Local Influence of U.S Global Militarization
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What would it be like to live near a United States (U.S.) military base overseas,
knowing that the U.S. has the largest number of overseas military bases in the world?
While China has more than 4 times the population of the U.S population, and has the
double the number of active military personnel as the United States at 2.3 million (Global
Firepower, 2015), it has a single overseas military base established in D'jibouti in
2016 (Sun & Soubir, 2016).

In contrast, out of ten other countries including China, who have military bases
overseas, the U.S has nearly 1,000 active military bases in 70 countries (McCarthy, 2015;
Weyand, 2012). The U.S has a military presence in every single continent spanning from
Australia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Romania and Spain. To give additional comparison
regarding the U.S. massive global military presence, "Britain, France and Russia … have
30 overseas bases combined" (Vine et.al., 2015). It should come as no surprise that size
of a military presence has a significant influence around the globe and near the local
communities with which the bases are located.

My research question is as follows. What does US global militarization say about
the way the US interacts with other nations? What are the dynamics of having the U.S
military presence in their country? What are the different forms of protest against military
presence in each of these countries? My research builds on the literature about U.S.
reliance on military bases to build its empire, but incorporates data from personal
interviews I conducted while I traveled to Vietnam and Cuba.

While military expansion is central to militarization, equally important is the U.S.'s reluctance to close bases. In Cuba, the U.S cannot find a way to close Guantanamo Bay naval base and its detention camps that house and notoriously torture prisoner's of war, despite Obama's efforts to neutralize Cuban-American relations. In Vietnam, however, some local communities want the U.S military back in the Southeast Asia, because China, its neighboring military power is planning to build an artificial island meant to house military personnel and weapons.

Therefore, these case studies hint at the tension between fear of being under attack, which results in increase militarization, the fear of losing allies if they increase military presence, and fear of losing global domination and reputation in the face of militarization. While on an international level, nations respond to these heightened fears of World War III in different ways, community members in both Vietnam and Cuba are protesting. However, due to the geopolitical forces at play in each of the countries, the methods of resistance takes on different forms.

This study is relevant to today's world because our current President plans to apply hard power tactics with many countries, pit other countries against each other to our advantage, and involve ourselves just enough into war such that certain sectors of our economy profit. Because we are increasing our militarization globally, this brings more fear and tension to our international relations. We need to think about the consequences of militarizing international relations and the ramifications it has on our ability to maintain our allies, continue international trade and the everyday impact on the communities with which we occupy.

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