

# Colonialism and America's Imperial Agenda in the Pacific: US to "Rebalance" Military in Guam to Counter China and North Korea

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*Guam, an Island nation of 160,000 people has been a victim of Imperialism dating back to the 16th century. More than 65,000 of the population are called the Chamorro people, an indigenous population originally from the Mariana Islands. Many of the Chamorro people also live in the Northern Mariana Islands, another U.S. territory. Guam's fate with imperial powers from the West began with Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan, who represented the King of Spain landed in Guam around 1521. Spanish General Miguel López de Legazpi claimed Guam for the Spanish throne in 1565. It eventually resulted in the Spanish-Chamorro War which lasted 25 years. Then it was followed by Japan's brutal occupation during World War II. U.S. won a decisive battle against Japanese forces known as the Battle of Guam in 1944. However, the U.S. still remains in Guam. They never left.*

Over the years, the U.S. Military-Industrial complex has become the Island's main economic engine besides the tourism industry. With geopolitical developments in recent years, the U.S. is now in the stage of "rebalancing" its Pacific forces to prepare for a possible future war with China and North Korea.

On August 19th, the Department of Defense News (DOD News) stated that *"Guam, because of its military bases, Army anti-ballistic missile system and location 3,300 miles west of Hawaii is an increasingly important strategic hub for the U.S. Asia-Pacific rebalance, Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work said today."*

The article's title *'Work: Guam is Strategic Hub to Asia-Pacific Rebalance'* Clarifies the plan to rebalance U.S. military forces in the Pacific or to what the Obama administration would call the "pivot to Asia" with the goal of developing US military alliances and strategic partnerships to counter China and North Korea's military. *"As the undersecretary of the Navy," he told them, referring to his 2009-2013 term in that office, "I was here when we first started thinking about rebalancing to the Pacific."* The article clearly states that Guam is central to Washington's Imperial agenda. Work defines how Washington views Guam as an important part of their military strategy in the region, *"We didn't call it that at the time, but Guam has always been a central part of our plans. Certainly a central part of the Navy's plans but now a central part of the entire Department of Defense's plans."* It is a move that would allow Washington to form a military and economic alliance with Tokyo and Seoul. Australia is on board with Washington's agenda since it is part of the "Five Eyes", an intelligence alliance that includes Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S. The U.S. is partnering with Japan, South Korea and Australia to prepare for a possible confrontation with China and/or North Korea. In any case, the US will be prepared to take action if China and

Japan's tension escalate into a possible war over the South-China Sea dispute which involves several countries, a matter that should be settled among the countries involved without Western interference.

It is important to note that Washington is moving at least 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam after decades of protests by the Okinawan people. The US has been in Okinawa since 1945. More than 85% of Okinawans want the US military to leave. There has been hundreds of cases where victims as young as 12 years-old have been either raped or sexually violated by US military personnel. In any case, the US military has released hundreds of sex offenders without charges. There have been anti-American demonstrations taking place in Okinawa for decades because of US policies towards its civilian population. Back in 2008, a well known case involving a rape of a child. Okinawans protested at a baseball stadium the injustices they suffer at the hands of the U.S. military as the Associated Press reported that *"banners demanding the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops ringed the makeshift stage."* And that the *"problems with base-related accidents, crowding and crime are endemic."* A troubling account of what actually has taken place in Okinawa between 1972 and 1995 is the fact that an estimated 4,716 crimes were committed by members of the US military. More than 75% of all U.S. forces in Japan are located in Okinawa. The U.S. and Japan has finally decided to move troops out of Okinawa since the end of World War II.

However, Japan's tensions with China over the South-China Sea with Washington's support. Under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan is on the path to becoming a military power in the Pacific. The Abe government has made a decision to *"reinterpret"* the country's constitution so that the Japanese military can participate in any future military conflict with its allies. In a speech this past July, Prime Minister Abe told the Australian Parliament his government and Australia are cooperating on the *"the transfer of defence equipment and technology"* which means that Japan is in the process of building its military capabilities. Abe also mentioned how Japan, Australia and the U.S. will *"Join Hands"* to build an *"International Order"*:

So far as national security goes, Japan has been self-absorbed for a long time. Now, Japan has built a determination. As a nation that longs for permanent peace in the world, and as a country whose economy is among the biggest, Japan is now determined to do more to enhance peace in the region, and peace in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is to put that determination into concrete action that Japan has chosen to strengthen its ties with Australia. Yes, our countries both love peace. We value freedom and democracy. And we hold human rights and the rule of law dear. Today is the day that we bring life to our new special relationship. To make its birthday today, I should have brought a huge cake to share a piece with every one of you. There are many things Japan and Australia can do together by each of us joining hands with the United States, an ally for both our nations

