Civilians will be war shields with Civilian-Military Port

“Given that the name of the Jeju naval base is ‘civilian-military complex port’, it is a civilian port. Therefore it will not be a target of any attacks, according to the Geneva Convention.” Woo Kuan-Min, Jeju Island governor made this abrupt remark on July 29, 2013, during a general meeting of the island promotion committee for the construction of a new airport, held in the Jeju Chamber of Commerce and Industry building in Jeju City.

In response, the Gangjeong Village Association released a press release on July 29th critisizing the statement. In the release, they pointed out that, “Even though it can be mistaken for a civilian port due to its name, it is in fact a military port by law and the whole port was designated a military war section area.” Ultimately, they want to state that what Governor Woo really means by his statements is that he does not mind “civilians and civilian facilities being used as shields in war, which is strongly in violation of the spirit of the Geneva Convention.”

The Village Association strongly denounced the governor saying that he is merely playing the role of a rubber approval stamp for the conservative Park Geun-Hye war, which is strongly in violation of the spirit of the Geneva Convention.”

Meanwhile, the prominent Cardinal priest leader of the struggle, Fr. Mun Jong-Hyeon, accidentally cut off his left hand pointer finger with a ginder while doing traditional Korean wood carving calligraphy on August 11. His finger was reattached through surgery and he is also in the hospital recovering.

Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon and Artist Koh Gilchun in the Hospital

Jeju artist, Koh Gilchun, who is well known for his art activism in Ganjeong and brought the Jeju struggle to the attention of Noam Chomsky when he met with him in both 2011 and 2012 passed out due to cerebral hemorrhage on the final day of the Gangjeong Grand March, August 3rd. He had emergency brain surgery and was in intensive care for six days and then moved to general care. He is currently undergoing a slow and long rehabilitation process, including many basic things such as walking. Meanwhile, the prominent Cardinal priest leader of the struggle, Fr. Mun Jong-Hyeon, accidentally cut off his left hand pointer finger with a ginder while doing traditional Korean wood carving calligraphy on August 11. His finger was reattached through surgery and he is also in the hospital recovering.

Oliver Stone Visits Ganjeong

By K.J. NOH, Veterans for Peace

Highly acclaimed film director, Oliver Stone, whose films have been about revealing the hidden workings of power, Crimes of Empire, and opposition, and telling histories that have been silenced, erased or distorted, came to Gangjeong on August 2nd. He came to Jeju Island to demonstrate his solidarity with the cause of the Ganjeong villagers and their struggle against the naval base. Oliver Stone’s first act was to visit Film Critic Yang Yoon-Mo in prison. He expressed his concern about the conditions of incarceration to the prison warden, and denounced the incarceration of Professor Yang as a political prisoner.

“The courage of Professor Yang inspires me,” he stated to the press. “I believe without a doubt that he is a prisoner of conscience and I call for him to be released immediately.”

He also joined the Grand March for Peace and Life, putting on a yellow T-shirt and walking with the protestors for several miles. The following day, Oliver joined in the “Floundered Peace” ceremony, toured Gangjeong village, and witnessed the oppression of non-violent protestors. He then marched with the protestors again, this time leading the march with Mayor Kang, Father Moon Kyu Hyun & Moon Jeong Hyun, marching all the way to Tongin Grand March in Jeju City, to join the final rally, the closing event of the epic, the Grand March for Life and Peace.

Askad about his opposition to the base he said, “This base will host US Aegis missile destroyers, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines. It’s part of Obama’s Pacific pivot...put in place to threaten China...We have to stop this. All this is leading up to a war, and I’ve seen war in Asia. I do not want another war here.”
No to U.S. Pivot to Asia-Pacific and Militarism!

Sung-Ho Choo, a member of the Gangjeong Village International Team, recently joined the "Conference on U.S. Strategic Pivot to Asia-Pacific, U.S. Militarism, Intervention and War" held in Manila, Philippines, from July 10-13. The conference was co-organized by the Ban the Bases, Asia-Wide Campaign, People’s Forum on Peace for Life, Asia-Pacific Anti-US Bases Network, and International League of People’s Struggles (ILPS).

Joining the conference were around 80 peace activists from around the world. What was clearly felt was a common sense of urgency. War is a real danger. It is something that restricts the freedom of people: restricting their access to their history and culture; restricting their access to natural resources; restricting their access to their own lives. It is something that can make the ordinary people in the islands and the indigenous peoples fall into the disaster of war during World War Two and after. It brought disastrous ground war to Korea, Viet Nam and Okinawa. It led to generation. However the idea of only one center is fundamentally counter to the nature of islands, embraced by the ocean in all directions.

