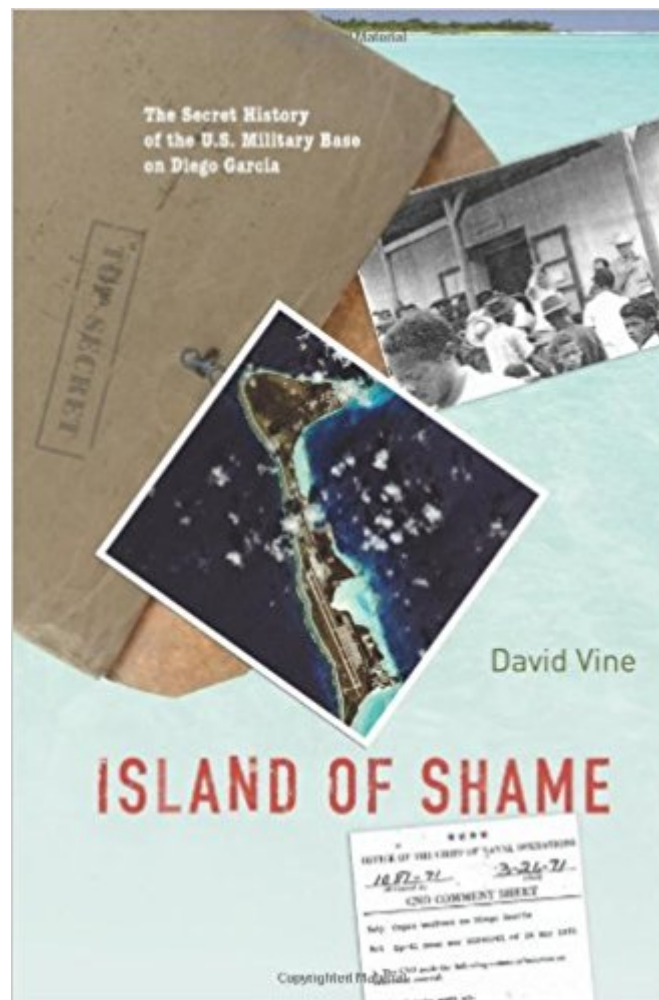




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# Island Of Shame: The Secret History Of The U.S. Military Base On Diego Garcia



## Synopsis

The American military base on the island of Diego Garcia is one of the most strategically important and secretive U.S. military installations outside the United States. Located near the remote center of the Indian Ocean and accessible only by military transport, the little-known base has been instrumental in American military operations from the Cold War to the war on terror and may house a top-secret CIA prison where terror suspects are interrogated and tortured. But Diego Garcia harbors another dirty secret, one that has been kept from most of the world--until now. *Island of Shame* is the first major book to reveal the shocking truth of how the United States conspired with Britain to forcibly expel Diego Garcia's indigenous people--the Chagossians--and deport them to slums in Mauritius and the Seychelles, where most live in dire poverty to this day. Drawing on interviews with Washington insiders, military strategists, and exiled islanders, as well as hundreds of declassified documents, David Vine exposes the secret history of Diego Garcia. He chronicles the Chagossians' dramatic, unfolding story as they struggle to survive in exile and fight to return to their homeland. Tracing U.S. foreign policy from the Cold War to the war on terror, Vine shows how the United States has forged a new and pervasive kind of empire that is quietly dominating the planet with hundreds of overseas military bases. *Island of Shame* is an unforgettable exposé of the human costs of empire and a must-read for anyone concerned about U.S. foreign policy and its consequences. The author will donate all royalties from the sale of this book to the Chagossians.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Vine, assistant professor of anthropology at American University in Washington, D.C., relates the untold story of how in the 1970s, the U.S. forcibly relocated the population of Diego Garcia, a small archipelago near the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, in order to build a military base. Colonized by first the French, then the British, the island was populated by African slaves used to cultivate the coconut plantations fueling Mauritius's sugar industry. Vine reveals how the official U.S. Navy strategy of using island naval bases to secure American power during the Cold War led to the decision to deport the indigenous population, the Chagossians, who were not compensated for the loss of livelihood or property and endured pervasive institutional racism, extreme poverty and health problems. Interviews with surviving Chagossians and the officials who supervised the relocation show the strategic planning and careful coverup in establishing what is now one of the largest military bases in the world. While Vine has done a great service in documenting the forgotten plight of the Chagossians, the book's sluggish pace and painstaking details will dissuade casual readers. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"[A] meticulously researched, coldly furious book that details precisely how London and Washington colluded in a scheme of population removal more redolent of the eighteenth or nineteenth century than the closing decades of the twentieth. . . . [O]ne likes to think that if Barack Obama were somehow to stumble across a copy of David Vine's fine book, he would instantly realize that a great injustice has been done--one that could easily be put right."--Jonathan Freedland, *New York Review of Books*"This angry and angering book is well researched, compelling, and valuable to understanding and emerging US 'empire.'"--Choice"For Vine imperialism, military prerogative and racism have all combined to deny a people a home simply because they were in the way. His succinct style and controlled outrage make for a damning indictment."--Phil Chamberlain, *Tribune*"Island of Shame is not just a gut-wrenching account of how a tropical paradise of powder-white beaches and palm fronds was turned into a massive launch pad for America's military expansionist programme. A large chunk of the book is devoted to how the Chagossians came to build their complex but happy society in the islands and the resulting tragedy of their displacement. Above all, Vine is a top flight researcher. . . . We owe Vine a great debt for shining his light on this island of horrors."--Latha Jishnu, *Business Standard*"David Vine's story of the Chagossians is an exemplary piece of both socially embedded reportage and investigative journalism, despite a tendency to indulge in the self-conscious idiom of academic ethnography and reflexive criticism of US 'imperialism.' At heart, however, he speaks truth to power. Power, though, is not

