individuals who are not participating in hostilities. The 4 Geneva Conventions were adopted in 1949 in response to the atrocities of World War II and have since been ratified by all 196 states, making them a universal legal framework. Each Convention addresses specific categories of individuals affected by armed conflict, aiming to minimise suffering. Compliance with IHL is essential for maintaining humanitarian standards in warfare and ensuring accountability for violations through mechanisms such as war crimes tribunals.

In addition to the original Conventions, two Additional Protocols were adopted in 1977, with a third added in 2005. These protocols further expand protections under IHL, of victims in international armed conflict, non-international armed conflicts (such as civil wars), providing protections for individuals not participating in hostilities, and establishing a distinctive emblem for medical services (the Red Crystal) alongside the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

International Environmental Law

International Environmental Law (IEL) is a branch of public international law focused on the protection of the environment and the regulation of human activities that impact it, aimed at addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. It establishes frameworks for cooperation among states to protect natural resources and promote sustainable development. Key agreements include the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, which require states to commit to specific environmental standards and actions to mitigate ecological harm.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are crucial tools within IEL. They facilitate cooperation among countries on specific environmental issues. MEAs can take various forms, including conventions, protocols, and declarations. The most prominent MEA is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), establishing a framework for international cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

UN Peacekeeping Forces (UNPKF) Bases in Conflict Zones

United Nations Peacekeeping Forces (UNPKF) operate in conflict zones to help maintain peace and security following conflicts. These bases serve as hubs for humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution efforts, and stabilisation operations. UNPKF personnel are granted specific legal protections under international law but must operate within the framework established by host nations' sovereignty while adhering to mandates set by the UN Security Council.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are established between the UN and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) or police-contributing countries (PCCs). These documents detail logistical support, command structures, and operational protocols, ensuring that contributing nations understand their obligations and rights under international law.

The primary legal basis for UN peacekeeping is found in the UN Charter, particularly in Chapters VI and VII. Chapter VI outlines the peaceful settlement of disputes, while Chapter VII provides the Security Council with the authority to take action to maintain or restore international peace and security. Although the term "peacekeeping" is not explicitly mentioned in the Charter, these chapters provide the necessary legal justification for deploying peacekeeping missions under various circumstances.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Rulings

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has jurisdiction to rule on disputes between states primarily through two mechanisms: contentious cases and advisory opinions. Contentious cases involve legal disputes brought by one state against another regarding the interpretation or application of international law, treaties, or customary law. For the ICJ to hear such cases, both parties must consent to its jurisdiction, often established through treaties that include ICJ clauses or by special agreements for specific disputes. Common issues addressed in these cases include allegations of genocide, territorial disputes, and violations of international obligations.

In contrast, advisory opinions are non-binding legal opinions provided by the ICJ at the request of UN organs or specialised agencies to clarify legal questions. These opinions, while not legally enforceable, carry significant moral and political weight and can influence international relations and law development.

ICJ rulings are incredibly hard to enforce, and doing so presents notable challenges due to the absence of a centralised enforcement mechanism akin to domestic judicial systems. According to Article 94(1) of the UN Charter, member states are obligated to comply with ICJ decisions in cases where they are parties; however, actual compliance is often dependent on the political will of states, several times of which the state is non-compliant simply because it doesn't want to comply. If a state fails to comply with a ruling, the aggrieved party may bring the matter before the UN Security Council (UNSC), as outlined in Article 94(2), but this process can be hindered by political dynamics and inconsistent application. Enforcement typically relies on diplomatic pressure and negotiations rather than coercive measures, as the ICJ lacks direct means to enforce its judgments. Consequently, while ICJ rulings are binding on states that accept its jurisdiction, their implementation often hinges on voluntary compliance and the broader geopolitical context of the region and ruling.

Regional Security Frameworks

Regional security frameworks involve cooperative arrangements among neighbouring states aimed at addressing common security challenges. These frameworks can take various forms, including formal alliances like NATO or informal partnerships focused on collective defence strategies. They allow regional military cooperation and various opportunities for establishing military infrastructure. By fostering dialogue and collaboration on security issues, regional frameworks enhance stability and reduce tensions within regions prone to conflict.

Case Studies

Central and Eastern Europe

Overview

The establishment of Russian military bases such as Hantsavichy Radar Station and Vileyka naval communication centre in Belarus is part of a longstanding relationship between Russia and Belarus, particularly in military and security matters. Belarus, under the leadership of President Alexander Lukashenko, has historically maintained close ties with Russia due to their shared cultural and political views and interests. Belarus serves as a buffer between Russia and NATO countries and the stationing of Russian troops on Belarusian soil is a strategic asset for Moscow as it enhances Russia's ability to project its influence in Eastern Europe. This does however have implications on Belarus' sovereignty.

