

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

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Photo by Han Jin-oh
Article by Curry

An Energizing and Reinvigorating 2017 Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace

After walking over 100 km up the east and west coasts of Jeju Island from Gangjeong Village in the south to Jeju City in the north, the participants of the 2017 Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace still had energy and enthusiasm for the closing rally. As the Gangjeong Choir performed, they invited all their fellow Gangjeong residents and activists to join them on the stage to sing “Let all who are dispossessed and weak face each other and hold hands, A new world is approaching, Let us sing as we dance!” (“What is Peace” by Joyakgol based on a speech by Father Mun Jeong-hyun).

Heavy rain started to fall as soon as the march left from the entrance of the Jeju Navy Base on July 31, and on the second day one participant reported,

“it felt like the hottest day in Grand March history.” Nevertheless, the march was joined by altogether about 2000 people bringing solidarity from the anti-THAAD struggle in Seongju, the citizens opposing the Jeju second airport in Seongsan, as well as from the Sewol Ferry tragedy, the Yongsan eviction tragedy, Ssangyong motors wrongful termination, and the Milyang struggle against high-power electric lines. There were Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, farmers associations, trade unions, people from a wide variety of NGOs, doctors, artists, children, students, mothers, fathers, people of all ages and abilities, from in and out of Jeju and Korea.

This year is the 10th anniversary of the struggle against the navy base, and over the years the networks

of solidarity have grown large and vibrant. Gangjeong villagers started the Grand March in 2008, and since 2012 the annual march has been open to the public. This year the name of the march changed from the Gangjeong Grand March to the Jeju Grand March with more effort to include the struggle against the second Jeju airport/airbase in Seongsan. When the east course of the march joined a candlelight rally on August 1st in Sinsan-ri, Seongsan, ex-mayor Kang Dong-Gyun remarked that “the push for the 2nd airport doesn’t look at all different from when the Jeju Navy Base came in.”The march gave participants a chance to share the accumulated wisdom from a variety of peace movements and encouragement for the peace work that still lies ahead.

The 18 hours’ resistance against THAAD

By Kim Young-Jae,
a peace activist in
Soseong-ri, Seongju

At 2 pm, Sept. 6, there was a rally which is held in the front of Soseong-ri village hall every Wednesday. The rally was for gathering the will of rally participants in expectation of intense resistance the next day, against the bringing of the additional four THAAD launchers which had been delayed so far.

Right after the rally and march, residents, peace keepers, and our supporters started a peace action of stopping the move of additional THAAD launchers by blocking a road to the THAAD area. Then we fiercely resisted for 18 hours until 9 am Sept. 7, the next day, bearing with our bodies merciless violence by 8,000 riot policemen mobilized from nationwide.

Even though tens of construction vehicles including four launchers of THAAD and oil vehicles were moved in, we did not fail. In the situation when our bones were broken, flesh was torn, and tens of people fainted, our 18 hours’ desperate fight was formidable and I think we made a victory.

The additional deployment of THAAD means a critical weapon system of US Missile Defense has completed its unfolding in the Korean peninsula. Thus the new cold war system between North Korea-China-Russia and ROK-US-Japan became more intensified, with the higher possibility of war. The Korean peninsula came to bear all damage, swept away in the conflicts of the powerful countries including the United States.

The people-loving people in Korea including the citizens of Soseong-ri, Seongju, Gimcheon, and Won Buddhists will fight to the end with all our means and ways, not submitting to state violence, until THAAD is withdrawn. For the peace of this land and the world, we will continue this great struggle.



On Sept. 6-7, about 500 people resisted for 18 hours in Soseong-ri, Seongju, to stop the deployment of four additional THAAD launchers. Photo by the Anti-THAAD office, Soseong-ri.

Why Iwakuni?