listening."--Colin Murphy, Irish Times"David Vine . . . has rendered high service by writing a thoroughly documented expose of the crime, which the world has ignored because one of its perpetrators is a superpower, the U.S., and its accomplice, the U.K."--A. G. Noorani, Frontline"Vine's important and timely book sheds welcome light on this dark chapter of U.S. military history, questioning the way our military operates and its impact on civilian populations."--Katherine McCaffrey, American Anthropologist

100% satisfied

Very detailed. Well researched. Information you probably won't find anywhere else. But way too obvious that he's biased. I agree that what the USG did was inhumane and the residents should be allowed to go back to their homeland and be paid substantially, but I'd say thousands of lives are saved as we speak because of our ability to launch missions from Diego Garcia. Of course thousands of innocent people have also been killed from the bombings, so how do you balance the benefits and disasters?Overall a good book but just not as balanced as I was hoping. Maybe if the USG talked about it, it would've been better.

As a country, we ought to be ashamed! I expected Obama to do something about this seeing as though he espouses political correctness...Oops, I forgot that is for others!

I enjoyed reading this book, it was very insightful and offered a different perspective on our military bases around the world. A must read for anyone interested in military history and US involvement in world issues.

The book was well written. I am glad that I am an American. Yet, sometime I do not think that our government has always done the correct thing. Another example, the American Indian.

Anthropologist David Vine spent years researching and writing "Island of Shame", and the meticulousness with which he approached his subject matter shows. For this reader, the book provided important nuances beyond the time constraints of John Pilger's moving television documentary on the deportation of the Chagossians, especially with regard to the type and level of compensation doled out to the evicted Cold War residents of Diego Garcia. (About the only thing missing from "Island of Shame" available within Pilger's first-rate program was the extremely telling

on-camera interview with former U.S. Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, who became visibly irritated, and questioned Pilger's motives.) Like Pilger, Vine gets up close and personal with some of the deported Chagossians, explains the caste system at play in their new "home", and makes no bones about displaying sympathy for their plight. Likewise, he does a thorough job examining the development of the U.S. government's Strategic Island Concept, and fully chronicles the interplay between Washington and London in formulating the coverup of the handoff of Diego that persisted for decades. And the Epilogue poignantly demonstrates how geopolitical decisions, once made, can pose enduring moral tribulations for those who become cogs in the public policy machine. Despite this book's painstaking research on a subject of moral significance, Vine's final chapter on the creation of a "Humanpolitik" descends into a broad-based polemic against military installations and American "empire", with precious little analysis of the pros and cons of the Strategic Island Concept and the use of American beach heads (although his discussion of the Bikinians is directly on-point). Tempering the emotions of this laudable work might have taken the wind out of Vine's sails, but the final chapter of his book, as written, also seems too big a subject to cover seriously in a mere 17 pages. Despite this shortcoming, "Island of Shame" is well worth reading, slowly and carefully. It expands on John Pilger's admirable work, provides yet another illustration of America's far-reaching hand of power (captured magnificently in Stephen Kinzer's "Overthrow"), and should keep us ever-alert to the actions of government - any government. Postscript: Soon after the release of this book, the current U.S. Administration released a small group of Chinese Muslims no longer deemed to be "enemy combatants" from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to Bermuda. The British Government protested publicly, stating categorically that they had never been consulted by Washington on the matter. One must ask: despite the legitimacy of the release of these individuals, is this another example of London dancing to Washington's tune and engaging in "plausible deniability"?

Great Book. Easy to Read . Very Insightful look at US top secret base in the Indian Ocean .

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