The establishment of NATO bases across Eastern Europe, including sites in Poland, Romania, and the Baltic states, reflects NATO's commitment to reinforcing security along its eastern flank. In recent years, NATO has increased its presence in Eastern Europe as a response to perceived threats from Russia, especially following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Countries such as Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, which share borders with Russia or Belarus, have welcomed these bases and deployments as essential for their national defence and regional stability. Hosting NATO troops and infrastructure bolsters the defence capabilities of these countries and serves as a deterrent against potential aggression. However, these actions have been seen as hostile by Russia, and have provoked an ongoing war in which

Russia invaded Ukraine due to perceived NATO threats in the region, and to prevent Ukraine from joining the aforementioned defence alliance.

How it Happened

The origins of the Russian military presence in Belarus trace back to the formation of the Union State in 1999, an agreement that formally aimed to deepen integration between the two nations across various sectors, including military cooperation. Over time, Russia has increased its military assets in Belarus, particularly as tensions between Russia and NATO have risen.

With the onset of the Ukraine conflict in 2014 and increased NATO presence in Eastern Europe, Russia sought to further secure its western front. Belarus, due to its geographical proximity to Poland, the Baltics, and Ukraine, became increasingly important for Russian military strategy.

Following the 2020 Belarusian protests against Lukashenko's rule, Russia provided political support to maintain his grip on power. In exchange, Lukashenko allowed Russia to solidify its military presence, leading to the establishment of a permanent base in 2021. The Russian-Belarusian exercises, known as "Zapad" drills, are a testament to the level of integration between the two countries' militaries.

NATO has historically placed military bases in countries like Italy and Greece, as a form of defence against Eastern Europe and Russia, and to solidify its military presence in the region as a counterbalance to the Russian threat. As NATO began to inch closer to Russia, and began discussing introducing Ukraine into the alliance, Russia invaded the nation to alleviate this action which it saw as a threat due to impending NATO presence on Russian borders.

Current Situation, Problems, and Effects

Current Situation

The Russian bases in Belarus continue to expand and house more troops, equipment and advanced missile systems such as the Iskander-M and the bases are starting to get increasingly integrated into the Russian command structures. Since the 2022 invasion into Ukraine, Belarus, due to its strategic location, has become a key headquarters for Russian military operations allowing Russian attacks to be launched from Belarusian soil as well as Russian soil.

NATO has expanded its military presence in Eastern Europe in response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, moving from a cautious approach to a more solid forward defence. Since 2022, NATO has deployed additional multinational battlegroups in countries like Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland, with prepositioned equipment and air defence systems to bolster readiness. The U.S. has increased its troop presence by about 20,000 across key sites, especially in Poland and the

Baltics, while Germany is establishing a permanent base in Lithuania. These moves are seen by NATO as defensive but are considered provocative by Russia, intensifying regional tensions.

Problems

Belarus faces many sanctions from the West due to its collaboration with Russia, causing it to become almost completely dependent on Russia for funding. This has many implications for Belarus' sovereignty as Russia has control over most of the advanced weaponry in Belarus, such as the Iskander missiles, diminishing Belarus' independent control over its military assets. Joint training exercises such as the Zapad drills create a sense of dependency on the Russian military and hinders Belarus' ability to form its own defence strategies and policies.

Due to sanctions from the West, Belarus continues to incur debts from Russia, allowing Russia to impose their will onto Belarus, leading to financial blackmail. This causes concerns regarding "soft annexation" where Belarus will grow increasingly dependent on Russia and lose control over its own affairs and essentially become a satellite state for Russia.

The bases also pose concerns to many NATO-aligned states particularly Poland and the Baltic states, which view the base as a potential threat to their own security, as they believe Russian influence will spread across Eastern Europe.

Effects

The presence of Russian troops in Belarus potentially destabilising the broader Eastern European region, complicating peace negotiations in Ukraine and heightening the risk of direct confrontation between Russian and NATO forces. Due to this NATO has bolstered its own presence along its eastern front, leading to an arms race dynamic in Eastern Europe. Military exercises, troop deployments, and enhanced intelligence operations have increased tensions in the region.

Eastern European NATO countries have raised their military readiness levels. These countries, particularly Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, conduct regular drills to practise rapid deployment, defence, and counteroffensive tactics. This heightened state of readiness means that NATO forces can mobilise quickly in response to perceived threats. NATO's increased activity along the Belarusian border has been both a deterrent and a response to the Russian military presence in Belarus.

