

Is military spending crippling America?

By [Global Research](#)

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The United States spends hundreds of billions of dollars each year on its military. Part of the budget funds a worldwide network of bases, including sites in former Soviet republics.

The U.S. has 6,000 military bases on its own territory and huge numbers of military facilities abroad – more than any other country in the world.

Experts estimate the number of units to be from 600 to over 800 spread over 130 countries.

Investigative journalist Wayne Madsen believes many of the locations are kept secret.

“Recently, there was an incident where an Air Force enlisted man crashed into a wedding procession in Lithuania. It turns out he was attached to an air base in Lithuania. So every day we find out about additional U.S. bases that we haven’t heard of in the past,” Madsen said.

Why the secrecy? Author and expert in U.S. military bases overseas, Alexander Cooley, says host countries often prefer to keep quiet about the bases.

“As U.S. legitimacy has declined, host country governments have been less willing to publicly be associated with the U.S.,” Cooley says.

However, that is not true for all governments.

Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili welcomes the idea of an American presence on Georgian territory and has reportedly offered the U.S. several thousand hectares of land to use for military bases.

Often, smaller countries like former soviet republic, Kyrgyzstan, allow bases to be set up on their territory for financial reasons.

However, the Georgian president is willing to waive rent and has offered the land with a 90-year lease.

“Georgia wants continuous and prolonged security engagement with the United States and with the West more broadly. Especially now that it sees that its path to EuroAtlantic integration has in some way been stymied. It perceives that a security relationship with the U.S. is the best way to guarantee that EuroAtlantic orientation,” Cooley said.

“So, any offer of Georgian territory or facilities to the United States or to NATO members is an attempt to lock in that kind of security interest and that type of engagement.” he added.

Meanwhile, some analysts say the United States doesn't need about a quarter of the military bases it has around the world.

Moreover, as Wayne Madsen says, the US simply can't afford them any more.

"We won't be able to pay for many of these bases and we may soon see many of these being closed down," he said.

Last year, the United States spent almost as much on its military as the rest of the world put together devoted to defence.

And all this at a time when taxpayers have been counting pennies to make ends meet.

By cutting spending on the military, the United States could massively increase the amount it invests in the needs of ordinary people.

But there are analysts who warn that the new president will not dramatically curtail America's ambitious military policies.

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