The Iwakuni base or the US Marines Air Station Iwakuni, located in the western part of Japan, is the nearest US Marine base to the Korean Peninsula and is shared with Japanese troops. The fighter jets stationed at the base often join large scale US-ROK joint military exercises. In fact, the large US base would become a launch pad for the peninsula if an emergency would happen there. The U.S. and Japanese governments are now pushing through massive consolidation of the base including additional deployment of 61 fighter jets and construction of a huge military housing complex outside the base. According to the plan, around 10,000 U.S. soldiers and their families would live in Iwakuni city (population 135,000). Local people have resisted the consolidation plan since its announcement in 2006. Because of the existence of the base, they have faced so much suffering such as noise, traffic accidents and sexual abuse committed by US soldiers. And, they finally showed their will of opposition against the base. You may see yellow banners at every house near the site of military housing complex if you come there. The banners show residents’ opposition. You may also see a yellow flag of Gangjeong if you have a chance to join the regular protest held by local people. They hold the flag which was brought from a Korean activist along with other solidarity banners. The regular protest is held 3 times every month by local people to show their continuous protest to the base consolidation. It already marked the 7th anniversary since its launching. They also organize larger scale protests sometimes, calling for solidarity of people in other areas. People’s solidarity is required to dismantle a military base and build peace. Under recent rising of military tension over the Korean peninsula, the anti-base struggle in Iwakuni has its significance as people’s efforts for building peace in East Asia. Iwakuni people’s resistance will continue. We ask you to pay attention and make solidarity with the Iwakuni people’s unyielding struggle for peace.

By Dr. Lisa Linda Natividad, Guam

The Colonization of Guam

Guahan (Guam) is the southern most island of the Mariana Islands located in the Micronesian region of the Pacific. Guahan was ceded to the United States in 1898 as a war prize of the Spanish American War and made official through the Treaty of Paris. On December 8, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Guahan following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The Chamorro people experienced war atrocities under the hands of the Japanese government. Thousands of people were forced onto concentration camps, many women were forced to be comfort women to Japanese soldiers, and hundreds of others were killed. The wartime experience for Chamorros included atrocities such as: death, rape, starvation, and slavery. On July 21, 1944, the U.S. Marines returned to Guahan to reoccupy the island. While some refer to this period as one of “liberation” in Guahan’s history, others denounce the notion in light of the United States’ failure to provide the same rights granted to U.S. citizens living in the 50 states, such as the right to vote for President. This is inherent in the island’s unresolved political status as an unincorporated territory of the United States. The island of Guahan’s current political status is that of an unincorporated territory of the United States, which is akin to being a current-day colony. Guam (Guahan) remains on the United Nations list of 17 Non-Self Governing Territories of the world. Since colonization by the Spanish in the mid-1600s, the Chamorro people of Guahan have never been recognized as an independent or sovereign people. They are subject to the laws of the United States but are not fully protected by the Constitution of the United States. They have been governed, occupied, and colonized by administering powers that include Spain, Japan, and the United States, who remains the island’s colonizer. *Editor's note: On August 14, a peace rally in Guam called for de-colonization and de-militarization.*

Justice for Kian and Other Victims

Regarding Duterte’s drug war in which around 8,000-12,000 people are known to be killed, Merci Llarinas-Angeles (Solidarity Correspondent, Peace Women Partners) writes from Philippines, “On Aug. 16, policemen shot 17-year old Kian delos Santos on the head, while he was already kneeling on the ground and begging for mercy. [...] There is now an outcry from many sectors in the Philippines which was expressed when thousands joined the funeral march for Kian this Aug. 26. The marchers called not only for Justice for Kian delos Santos but for all the victims of Duterte’s drug war.” On May 23, 2017, Duterte had declared “martial rule over the 27 provinces and 33 cities of Mindanao, the second largest island in the Philippines.” For more details of the situation and the people’s movement in the Philippines, see ‘Where to, Philippines?’ by Merci Llarinas-Angeles in the website of International Strategy Center.