While this has successfully reassured NATO's eastern members of the alliance's commitment to their security, it has also contributed to an increasingly polarised and militarised region, making de-escalating the situation more challenging.

South-East Asia (The South China Sea)

Overview

Ever since the 1970s, there have been many disputes between China, Taiwan and Vietnam in regards to the control over unclaimed islands in the South China Sea, each nation wanting a position of influence, partially involving Japan and the Koreans as well in some regions.

China claims rights over the South China Sea based on historical usage and control dating back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD). China asserts that its fishermen and explorers have navigated and utilised the South China Sea for centuries, establishing an enduring connection.

This conflict is due to several advantageous resources in the region. The first are on the Spratly Islands. To each claimant nation, having access to the Spratly islands meant having access to an abundance of resources like natural gas and petroleum.

The inability of the countries to resolve the issue diplomatically led to the aggravation of the affair at hand. In addition to claiming islands, China has also participated in building artificial islands and reefs: Meiji Reef, Zhubi Reef and Yongshu Reef, all that ‘coincidentally’ form a triangle around the US military base in the Philippines.

China has violated principles of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) too, by infringing on the territorial integrity of nearby countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei by entering their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and harvesting their materials illegitimately under international law.

How It Happened

206 BC: China claims rights over the South China Sea based on historical usage and control dating back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD). China asserts that its fishermen and explorers have navigated and utilised the South China Sea for centuries, establishing an enduring connection.

1940s and 50s: China uses 20th century maps to justify its control over the region. First appearing on Chinese maps in the 1940s as an eleven-dash line, it was revised in the 1950s to a nine-dash line across the South China Sea, with China arguing that the line reflects its historical rights over the South China Sea, although the exact legal basis and extent of these rights are not clearly defined in international law.

1945-52: The USA begins building military bases in Japan, a major one in Okinawa still important to their operations today.

Late 1950s to 1960s: The United States began building military bases in South Korea in the 1950s and 1960s, formally acquiring an existing military base: the Yongsan compound on September 11, 1948, and continuing to construct bases like the Osan Air Base and Camp Humphreys into the 1950s and 60s.

2007: Using initiatives like the “Quad” formation between the U.S, India, Japan and Australia, the United States have centred their focus towards limiting China’s power and control especially in the South China Sea. Furthermore, the USA has strengthened its diplomatic relations with countries like the Philippines and Vietnam who also had concerns in regards to China’s insurgence of activity in the South China Sea.

2013-2105: Despite this, China began to construct man-made islands, and increased its activity in the South China Sea. China built artificial islands with a total area of close to 3,000 acres on seven coral reefs it occupies in the Spratly Islands in the southern part of the South China Sea. China used these islands to strengthen territorial claims in the South China Sea to the region demarcated by the nine-dash line.

2014: The Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA)– a military agreement signed between the United States and the Philippines, allows the US to operate militarily out of certain locations and bases in the Philippines

2015-2106: Subsequently, China installed weapons systems on the islands, including anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems despite giving an assurance to then US President Obama that they would not be militarised. China claims the territory around these regions.

2016: The Permanent Court of Arbitration Ruling

In 2013, the Philippines brought a case against China to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, challenging China’s claims over parts of the South China Sea, particularly in areas within the Philippines’ EEZ, as established under UNCLOS. The court ruled on the same in 2016.

The court ruled that China’s nine-dash line had no legal basis under international law. The tribunal determined that China’s historical claims could not override the rights of other countries within their EEZs. It criticised China’s construction of artificial islands, finding that these actions caused irreparable harm to coral reefs and other marine life, in violation of environmental

protections under UNCLOS. It affirmed the Philippines' rights to resources in its EEZ, including fishing rights at Scarborough Shoal, and rejected China's interference in these areas.

China, however, refused to participate in the arbitration and rejected the ruling, dismissing it as "null and void." Despite international pressure, China has continued its activities in the South China Sea, effectively ignoring the ruling.

2018: China begins to construct man-made islands. China's island-building and military installation has sparked much concern amongst other countries that have interest in the South China Sea as well. Established an information collection sensor in the Bombay Reef as well as port facilities. By dumping tons of sand, China has managed to create around 3,000 acres of land and on these man-made islands, China has established their own military bases.

2021: the U.S along with the UK and Australia have formed the AUKUS Pact which is a trilateral security agreement that strives to aid and strengthen the government and security of the respective nations, with the pact increasing Western countries' activity in the South China Sea.