Japan is now working to change its legal basis for security so that we can act jointly with other countries in as many ways as possible. We want to make Japan a country that will work to build an international order that upholds the rule of law. Our desire is to make Japan a country that is all the more willing to contribute to peace in the region and beyond. It is for this reason that Japan has raised the banner of *"Proactive Contribution to Peace"*

While Japan is strengthening its military power, South Korea on the other hand is already

home to the US Military since 1947 which faces North Korea. The United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) is an important location for the U.S. in the Pacific region. The U.S and South Korea has had a military alliance since 1953 after the stalemate that ensued after the Korean War between South Korea and US forces and North Korea who had military support from China and the Soviet Union. The Department of Defense News who has been following the developments closely between U.S. and South Korean officials published an article called '*Work Highlights Importance of U.S.-South Korea Alliance*' signified the strategic importance of a U.S/South Korea alliance:

The deputy secretary highlighted the importance of the U.S.-South Korea alliance and thanked the South Korean leaders for their support.

"It's important that we're transparent, that we work through issues together as an alliance," the official said, "because both sides recognize the importance of a strong U.S.-Korea alliance, especially in the current situation on the peninsula with North Korea"

China and North Korea are the belligerents in the Asia-Pacific region, at least in Washington's eyes. Guam is going to play an important part for US forces if and when a war was to take place.

#### *Guam, a Victim of Imperial Powers*

Guam was ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish American War in 1898. Guam was purchased along with Puerto Rico and the Philippines from Spain for \$20 million in 1899. The population of Guam grew to over 10,000 inhabitants during that time. The US government then placed Guam under a military government under Captain R. P. Leary who was appointed the island's first U.S. Governor under U.S. President William McKinley by an executive order. Guam was now governed under the administration of the Department of Navy. Then during World War II, Japan invaded and occupied Guam which began on December 10th, 1941. Guam surrendered to Japan's South Seas detachment forces after a defensive struggle by the island's Insular Force Guard and a small number of U.S. marines. Guam was renamed "*Omiya Jima*" by Japanese Imperial forces. For 31 months, the people of Guam were subjected to inhumane hardships by the Japanese military.

Although some measure of religious freedoms and business activities were permitted, atrocities, such as rape and murder were common. Concentration camps were established and approximately 600 Chamorro's were executed. Some Chamorro's were even beheaded. Both Guam and China were victims of Imperial Japan, the irony now is that Guam hosts US military bases to "keep an Eye" on China's emerging economic power and to dominate the entire Asia-Pacific region. US Allies in the region were once political enemies of Washington at some point in history including the Philippines (1900), Vietnam (1964) and Cambodia (1969). Now they are proxy states used to counter China's growing economic and political power. In an interesting and informative article published by Global Research and The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan in Focus in 2010 called '*American Military Bases on Guam: The US Global Military Basing System*' By Prof. Catherine Lutz accurately describes the colonial situation in Guam:

It is colonial even as many of Guam's residents take their US citizenship

seriously and want to make claims to full citizenship on the foundation of the limited citizenship they now have. It is colonial even as Guam's many military members – those born on Guam and those born in the 50 United States – can and do see themselves as doing their duty to the US civilian leadership who deploy them to bases here and around the world. It is colonial even as many of Guam's citizens have been acting in the faith that they should be able to make and are making their own choices about whether Guam becomes even more of a battleship or not. But social science will call it nothing more than colonial when a people have not historically chosen their most powerful leaders and have been told to background their own national identity in favor of that of the power which has ultimate rule. The US presence in Guam is properly called imperial because the US is an empire in the strict sense of the term as used by historians and other social analysts of political forms.

Besides colonialism, another concept relevant to Guam's situation is militarization. It refers to an increase in labor and resources allocated to military purposes and the shaping of other institutions in synchrony with military goals. It involves a shift in societal beliefs and values in ways that legitimate the use of force (Ferguson 2009). It helps describe the process by which 14 year olds are in uniform and carrying proxy rifles in JROTC units in all of Guam's schools, why a fifth to a quarter of high school graduates enter the military, and why the identity of the island has over time shifted from a land of farmers to a land of war survivors to a land of loyal Americans to a land that is, proudly, "the Tip of the Spear," that is, a land that is a weapon. This historical change – the process of militarization or military colonization – has been visible to some, but more often, hidden in plain sight

The DOD news report on August 19th specifically states what Mr. Work's plans for the Asia-Pacific region involving Guam are:

Work explained the realignment in another way to the troops here. "As far as the Asia-Pacific goes, Marines are being distributed around the Pacific — 5,000 Marines are going to come here to Guam, 2,500 Marines are going to Australia, some Marines are going back to Hawaii [and] about 3,500 Marines are going up to Iwakuni, [Japan]," the deputy secretary said. The Army will be active in the Asia-Pacific too, he said, noting that seven of the world's largest armies are in the Asia-Pacific region, and soldiers would be good at contributing to training capacity building in the region.

