

FACTS ABOUT THE U S NAVAL BASE AT GUANTANAMO

The United States naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba, receives constant media coverage ever since the US authorities turned it into a prison camp for alleged terrorists described as “enemy combatants”. A few facts about this military base may be of interest.



The Guantanamo naval base is the oldest military facility of the United States outside its territory, (1903). It was imposed upon the new-born Republic of Cuba by means of the Platt Amendment as a precondition for the withdrawal of the US military occupation forces at the end of the war of independence against Spanish colonial rule.

The base covers 117,6 km² blocking the entrance to one of the best deep-water bays in the country. Cuba has neither access nor any jurisdiction over that enclave. Control and administration of every single aspect within that perimeter is the sole responsibility of the Defence Department of the United States.

The treaty imposed in 1903 and its follow-up version of 1934 use the term “lease” to describe the possession without date of termination of that piece of Cuban territory. The 1934 document stipulated that the perimeter would be used by the United States as a military base and for no other purposes “for as long as both Governments agreed not to modify the treaty”.

In payment for that so-called lease the United States extends an annual cheque for 4,085 USD, equivalent to 34,7 cents per hectare. Since 1959 the Cuban government has refused to cash in those cheques in rejection of what it justly considers to be an illegal usurpation of a portion of its territory.

Article 11, Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba specifies that “Cuba repudiates and considers null and void all treaties, pacts or concessions arranged under conditions of inequality or that disregard or diminish its sovereignty and territorial integrity”.

Since the triumph of the Cuban revolution on 1st January 1959, in spite of the countless transgressions, aggressions and provocations committed from the naval base at Guantanamo, the Government of the Republic of Cuba has reiterated that it will never renounce its rightful sovereignty over that piece of its national territory and will be always ready to resolve that dispute by means of peaceful and responsible negotiations based on International Law.

Nevertheless, the US military authorities, in violation of the letter of the illegal treaty that gave origin to the base, since 2002 turned it into a concentration camp where they have kept more that 600 prisoners from 42 nationalities deprived of every legal and human right to this day.

At the recent 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Cuba submitted a draft resolution requesting attention by the corresponding agencies of the United Nations system to the arbitrary acts and violations of International Law that are being committed at the US naval base in Guantanamo. The draft resolution could not be voted due to the pressures of the United States and its European allies in the Commission.



If you want to know more about these and other topics in relation to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo, you can check the following web-sites: www.cubagob.cu and www.cubadebate.cu