IPAN calls for THAAD OUT OF KOREA

It was about one day after my arrival to Melbourne, Australia that I got the news of people’s tragic 18 hour resistance in opposition to THAAD in Korea. My heart was there. Yet, friends in Australia helped remind me the importance of connecting dots. I was truly honored to be a part of the IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network) annual conference held in Melbourne, from Sept. 8 to 10, this year. IPAN is ‘a network of community and church groups, trade unions, peace and anti-war organizations and concerned individuals from across Australia’ whose overall vision is first of all, 'to advocate for an independent and peaceful Australia, free of foreign military bases, and free of interventions by other foreign governments, corporations, or vested interests.' More than 160 people mostly from around 60 Australian organizations also welcomed inspiring speakers from overseas such as Assoc. Prof David Vine, United States and Olivier Bancoult, indigenous leader from Diego Garcia. It was here in this intense conference mainly held in the historic building of the Maritime Union of Australia, Melbourne, that I could also share the situation of Jeju and Korea, as well as appeal for solidarity with the people of Soseong-ri against THAAD. On Sept. 12, a sudden protest for "THAAD Out of Korea!" "No WAR!" "No THAAD!" was organized thanks to the wonderful organizers in IPAN. About 15 people showed up in front of the US Consulate building in Melbourne, despite the rain. In our protest, we also connected dots to Pine Gap in the middle of Australia, a US-led spy base and part of the missile defense system which would take a critical role in case of war, according to Dr. Hannah Middleton and Prof. Richard Tanter. Otherwise, greatest thanks to Annette Brownlie and Shirley Winton, without whom, I could never come here. My deep thanks to Warren Winton and Hosu, as well. For more on IPAN, see: ipan.org.au



IPAN activists protest in front of the US Consulate building, Melbourne, Sept. 12. Photo by Choi Sung-hee

International Solidarity



The fishers of Gaza and people of Gangjeong are connected in a symbolic way thanks to Ann Wright, a US peace activist who visited Gangjeong on July 28-29 and had been a part of the ‘Women’s Boat to Gaza’ last October. The people of Gangjeong pictured here includes Kim Mi-ryang, daughter of a sea-saving woman and fishermen who migrated from Vietnam and the Philippines. The fishermen and women of both Gaza and Ganjeong suffer from occupation/ militarization. By showing solidarity and friendship, dots are connected again, thanks to Ann Wright. Photos by Ann Wright and Sung-hee Choi.

2017 Jeju Grand March and Peace for the Sea Camp Reflections

By Curry

Each year a special double-length Gangjeong Village Story reports on the annual Grand March and the annual Peace for the Sea Camp. Both events bring together people from around Korea, East Asia, and beyond to encourage and learn from one another’s experience working for peace. This year, counting regular members of the international team and people who joined briefly, 21 internationals joined the Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace (July 30-Aug. 5). 11 of these were people from Japan who are involved in the struggle against the US bases in Okinawa, including Kamoshita-san from Henoko who has joined the march several times. Cha Cha joined the march for the second time, this time as a volunteer with the international team. Others, including Suki from Hong Kong, Ella from Taiwan, and Uno from Indonesia, had visited Gangjeong before, but joined the march for the first time. As always the Grand March would not be possible without the tireless work of the organizers, the safety teams, the medical teams, the cooks, the dishwashers, the donors, and the churches, farmers associations, and civil society groups that provided breakfasts and snacks along the way.

Peace for the Sea Camp was held in Ishigaki August 16-30. 42 participants from Jeju, Okinawa, Taiwan, Ishigaki, Yonaguni, Miyako, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Germany, Poland, and the US were hosted by 28 local volunteers. Diverse activities included games, discussion, stargazing, tideland exploration, war site visits, an exchange party, and a campfire concert. During the symposium on the 17th, we learned about radioactivity measurement in Japan, the Gangjeong struggle, the No-Nuke movement in Taiwan, the struggles at Henoko and Takae, Okinawa, spiritual foundations for optimism, the arms trade, Miyako Island, indigenous land struggle in Taiwan, and Japanese and American discourse about atomic bombs. We viewed the 2017 movie “Targeted Island” by Chie Mikami which features the anti-base struggles in Ishigaki, Miyako, Yonaguni, and Okinawa. In closing, we read a joint declaration for peace and had a peace walk through Ishigaki City.

Hyunsung Park

I arrived on August 15 at Ishigaki island to join the Inter Island Solidarity Peace Camp. It was my first time to participate in this camp. Even though I participated in various camps with Byeopssi school, new camps always give me feelings of excitement and nervousness.