Another part of the defense buildup on Guam began in April 2013, when arrangements began to move a ballistic missile defense system called a terminal high-altitude area defense battery, or THAAD, and soldiers to run the system, onto Andersen Air Force Base.

Threats from North Korea prompted the move, which because of the limited number of THAAD systems yet built was said to be temporary. But the senior defense official said Gov. Calvo and Rep. Bordallo have publicly asked that the system be kept on the island permanently


Washington's crumbling empire is preparing for war against China. At the same time, the U.S. is planning for war against Russia, Iran and now Syria which is back on its radar due to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria also known as ISIS. ISIS in Syria is a convenient excuse for Washington to reposition its military in the Middle East. An article published by the Japan Times in 2013 called *'On Guam liberation day, 'colonial' U.S. riles: Rule of island contrary to democratic principles: locals'* after its 69th anniversary from its liberation of Japan's military dictatorship by U.S. forces. The only problem is that Guam never liberated

itself from U.S. forces. It's been now 70 years of U.S. colonial rule over Guam. The president of the University of Guam and a former delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives Robert Underwood was asked about the parade held to mark the anniversary at the historic Marine Corps battles with Japanese forces in the capital and several war memorial activities that took place throughout Guam and said *"(But) it's not total liberation. It's only liberation from the Japanese."* Guam was under Japanese rule from 1941 to 1944. Then from 1944 to the present, the U.S. government has made Guam a strategic military location. According to the Japan Times, the governor of Guam Eddie Calvo said *"It's been 69 years since our liberation. Seven decades since our parents and grandparents survived the worst of war. They were slaves, forced to work; they were starving, beaten, raped and murdered."* The report also stated how locals feel about the U.S. presence in Guam since the war had ended:

*Antonio Sablan, a resident of the island, said that July 21, 1944, was not just the day when his family was freed from Japanese rule but also the day when U.S. forces recaptured the island. According to Sablan, American forces seized private property and land, including that of his family. And he is upset that Guam remains practically a U.S. colony. "If I was liberated, how come you have my kitchen and my living room? How come you have my house?" Sablan asked, citing the U.S. military's ownership of about a third of the island*

The report also stated:

Guam's official political status is that of an "unincorporated territory" of the United States, "where fundamental rights apply as a matter of law, but other constitutional rights are not available," meaning residents cannot vote in U.S. presidential elections if they are based on the island, despite their American citizenship. "Guam is a colony. The federal government has the final say on everything. It's a colonial relationship," Underwood said. "Of course, in the end it's not healthy"

Guam has the same political similarities with Puerto Rico *"By agreeing with the U.N. classification of Guam as a "nonself-governing territory,"  the United States, as a signatory to the U.N. Charter, recognizes that the island's indigenous people, the Chamorros, deserve the right to self-determination, Guam Sen. Vicente Pangelinan said in an interview."* Guam has been a military colonial possession of the United States government with a small population that has been in one form or another colonized. But there are many residents, especially the indigenous Chamorros *"desiring political self-determination."* There is a movement for independence on the island-nation. *"Gov. Calvo has impaneled the Guam Commission on Decolonization to determine which status people would prefer: independence, integration, or a relationship based on the Compact of Free Association pact, which would turn Guam into an associate state of the U.S."* However, there has been an effort to collect signatures for the Decolonization Registry as *"Pangelinan said that so far, only 8,000 or so people have signed up for the Decolonization Registry, which requires 20,000-plus signatories."*

It will be difficult since the people depend on government benefits provided by Washington. *"He added that many underprivileged people, Chamorros in particular, benefit from government subsidies for health care and education and thus prefer not to become actively involved in seeking change to the status quo."*

It is a difficult economic situation to overcome, especially when Guam's main industry is dependent on the tax-payer funded U.S. military-Industrial Complex and tourism. Proactive



residents like Sablan, however, said reform is still possible as The Japan Times reported. *"I believe that no matter how long it takes, even if it's just a little man with a small chisel or ice pick to break an iceberg, as long as he continues chipping, maybe not in my lifetime, but in the future, something will happen," Sablan said, urging his fellow residents to "decolonize" their way of thinking."*

I absolutely agree with Mr. Sablan. Decolonizing the way people think would be an ultimate defeat for the ruling elite in the West. However, Washington is in high gear to pursue a world war that will involve many nations. The Engine behind this drive to war is the United States, Europe (NATO), Israel and several nations that Washington dominates. Guam is a colony. It is a country that is forced to rely economically on Washington's war agenda in the Asia-Pacific region. Guam is a victim of Washington, not an accomplice. Guam is a country, not a colony. Any form of decolonization can only occur if the population thinks differently about an Imperial power occupying their land. The U.S. government is not in Guam for altruistic reasons, only to dominate their neighbors under a Unipolar world.

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