

# *Guantanamo Naval Base: An offense to the dignity of Cubans*

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By María Josefina Arce

Guantánamo is the scene of a new International Peace Seminar and for the abolition of foreign military bases, which curtail the sovereignty of the people, They constitute a destabilizing element and a threat to international security.

The United States and its NATO allies, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, have about 850 of these enclaves in the world, 70 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Precisely in Guantánamo, against the will of the Cuban government and people, Washington has illegally maintained a Naval Base since 1903, which fostered corruption, vices and prostitution until 1959.

And after the revolutionary triumph it became a focus of tension and provocations. Between 1962 and 1996 alone, more than eight thousand territorial violations, both air and maritime, and thousands of hostile incidents were recorded.

In its supposed fight against terrorism, the United States installed illegal prisons around the world and the Guantanamo Naval Base was one of them. More than 700 people were tortured and detained there.

UN human rights experts described the violations committed in that enclave as a stain on Washington's commitment to the rule of law.

But in addition, the illegitimate naval base has caused damage to the environment. Cuban experts have pointed out the serious damage to the soils of the Guantanamo Valley since its establishment in 1903.

In the most diverse international forums, the Cuban government, on behalf of all the people, has demanded the closure of the Base and the return of that usurped territory.

A claim supported by the participants in the seven editions of the International Seminar on Peace and against Military Bases, and that in this eighth meeting they will once again express their solidarity with the just claim of the Cuban people.

The Guantánamo Naval Base constitutes an offense to the dignity and sovereignty of Cuba and contradicts the postulates of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, approved in 2014 in Havana at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American States and Caribbeans.

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