2023: The US builds 4 new bases in the Philippines, stitching the gap in the arc of US alliances stretching from South Korea and Japan in the north to Australia in the south.

Current Situation, Problems, and Effects

Now finding the world's attention is focused on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China is constructing more artificial islands. The photographs of the Chinese increasing military activities in the seven artificial islands have also surfaced. Images show that China has further fortified its artificial islands in the South China Sea, with more buildings, radars and aircraft hangars to help project power across the Indo-Pacific.

As of November 2024, the South China Sea remains a focal point of geopolitical tension, marked by competing territorial claims, military activities, and international diplomatic efforts.

China's Military Activities: China has intensified its military presence in the region. Notably, the People's Liberation Army Navy conducted its first dual aircraft carrier formation exercise in the South China Sea, involving the Liaoning and Shandong carriers. This exercise underscores China's enhanced naval capabilities and its commitment to asserting sovereignty over the contested waters.

Neighbouring countries have responded to China's assertiveness.

The Indonesian government has taken measures to safeguard its territorial integrity following incidents involving Chinese coast guard vessels disrupting state energy firm surveys. Indonesia has expelled Chinese vessels from its waters and emphasized its commitment to protecting its maritime rights.

Vietnam has protested China's detention of Vietnamese fishermen in the Paracel Islands, demanding their immediate release and condemning China's actions as violations of its sovereignty.

The Philippine military has conducted combat exercises simulating the retaking of islands in the South China Sea, reflecting concerns over China's activities. These drills have been observed by Chinese naval forces, indicating the ongoing tensions between the two nations.

Internationally, The United States and its allies continue to monitor the situation closely. The U.S. Navy's deployed aircraft carrier, the USS Ronald Reagan, has been active in the region, conducting operations to ensure freedom of navigation.

China is reportedly enhancing its surveillance capabilities with the construction of a new radar system on Triton Island, intended to detect stealth aircraft. This development aligns with China's broader strategy to establish a comprehensive surveillance network across the South China Sea.

Further Effect and Explanation

The South China Sea has about $\frac{1}{3}$ of maritime trade passing through it, a fundamental reason for both China and the USA's bid for power. The fight for control between the two in the South China Sea region has put further tension and strain on their diplomatic relations.

This tension is also responsible for fueling an arms race between USA and China, as in order to maintain peace and prevent China from getting complete control over the South China Sea the USA has also increased its military presence in the region.

China's building of islands and setting up military bases has also had a negative impact on the ecosystem. In addition to the deteriorating health of the coral reefs surrounding the site where the artificial islands were constructed, the biodiversity and ecosystem could also be under threat as the islands are a new opportunity for fishermen to fish in new waters which in turn could lead to overfishing. Furthermore, the pollution that comes from the rapid construction decreases the quality of water which may also affect many species that are easily threatened by environmental changes.

Another effect of China's island building is regional political destabilisation. China's increased activity in the south China Sea may threaten the principle of the law of sea: Freedom of navigation which is why the US conducts many military patrols to ensure that China is following protocol however this has led to some unintentional friction between the two countries. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has outlined and administered boundaries China must abide by. Its overarching law is freedom of navigation for all sovereign states. By building artificial islands, in disputed border areas, China extends its sovereignty into territorial waters of the Philippines and other countries. Theoretically, China is granted navigation in these waters however it cannot be granted economic exploitation of the natural resources that lie within the waters that belong to the Philippines.

In addition to securing resources, China views its control over the region as essential for protecting its trade routes, countering U.S. influence, and ensuring its long-term security and stability. The presence of Chinese bases in the South China Sea, despite international opposition, is thus framed as a necessary assertion of sovereignty and regional self-defence

Africa (Djibouti)

Overview

Djibouti is a country the size of New Hampshire situated at the horn of Africa and at the opening of the Suez canal. The Suez Canal is arguably the greatest catalyst to global trade, making the route from Asia and the Middle East to Europe far easier. Around 12% of global trade passes through the Suez Canal. This is why, although Djibouti is a small country, its geographical location makes it ideal to establish military bases as foreign nations who set up their military bases can oversee the flow of trade and even contribute to it.

Djibouti is also encircled by regions with saturation of conflict and tension. South of Djibouti is Somalia, a country which has experienced an insurgence of pirate attacks over the past few decades. Recently, 14th December 2023 there was the hijacking of the bulk carrier vessel MV Ruen which contained around \$1 million worth of cargo. In addition, Djibouti has been facing its own set of humanitarian issues like the conflict between the two ethnic groups known as Issa and Afar. January 23rd 2021, reports show that villages were riddled with tension between the two ethnic groups as murders of officials even took place. China, the USA, and France have established military bases in Djibouti. For countries like the US and China, establishing military bases in such conflict ridden areas enables these nations to project their power as arbitrators. Getting involved in certain conflicts does strain economic resources and military, it allows the nations to expand their presence and political relevance internationally.

