

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**INTERVIEWER:** Cathy Lutz is a professor of international studies and anthropology at the Watson Institute. She also loves maps.

**CATHY LUTZ:** I've loved them my whole life. I love tracing pathways from one place to another. I love how they've always been gorgeous. They've always had many colors, your road maps, your school maps. I love geography because of that.

But I really became interested in the politics of maps only much later and as an anthropologist. And in particular, I became interested in maps more recently through my interest in what's been going on the island of Guam in the Western Pacific.

**INTERVIEWER:** Lutz has been studying Guam for several years. She was first drawn to the island after stopping through on her way home from research in Micronesia.

**CATHY LUTZ:** And I sort of passed through that island. And it struck me as a place that looked a little depressed, as not an attractive place to stop and stay. But many years later, I was able to go back and found out that it was actually an incredible place, a place of a lot of natural beauty, of very interesting and welcoming people.

And it only became clear to me a little bit later that this was also an island that had many military facilities and a long military history that had left its mark on the landscape.

**INTERVIEWER:** To understand the United States presence on Guam, we have to look all the way back to 1898.

**CATHY LUTZ:** 1898 was the first US arrival on the island.

**INTERVIEWER:** The United States acquired Guam as a colonial territory in the Spanish-American War.

**CATHY LUTZ:** The Spanish and then the Americans saw Guam as a crucial strategic asset, because it was a coaling station or a provisioning station for any kind of transoceanic activity between the Western hemisphere and Asia.

**INTERVIEWER:** Having Guam as a colonial territory enabled the US to easily trade with countries in Asia. The US held Guam as a colonial territory for this reason for more than 50 years.

- CATHY LUTZ:** And so it was a colonial territory from 1898 up through 1950, at which point the rest of the world, all of the other colonial powers had been having to respond to the anti-colonial movements all over Africa and Asia and South America as well to push back on those powers and say, we need to be self-determining sovereign nations.
- INTERVIEWER:** The residents of Guam were colonial subjects of the United States and shared a status similar to that of people who lived in colonies elsewhere.
- CATHY LUTZ:** So the US was quite concerned, as it saw that happening, this wave of protest and assertion of independence. It was very nervous about what was going to happen in Guam and some of its other territories.
- So in 1950, the US unilaterally made the citizens of Guam citizens. Before that, they were simply territorial colonial subjects.
- INTERVIEWER:** The United States didn't want to give up Guam. So by making the residents of Guam US citizens, the government could hold onto the island.
- CATHY LUTZ:** By linguistic fiat, by a speech act, they said, you are now decolonized in a sense. But that's not how decolonization is supposed to work. There's a UN charter that the US and other nations have signed onto which says there's a process you have to go through.
- You have to, after a period of public education and public discussion, allow local residents to decide what their future will be. They could decide to become a US state or to request that. They could decide to be an unincorporated territory, continue in their status. Or they could decide to be independent.
- But the United States could not risk that, because they saw Guam as so crucial. And so they held on through this means of basically suggesting that the UN process was no longer operative.
- INTERVIEWER:** The reasoning for maintaining control of Guam grew out of the Cold War belief that the US government should have bases all over the world.
- CATHY LUTZ:** Wherever it has taken land for military basing around the world, and it has 1,000 military bases around the world outside the US, it has tended not to want to let them go, with this idea that the United States should be everywhere at all times, the military guardian of all the globe's

interests.

**INTERVIEWER:** There are also tangible economic reasons why the US benefits from holding Guam.

**CATHY LUTZ:** One of the reasons the US has military bases around the world is in order to ensure that trade between the United States and its trading partners not be disrupted. So Guam's role there is obviously crucial. The economic interests then that drive the US military to be out there has everything to do with that kind of international economic-- the profits that are to be made by that trade.

There's also the profits to be made by people who do military construction, military provisioning, military logistics. And those dollars are really crucial to understanding what pushes on base building and base maintenance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Fast forward to the present. And we see the military presence on the island hasn't decreased at all. In fact, there's a planned military buildup.

**CATHY LUTZ:** The military buildup on Guam was planned in cooperation with Japan after years and years of incredibly effective and tireless protests by the people of Okinawa who were very tired of not having the land back that they had lost to the US military in World War II after the Battle of Okinawa and tired of their high rates of crime that the Marines brought with them.

It's particularly noxious when a foreign person comes to your country and commits a crime versus one of your own citizens. So they were fed up. And so they basically agreed to be transferred to Guam with the Japanese government paying billions of dollars to help pay for that transfer and buildup.

At the same time, the US military built another military base on Okinawa. They didn't reduce but replaced their footprint.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**INTERVIEWER:** The US military presence on both of these islands is growing. And on Guam, many residents are protesting.

**CATHY LUTZ:** There has been tremendous pushback from the beginning when the plans were first announced in the mid-2000s that there would be 8,000 Marines plus thousands more dependents.

And that number was reduced when people protested that-- They call it a footprint. That footprint of the military would be so large--

**INTERVIEWER:** This footprint causes huge problems near US military bases around the world. And Lutz says that the buildup will likely make these problems worse on Guam.

**CATHY LUTZ:** It's going to massively change the island in a variety of ways, including in things like rising crime rates, increased numbers of toxins that are going to be leaking into the environment.

So yeah, so Guam gets Okinawa's problems. And the United States feels more secure about this with the sense that they can control events on Guam more than they control events on Okinawa.