Take our common history as example. Imperial Japan was once the one center point for Okinawa, Jeju and Vietnam where these islands became the stepping stones for the expansion of Imperial Japan. During Japan’s colonization, lots of people exchanged and communicated with others between Japan and Jeju-Okinawa-Taiwan. However, this kind of exchange promoted under militarism finally drags the islands into the diorama of war during World War Two and after. It brought disastrous ground war to Okinawa and Jeju and in Taiwan. Okinawa was tightly militarized and heavily occupied by the U.S. military as labor as well, but following the hands in Okinawa, did not see war at that time. However they later faced the terrible, extended massacre of 4.3. The partial corporate point of Okinawa’s war was established by U.S. militarism was broken right after the war. To Imperial Japan and left as an immovable line of disposed territories which further disfranchises militarism and deepens the division across the sea and land. Thus the reality of islands in the seas and the land. It is a sensitive point of our history and seek to find a common future peace across the ocean, between the islands of the region.

On August 3rd, the International Dialogue Conference on “Solaing Peace from Oceanic Perspectives” was held in Taipei, Taiwan. It was invited as one of the speakers in the session, “An Oceanic Decolonization of Geopolitics.” I began by sharing a short text titled “Japan for Peace Case Study” because I think the long suffering islanders can provide an inspiring source to deconstruct geopolitics and for the peace in our region.

A long time ago, Jeju, Okinawa, and Taiwan were embraced by the ocean and developed unique cultures. Their influence and exchange came from the mainland or big islands. Islands have been “margin” places for the “center” of the mainland or big islands, but islands as their own center have gone on their own paths from generation to generation. However the idea of only one center is fundamentally counter to the nature of islands, embraced by the ocean in all directions.

There are numerous reasons why the people of Gangjeong, the people of Jeju Province, and other peace activists work to put a stop to the construction of the naval base in Jeju. Just to list a few: The undemocratic procedures of the site selection process; the undemocratic procedures of lowering the Absolom Preservation Title which Gangjeong used to hold to the unstable conditions of the location; [base] design errors; a manipulative and crooked [base] simulation; an artificial construction that presupposes the destruction of environment; the government’s severe violence and denigration of its duty in its protection of this unlawful construction; a fake national security project that facilitates amnesties; the unexecuted resolutions of the navy, construction company, national assembly and local assembly; and finally the immorality of the construction companies, Samsung Corp. and Daelim Industries. As you can see, the naval base although plagued with problems from its birth, is still being enforced.

I believe that the strong protest in Gangjeong is a struggle between those who support and try to destroy the truth and those who try to obstruct it. At the moment it looks like those who try to cover up the truth are winning but in the end, we will prevail and those who seek and truth and justice will be able to put an end to all of the lies and the construction of the military base in Gangjeong, where peace begins.

This is my conviction and hope and I will continue to be with those who love nature and peace in their natural state. I call for coexistence and solidarity and for the peace in our region. It is an impressive event in Dienan and then went to see Rohememn Barnece (where the US Marines are being deployed) and the Shal Bay Satellite Receiving Station that is part of the whole NSA global surveillance network. Next Vietnam and I went to Melbourne. We were already here at the historic site now, of course, which now occupies one-third of Guang, wants even more land on the small island due to expansion as a result of the pivot.

As you already know, construction of a naval base is being enforced in Gangjeong, a village on Jeju Island. The project has a name both incomprehensible and pernicious: “Civil-Military Complex Project for Beauty.” It is to plan to build a structure of the state and passenger liners at the same time.

They hold signs that read: “Stop the construction.” Peace is the only solution. It’s all about finding a common future peace across the ocean, between the islands of the region. If we are able to find a way to make peace in Gangjeong, the peace in the world.

I truly hope we don’t make a mistake of being divided by war and military, and think of the Absolute Preservation Zone title which Gangjeong used to hold, the unsuitable conditions of the location, [base] design errors; a manipulative and crooked [base] simulation; an artificial construction that presupposes the destruction of environment; the government’s severe violence and denigration of its duty in its protection of this unlawful construction; a fake national security project that facilitates amnesties; the unexecuted resolutions of the navy, construction company, national assembly and local assembly; and finally the immorality of the construction companies, Samsung Corp. and Daelim Industries. As you can see, the naval base although plagued with problems from its birth, is still being enforced.

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