During the camp, we heard lectures on the subject of military bases, islands and war, did field visits, and had exchange meetings with Ishigaki residents. All the programs were meaningful, but particularly memorable was the field trip. On Ishigaki, there are traces of several military installations that were made in preparation for the attack of the U.S during World War II. Most of the military installations were created by Joseon (Korean) people who were forcibly drafted, and of course there were Chinese, Taiwanese, as well. There were also ‘comfort women’ in Ishigaki. So though the caves and facilities were well constructed, I couldn't admire them. At least everyone in the camp knows how they were made. I thought a lot about how the Joseon people lived in the isolated island society.

Another memorable thing was the exchange meeting with residents of the villages where the missile base is being constructed. There are young people who are active joining the anti-military base activities in the island. Actually, young people are not the generation who experienced and remember the war. It was impressive how they remain on the island to protect Ishigaki.

Suki

I'm Suki, and I am from Hong Kong. I learned about peace issues from the Jeju April 3rd Peace Camp in Gangjeong from March 30th -April 2nd, 2017. After that, I wanted to learn more about peace issues on different islands. Therefore, I joined the Jeju Grand March and peace camp in Ishigaki island.

During the Jeju Grand March, I was exhausted but I never thought about giving up because I know how peace is important to me. Then, hearing the stories during peace camp I think that islands don't belong to bigger nations. Each island has its own unique culture and we need to help keep that culture. After attending the Jeju April 3rd peace camp, the Jeju Grand March and the Ishigaki Inter-Island Solidarity peace camp I learned that islands have always played an important part in war, and the military takes islands as strategic bases. I think that the bigger nations don't want the mainlands to become a battlefield; it seems that people from the mainland don't care about the peace issues as much the islanders. But, even though people live in different islands, they are facing the same struggle against military bases in their islands. If I don't want war to come again then I think that inter-island solidarity is important for me, islanders, and the whole world.

Cha Cha

I am an ordinary Seoulite who didn’t even know where Gangjeong was. The media was too quiet after I first heard about the naval base problem of Gangjeong. Silly optimistic me was thinking that everything was okay. I was so shocked when I saw the naval base perfectly built when I was on vacation to Jeju in July 2016. I felt guilt about not knowing what to do when I saw some activists who cried out and hit the base fence with a hammer. I had to do something, so I joined the 2016 Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace.

Bruce Gagnon, Ken Jones, and Will Griffin of Veterans for Peace US walked with me and told me about THAAD and why the US wants to have THAAD and naval bases in South Korea. In the face of this massive power and race for supremacy, I couldn’t stop crying on my 100km march. I spent a year doing something, even small things, to recover from my time that I did nothing for Gangjeong. Why did I join the 2017 Grand March again? Because the naval base is still there, and nobody can preserve our peace instead of us. Even though the naval base of Gangjeong will be withdrawn, a second and third Gangjeong will come up in other places, in other nations because the US wants to contain China. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bruce Gagnon, Ken Jones, Will Griffin who contributed to awaken and change my life with great international solidarity.

Yuichi Kamoshita

Every year, the Jeju Grand Peace March offers a chance for foreigners to come and participate. It is a great chance to see Jeju, communicate with people and feel the island of Jeju. As a Japanese person, walking and praying in Jeju is very meaningful. My grand or great-grand father’s generation invaded, occupied and exploited South and North Korea. I understand that my travel to Korea is to help build reconciliation between Korea and Japan by walking and praying. Human kind is facing a critical time today. The environment, our Mother Earth is crying. Our daily life kills a lot of lives on this Earth. The problem is that we don't realize this fact. We humans don't have time to make an arm race. While we are spending so much energy to live this human made systemic world; the Earth, our Mother, and our home is going to be the place where we cannot live. My prayer is that we are not divided by making enemies. All living creatures seek happiness. When we face enemies who disturb our aim, let's pray for their happiness. Their happiness becomes my happiness. In the end, I humbly ask you to please come to Henoko, Okinawa!! We are fighting to protect our bay from the new U.S. military base construction. We need a large number of people to stop the construction. We must defend our bay, there are more than 5300 species including 262 endangered species that live in the bay. Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo

If you need advice to come to Henoko, Okinawa, please email here : duckwalksdrums@gmail.com