But the people of Guam who are unhappy about this move-- and it's not everybody. There's a lot of support, some of it ambivalent support, some of it less than fully informed support. But a lot of people who are unhappy.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how do maps play into that?

**CATHY LUTZ:** Well, mapping has always been a military technology, first and foremost, in certain ways. The development, the devotion of resources to creating them has often come out of what's perceived as military necessity.

So the frontier, the mapping of Indian Territory, the mapping of international sites where the United States might be building scenarios for invasion or for surveillance at least, all of that mapping is extremely important to not just the US military but many modern militaries.

**INTERVIEWER:** Lutz studies the ideology behind the military maps of Guam, not just what they do or don't depict but the implicit argument they make.

**CATHY LUTZ:** The map is not the territory. So the maps of Guam look beautiful. Right we see the topography, lines of elevation. We see neat boundaries between them the military base and the civilian world.

**INTERVIEWER:** These neat boundaries don't exist on the ground, Lutz says.

**CATHY LUTZ:** There is a fence there. But the military toxins that are unfortunately a fact of life on Guam, the heavy use of industrial chemicals by the US military in all of its operations, that those don't

respect the fence line. They don't respect that boundary line.

So the map suggests the military takes care of its land, and the civilians have their land. That is not true.

**INTERVIEWER:** Lutz says that the planned military expansion on Guam resulted in a lot of new maps.

**CATHY LUTZ:** There were various environmental impact statements that were required to be drawn up. And those included many maps of the military base areas and looking for places to put the Marine barracks, places to put the Marines' firing ranges.

And in connection with that, again, people had a much more detailed look at exactly what the military was planning in terms of land taking and impact. There was a large and beautiful area of beach and previously family-owned areas of land that were going to be closed down for the firing range, areas of the ocean that we're going to be closed to fisherpeople because of the danger of being hit by this often very heavy ordinance that's being shot out on these firing ranges.

**INTERVIEWER:** Lutz shows us a map of Guam created by the US military.

**CATHY LUTZ:** Here's an example of a map from the environmental impact statement that suggests how the US military is going to arrange its firing ranges on Guam. The map here shows us, well, there's already an international raceway here. It's basically a small stock car racing facility, so basically suggesting the land is already a little degraded, which it is in some parts.

But then this other green area over which the firing range is set shows, again in beautiful colors, just a couple of dots. It doesn't show us any lines of fire. It just shows us where there's some endangered butterflies in line with the requirements of the environmental impact statement.

This pristine forest that's underneath is not really identified as such. The raceway's identified. The quarry is identified over in the corner here. But the rest of it is like a terra incognita. We don't know what's there, except it suggests it's green.

**INTERVIEWER:** But it doesn't say pristine limestone forest?

**CATHY LUTZ:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** It says quarry.

**CATHY LUTZ:** Right.

And the proposed land acquisition area is a quiet line over here, which is to say, this is land that doesn't belong to the military right now, which they want to take, which basically will take them from, again, a smaller to a larger footprint. The map maker suggests that the military itself is a highly professional, highly scientific organization that is going to take care to do the least amount of damage to the land of Guam as they can.

What it doesn't map are contamination sites that exist both on and off-base, some of them right in this area. They're not identified.

So it suggests that there's no past. There's just present and future. And that future is under the control of professional, scientific personnel of the military who are going to do their best to make this a positive for Guam.

There are just hundreds of maps that have been produced. This is just one of hundreds of maps.

**INTERVIEWER:** These maps all propose a potential future for the island. But there are many possible futures that aren't included.

**CATHY LUTZ:** The military had several alternative sites for that firing range. They presented each of them in the form of a map. We could have it here. We could have it here. We could have it here.

The no firing range alternative, the Marines will use the firing ranges that already exist on Guam for use of the Air Force and the Navy, that map is not there. So we're led to believe, here's our choices. And I think that's one of the most important things about a map is the way it limits our sense of what the possibilities are.

We're mapping for a purpose. But we're only mapping these three alternatives.

**INTERVIEWER:** In order to propose alternatives to the military presence on Guam, Lutz says we need to stop seeing these maps as objective.

**CATHY LUTZ:** They're objective. They're scientific. They take a lot of highly detailed work and knowledge and technologies like, now, satellites and so on. But I think being knowledgeable about how a photograph or a map can deceive us about the nature of reality is really important. It's a kind of visual literacy that we, I think, need to teach in our schools and in our public life to be able to

talk about. Those against the grain of that assumption of objectivity is really important.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

One of the things I would love to see-- and nobody has the time to do this on Guam, because they're too busy reacting to this and trying to stop this. But I would love to see a map of what the people of Guam think the island might look like in a world without US military bases.

What would those areas-- how would they be rehabilitated? What activities would occur there? What people would live there? What would the island be like?

**INTERVIEWER:** Cathy, thank you so much for coming in today and talking to us.

**CATHY LUTZ:** Thanks for being interested, Sarah.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**INTERVIEWER:** This has been "Trending Globally, Politics and Policy." If you enjoyed today's conversation, you can subscribe to the podcast on iTunes, SoundCloud, or Stitcher or download us on your favorite podcasting app. If you like us, rate us. And help others who might enjoy the show find us. For more information, go to [watson.brown.edu](http://watson.brown.edu).

[MUSIC PLAYING]