

# Why Not Abandon All Foreign Bases?

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Global Research, October 21, 2021

[LewRockwell.com](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

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*Neoconservatives—like [Michael Rubin](#) at the American Enterprise Institute (“The One Foreign Base Biden Should Abandon”)—haven’t gotten over President Joe Biden’s withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.*

But Rubin is also upset that “the Biden administration is determined to hold on to the one base that America should have abandoned a decade ago.” This is Incirlik Air Base in Turkey.

Rubin maintains that during the Cold War, Incirlik was crucial. But even though “the base supported U-2 surveillance flights, U.S. operations during the 1958 Lebanon crisis, the 1991 liberation of Kuwait, and, most recently, the fight against the Taliban,” Incirlik—which “also hosts approximately 50 nuclear weapons”—is “now a strategic liability” instead of “a strategic asset.”

Turkey “is as much an enemy as an ally.” President Erdogan cannot be trusted. “Every American serviceman, contractor, and family at Incirlik are potential hostages.” “Incirlik now risks a repeat of the 1979 Iran hostage crisis.” An American “departure from Incirlik” would not “affect U.S. operations.” The United States should use the “Mihail Kogalniceanu air base in Romania” or the “Souda Bay Naval Base” in Greece. It would not be “irresponsible” to leave “an obsolete base.”

Rubin is right. The United States needs to “end the U.S. military presence in Turkey.”

But here is a better idea: Why not abandon all foreign bases?

According to the Department of Defense’s (DOD) [Base Structure Report](#): “The DoD manages a worldwide real property portfolio that spans all 50 states, 8 U.S. territories with outlying areas, and 45 foreign countries. The majority of these foreign sites are located in Germany (194 sites), Japan (121 sites), and South Korea (83 sites).” Incredibly, the DOD is “one of the Federal government’s larger holders of real estate managing a global real property portfolio that consists of over 585,000 facilities (buildings, structures, and linear structures), located on 4,775 sites worldwide and covering approximately 26.9 million acres.” The DOD has acknowledged the existence of about 800 U.S. military bases in 80 countries, but we know

from the work of [Nick Turse](#), [David Vine](#), and the late [Chalmers Johnson](#) that that number could be over 1,000. The United States has about 95 percent of the world's foreign military bases. "Red" China has just one.

There are also about 175,000 active duty U.S. troops overseas in over 170 countries and territories. World War II ended in 1945, and yet the United States still maintains tens of thousands of troops in Germany and Japan.

Why not abandon all foreign military bases, bring all of the troops home (not just the ones in Afghanistan), and stop policing the world? And while we're at it, turn over all of the DOD golf courses in Japan to the Japanese.

The U.S. global empire of bases and troops is unnecessary to the defense of the United States, a global force for evil, and a drain on U.S. taxpayers. Its only purpose is to carry out an imperialistic, militaristic, reckless, belligerent, and meddling U.S. foreign policy that is not in the interest of the American people.

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