How it Happened

Both France and Italy had historical presence in Djibouti in the late 1800s. France established a port in Djibouti to access trade to India, and Italy installed its military presence in the Djibouti-Somali region in order to partake in global trade and to achieve this the combatted rivals and local groups in the Somali region. Camp Lemonnier is the US Military base setup in Djibouti in 2002.

Moreover, Djibouti's ability to exercise complete control over its land can be questioned. Djibouti although gained independence in 1977 from France, it has always had many foreign powers present in its region. When these foreign nations establish their presence through their military bases, they indirectly control some portion of Djibouti's land.

Current Situation, Problems, and Effects

Two of Djibouti's biggest problems are its political instability and economic dependency on the foreign military bases and forts. Djibouti's source of revenue being saturation of foreign military bases and ports poses a challenge because it makes Djibouti economically dependent on something that can very easily fluctuate and diminish. Furthermore, due to Djibouti's high dependency on foreign military bases, it has failed to diversify its economy. According to the International affairs forum, 85% of Djibouti's GDP comes from services related to the upkeep of ports and military bases.

In addition to having an economic dependency on foreign military bases, Djibouti's political instability facilitates soft projection of power for the countries that have stationed their military presence. The rising conflicts between the two major ethnic groups in Djibouti have indirectly threatened law enforcement as reports show that law enforcement personnel who got involved in some conflicts were even killed. This humanitarian crisis calls for arbitration by the external military present. This in turn may also create tension between the nations that have opposing views on how to deal with the conflict in Djibouti as both China and the USA have established military bases in Djibouti.

In total, Djibouti is economically and politically dependent on the presence of foreign military bases which in turn questions how much power Djibouti has over its own nation. If Djibouti's humanitarian conflicts are only resolved through arbitration and their largest revenue generator is foreign military bases, their sovereignty is limited.

Benefits of Foreign Military Bases

Boosting Economy

The presence of foreign military bases is economically beneficial for the host country. It creates job opportunities as the military bases require maintenance works and healthcare providers and these positions are filled by the local civilians. In order to make or expand the military bases, infrastructure workers are necessary. In addition, to compensate for the land used for the military base, there is rent paid. The expenses for the food and lodging are also covered, overall boosting the economy of the host country. Local shops also thrive as they now have an expanded market to sell to.

Enhanced Security and Military Protection

Having an external military presence in a country enhances military protection as they act as a deterrent to external aggressors. In addition, they act as arbitrators when there is political conflict within the region. For example, the U.S bases in Japan are helping resolve rising tensions in the South China Sea, and enhancing security of neighbouring nations.

Improvement of Diplomatic Relations

Foreign military bases can improve diplomatic relations as they allow countries to work together on shared security concerns and combat pressing issues such as piracy, maintaining regional conflicts and terrorism. This strengthens diplomatic relations as the countries work on a mutual interest to maintain stability and security.

Additionally, these foreign military bases allow for joint training of troops and exchanges of military personnel. This facilitates cultural exchange which fosters respect and allows for any diplomatic tensions to be ironed out. Foreign military bases are a strong symbol of an alliance between the two nations as it shows support. This can prove to be a deterrence to regional threats. In 1953 USA and South Korea signed the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty and the USA set up a military base in South Korea. This deterred North Korean violence, and helped cease the hostilities of the Korean War. This alliance strengthened over time improving diplomatic relations between the USA and South Korea greatly, and the two are now strong allies.

Regional Geopolitical Stability

Foreign military bases can positively impact regional geopolitical stability by enhancing security and enabling rapid response to crises. For example, strategically located bases like Djibouti's allow swift deployment to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden, safeguarding maritime trade routes. The presence of these bases also acts as a deterrent against hostile actors, and reduces the likelihood of conflict, an attempted invasion, or an attempted coup by showcasing a strong international defence's presence. They often strengthen alliances and foster diplomatic ties, promoting regional security through partnerships, as seen in the U.S.-Japan alliance, which reinforces Asia-Pacific stability. Additionally, foreign bases bring economic benefits to host countries, generating jobs, infrastructure, and revenue, which contribute to local and regional stability. Many bases invest in training local forces, bolstering the host nation's security capabilities and enabling it to address threats more effectively. Furthermore, well-resourced foreign bases play a key role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as seen with U.S. operations from Okinawa, enhancing stability and goodwill across regions. Through these combined security, economic, and diplomatic advantages, foreign military bases can foster a stable regional environment when their presence aligns with host country interests and respects sovereignty.

Conservation of Human Rights

Foreign military bases can act as arbitrators and help prevent any conflict arising between civilians and militant groups or the government itself. Their intervention aids in maintaining a balance between the government and its people, and gives competition to rising radical groups that may threaten the peace in the nation. It helps secure stability, and ensure that human rights are upheld, sometimes even acting similar to a second method of law enforcement.

Additionally in the cases of natural disasters or humanitarian crises, military bases act as aid, easily deploying shelter, food and medical aid. In 1999 after the Kosovo war, NATO set up military presence in the region through establishing bases and stationing military personnel to ensure that there would be no conflict in the area, and that human rights were upheld.

Intelligence Sharing

As a host country, having foreign military bases can prove to be resourceful for intelligence sharing and improved military training. Although the host country's military is regarded as separate from the foreign military base present, their respective regional security are correlated.

This means that when the host country's security is threatened, so is that of the foreign nation's military base. To minimise any danger, the two exchange intelligence.

Problems with Foreign Military Bases

Sovereignty Concerns

Neo-colonialism or the military and political intervention of a foreign country upon another nation leads to the formation of a satellite state. A satellite state is used to describe a theoretically independent nation but due to the intercession of a foreign nation, its political decisions are heavily influenced.

Establishing military bases can pose a threat to the sovereignty and autonomy of a nation. Firstly, Foreign military bases may operate differently and not in accordance with the law of the host country, this undermines the political control the host country has even within its borders. Host countries also grow dependent on the added benefits of having a foreign military base. A base is proven to introduce economic benefits like rent and trade, as well as the benefit of additional protection, relying on these benefits could result negatively for the host country because it indirectly gives the foreign nation power over the host country.

For example, US military bases that operate in Djibouti can be viewed as a form of Neo-colonialism. The large sum of rent and job creation due to the setting up of the military base has created much revenue for Djibouti creating economic dependency on the US, leaving it susceptible to control.

The US has also been accused of interfering in local politics in Niger to keep their drone base stationed there, able to do so due to their power and base in the country. This kind of intervention is a massive concern for the sovereignty of a nation.

Financial Blackmail

Financial blackmail can occur when a nation with a foreign military base uses the revenue they generate as leverage to blackmail the host nation to comply. This can be achieved through financial dependency as host countries receive significant economic benefits from foreign military bases such as job creation, development of infrastructure and payments from the foreign power as well. This makes the host nation completely dependent on the foreign power and forces

them to comply out of fear that the finances can be taken away, after which their economies might collapse.

Foreign military bases are often associated with favourable loans and conditional funding directly related to the base's presence, and if the host nation tries to pass any regulations inconveniencing the foreign power, it can threaten to pull the funding forcing the host nation to remove the regulations.

This can also lead to neocolonialism. Armenia is financially dependent on the revenue generated by the Russian base and Russian funding leading it to align closely with Russian policies. Locals view this as Russia blackmailing Armenia and protest it. The same situation is prevalent in Djibouti, where China has used its debt to secure its military presence; in countries like Chad, Mali, Niger, and Djibouti, where France has maintained military bases often justified as part of anti-terrorism efforts, and leverages its economic and military presence in Djibouti to maintain influence over the government's decisions, ensuring that French interests are prioritised in regional security matters; in Cyprus, where the UK maintains sovereign base areas in Cyprus, strategically important for Middle Eastern operations, and has used these bases to reinforce Cyprus' dependence on British economic benefits, using this leverage to maintain favourable terms regarding its military presence, dampening Cyprus' ability to make its own EU and NATO decisions.

Foreign military bases can create a financial dependency that the foreign power can exploit and use to blackmail the host nation. This dynamic complicates host nations' sovereignty and policy-making freedom, as they must balance the immediate economic benefits against long-term independence and control.

Humanitarian Concerns

Some key humanitarian concerns caused by foreign military bases are; displacement, strain on local resources, human rights violations and gender-based exploitation. The establishment of foreign military bases often leads to the displacement of local populations, sometimes without adequate compensation or relocation support. Thousands of people lost their homes when US set up bases in Okinawa and weren't given proper compensation. Cultural sites and sacred burial grounds were also destroyed.

Foreign military bases can strain local healthcare, water, and sanitation resources, especially in underdeveloped regions, resulting in the local population not getting access to necessary items and causing famines or infections. The presence of many French and Chinese bases in Djibouti increases the demand for food, water and other resources, driving up prices and making it unaffordable for the local population.

There are often concerns about human rights abuses related to foreign military bases, such as incidents of violence, harassment, or exploitation of locals by foreign personnel. In many cases, foreign personnel have legal immunity, and go unpunished after abusing the human rights of the locals. In 2002 the Yangju highway incident took place where a US military armoured van crashed into and killed two 14 year old schoolgirls in south korea. The two soldiers were found not guilty and the case was closed in just 5 months. This legal immunity increases gender-based exploitation as rape and sexual assault by foreign military personnel are common in various host countries, such as sexual assault committed by US troops in the Phillipines. This is a major human rights violation, as women and children are at risk of exploitation.

Local Protest

The presence of foreign military bases often leads to local protests due to concerns about sovereignty, safety, and social justice. In both Okinawa, Japan, and South Korea, communities have expressed significant opposition to these bases, viewing them as infringements on their national identity and autonomy. High-profile incidents involving U.S. service members, such as the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old girl in Okinawa going punished after years, have intensified local fears and fueled widespread demonstrations. Additionally, residents often feel that the economic benefits touted by proponents of military bases are overstated, with many locals perceiving a disparity between the costs they bear—such as land use and environmental degradation—and the limited advantages they receive.

In Okinawa, where U.S. bases occupy nearly 19% of the main island, ongoing protests reflect deep-seated grievances over crime, environmental issues, and the historical context of U.S. occupation. Similarly, in South Korea, opposition has emerged around bases like Camp Humphreys due to concerns about safety risks and environmental damage from military activities. These protests highlight a broader struggle between national security interests and local sovereignty, emphasising the need for dialogue and policy adjustments to address

community concerns and foster more stable relationships between host nations and foreign powers.

Regional Geopolitical Destabilisation

Foreign military bases can contribute to regional geopolitical destabilisation by intensifying military tensions and fostering power imbalances between countries. When one nation establishes a military presence in another region, it often provokes security concerns and a sense of vulnerability among neighbouring countries. This can lead to an arms race, where countries increase their military capabilities to counter perceived threats, thus exacerbating regional instability. The strategic positioning of foreign bases may also alter the balance of power, especially when larger powers place their bases near contentious borders or in regions with historical territorial disputes. This escalation of military presence can further fuel nationalistic sentiments and stoke conflicts, as countries view the foreign presence as a challenge to their sovereignty and security.

Moreover, foreign military bases often create alliances that are viewed as hostile by other nations, further polarising the geopolitical environment. These alliances can lead to the formation of opposing blocs, increasing the risk of proxy wars or direct confrontations. The presence of foreign bases can also complicate diplomatic efforts, as host countries may face internal political pressure to align with the interests of foreign powers, sometimes at the expense of regional unity or peace. In this way, foreign military bases are not only a source of military tension but can also destabilise the broader political landscape by influencing the foreign policies of local governments and provoking responses from neighbouring states.

Prolonged Military Presence

Prolonged military presence is often a direct consequence of having foreign military bases, as these installations serve as strategic footholds for long-term influence and control in a region. When a foreign power establishes a military base, the initial rationale may be to project power, secure resources, or maintain regional stability. However, once the base is operational, it becomes a permanent fixture that is difficult to dismantle, even when the initial geopolitical objectives have been achieved. Over time, the base may evolve into an entrenched aspect of the host country's security architecture, with both political and economic interests tied to its continued presence. As a result, the foreign military presence becomes normalised, making it more challenging to withdraw and often leading to a prolonged stay that can last for decades.

Additionally, the strategic importance of foreign military bases can lead to a cycle of dependency, where the host country becomes reliant on the foreign military power for security, defence, and economic support. This relationship can lead to the extension of the foreign presence, as the host nation may prioritise maintaining military ties to ensure protection or economic aid. Prolonged military presence can also create a sense of permanence, with foreign powers increasingly investing in infrastructure, logistics, and personnel, which in turn reinforces the military base as a long-term operational hub. The presence of these foreign bases can become deeply embedded within the political and social fabric of the host country, often with little opportunity for withdrawal without significant diplomatic, security, or economic consequences.

Legal Immunity for Military Personnel

Like the name suggests, extraterritorial jurisdiction in context to foreign military bases is when the foreign nation's law applies to its military bases when the bases are located in a separate host country (for example the USA's laws apply to soldiers stationed permanently in Japan). This creates a dual-jurisdiction and poses strain on the relationship between a host country and the foreign country which has its military base located in the host country.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction additionally creates legal immunity to military personnel as they are exempted from the local law. This creates friction between the host and foreign countries as it can be perceived that the foreign country's law supersedes the local law, making it difficult to prosecute crimes. This is also an example of implicit projection of power which aids the foreign country in establishing control.

In 1995 a high profile case where US military personnel were accused of sexually assaulting a twelve year old Japanese girl in Okinawa. The case caused widespread protest, taking a long time to be tried even though ultimately the US marines were sentenced. The case also highlighted the issue of jurisdiction and immunity, as the initial arrest and detention process were delayed due to SOFA protocols.

Several other incidents, including accidents involving military vehicles and cases of sexual assault, have further strained relations and brought attention to the limitations of Japanese legal authority over U.S. personnel. The immunity provisions have allowed U.S. personnel to avoid Japanese prosecution in certain cases. They have sparked significant backlash, especially in Okinawa, where a large portion of U.S. forces are stationed. Local residents and activists have

called for the revision of SOFA to allow Japanese authorities more direct control over U.S. personnel involved in crimes.

As a response, the U.S. and Japan have agreed to amendments, allowing Japan more leeway in some off-duty cases. However, the core provisions of SOFA remain intact, preserving legal immunity for military personnel under specific circumstances.

The U.S.-Japan SOFA remains controversial and is seen by many in Japan as a limitation on the country's sovereignty. The Okinawa example illustrates the complexities and public frustrations associated with legal immunity in SOFA agreements, which are common for foreign military bases worldwide.

Environmental Impact

The environmental impact of foreign military bases on host nations is substantial, involving pollution, habitat destruction, and exposure to radiation. Foreign military bases handle toxic chemicals and spills of these chemicals like fuel, lubricants or ammunition often contaminate soil and water sources. The US base in Okinawa polluted local rivers and groundwater for decades as a result of improper disposal of jet fuel and heavy metals.

The creation of a military base needs large plots of land and this leads to deforestation and the destruction of many habitats, wreaking havoc on biodiversity. In 1968 a US B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons crashed at Thule air base, Greenland causing radioactive contamination. Cleanup operations were conducted, however residual radioactive contamination still remains to this day.

QARMA (Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

The specific agenda for a resolution in this committee will be decided during the course of the conference. For now, we'd like to provide an overarching question that you should attempt to answer, and solve by implementing policies in your resolutions:

Do foreign military bases ensure global security, mutual safety, and economic benefit, or do they exacerbate global geopolitical tensions, undermining spheres of influence and leading to issues like neocolonialism or economic blackmail?

And now into the QARMA:

1. Are current policies concerning foreign military bases effective? Do they need to be changed?
 2. How can foreign military bases operate without infringing on the sovereignty of the host nation?
 3. What environmental standards should foreign bases be required to meet, and how should they be held accountable for environmental damage?
 4. How can foreign military bases contribute to regional security without exacerbating geopolitical tensions?
 5. What role should regional organisations (e.g., NATO, ASEAN, AU) play in regulating the placement and operations of foreign military bases to align with regional security goals?
 6. How can foreign bases ensure the protection of human rights for local populations, especially in cases of abuse by military personnel?
 7. What mechanisms should be in place for resolving disputes over foreign military bases, including cases of contested sovereignty?
 8. What policies should be adopted to ensure that foreign military bases do not interfere in the political processes of the host nation?
 9. Should foreign military bases have a fixed timeline or criteria for continued presence, and if so, what should these conditions entail?
 10. What exit strategies should be in place for base-operating countries if the host nation withdraws consent or if the base's original purpose becomes obsolete?
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Closing Remarks and Tips

In conclusion, for better or worse, with the establishment of foreign military bases comes geographical, political, economic and even humanitarian impacts. Host countries strengthen their diplomatic relations and enhance their security, but bases can also challenge their autonomy, and destabilise the region both geopolitically and locally. It is up to you, the delegates, to decide if frameworks concerning foreign military bases are adequate, and if they should be changed. Are foreign military bases a problem or a solution?

Coming to tips, extensive research specific to not only the topic but your country is imperative to substantiate your arguments. The study guide only attempts to condense vast amounts of information, and further research would be required for success. A good delegate is one armed with not only facts, but with the ability to showcase a variety of opinions, perspectives, and challenge thought. It's a delegate who can think on the spot and navigate their way through complex challenges thrown their way. But no pressure! First and foremost, always remember to try your best, and have fun, and that's what enriches your experience. Remember to write a comprehensive resolution that outlines and rectifies all the problems with the current frameworks, and solves the issue at hand.

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Good luck!!

*The Executive Board, UNSC
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