And more info : henokononviolentaction.blogspot.jp

2017 Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace

The first day of the march starts with heavy rain as the east coast team walks past Beom Seom (Tiger Island).
Photo by Wooki Lee



Byeopssi school students serve lunch.
Photo by Wooki Lee



Above photo- Playing in the ocean to cool off from the heat.
Photo by Wooki Lee



Center photo- International participants from Okinawa, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the US posing in front of Seongsan Sunrise Peak. Photo by Erica

Below photo- Dancing together at the festival on the last day of the grand march. Photo by Wooki Lee



Left Photo- Dishwashing team assembly line washes hundreds of dishes two times a day.
Photo by Curry



West coast team marching along the ocean.
Photo by Wooki Lee

Ishigaki Peace Camp 2017



Korean participants say farewell to Ishigaki organizers after the closing peace march. Photo by Joy Hou

IU and 5 other children from Ishigaki and Miyako enjoyed playing at peace camp. Photo by Lee Sangsun



The final celebration of camp had a traditional performance called Shishi-mai. The lion dance wards off bad spirits and brings prosperity to the community, this dance has been taught for centuries in Okinawa. Photo by Lee Sangsun



Above Photo- Setsuko-san tells her story of growing up in Ishigaki during the war, her work as an assistant to the US as a geological surveyor, and her campaigns for peace and justice. Photo by Curry



Exploring the tide flats and mangroves, participants saw the unique nature of Ishigaki Island. Photo by Curry



Above photo- Members of peace camp came from Japan mainland, Okinawa, Yonaguni, Miyako, Ishigaki, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Germany, Poland, and the US. Photo by Shin Jung-ja



Posing in front of the Article 9 statue. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution renounces war as a sovereign right. Photo by Curry

Miyako Mothers for a Peaceful Future

By Curry

Miyako Island is part of Okinawa prefecture, between Okinawa Island and Ishigaki. An American base on Miyako was converted into a Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) base in 1972 when Okinawa Prefecture was returned to Japan. Now the Abe government has been working to change Article 9 of Japan’s constitution, which renounces “the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes,” and is expanding the SDF and its capabilities. Changes have been felt strongly in the southwest islands of Japan. There are new base plans in Ishigaki, a new radar base in Yonaguni, and the Miyako base is being expanded. There are already 160 SDF soldiers in Miyako but the plan is for the deployment of 600 more. There was no environmental assessment, and the base threatens to contaminate an important source of fresh water for the island, but the mayor declared in advance that he would support the base plan. One outspoken critic is City Council member Kaori Ishimine. She shared at the Ishigaki Peace Camp how she and other mothers were concerned that the base plans would make Miyako a target for war. They broke the taboo of talking about the SDF and formed “Mothers for a Peaceful Future.” “It is for the children and for ourselves. War is the antithesis of bearing and raising children.” Kaori-san says it is important that they keep sharing their message of peace because “the existence of the base hurts us. That is because it exists to hurt people in other countries.”

Ishigaki Elders Call for No More War

By Melissa

Two Ishigaki elders, Setsuko-san and Shiohira-san, told their stories about growing up during the war and the current opposition to the new Japanese Self Defense Force base in Ishigaki. The 1945 Battle of Okinawa between the US Military and the Japanese Imperial Army stretched to Ishigaki Island as an air raid. Both elders told how their schools were destroyed and family members were killed in the war. They described the destruction of bombs and torpedoes and how 7th grade boys became soldiers. Locals were forced to hide in malaria infested mountains, when the Japanese army said US troops might invade. While people were hiding, Japanese soldiers stole cattle and food to feed themselves. Thousands died of what is now called 'wartime malaria.' Currently, against the will of the 4 villages where the base will be located, the Japanese government, including the pro-base Ishigaki mayor, is sending up to 600 Self Defense Force troops and building a missile base as “protection against Chinas.”

However, elders like Setsuko-san and Shiohira-san warn against this idea of ‘self-defense,’ that it will actually make Ishigaki a target of war again. The other surrounding islands are also affected. The Yonaguni island radar base was completed in 2016 and Miyako islanders are struggling against new base plans as well. Listening to our elders we know that military bases do not bring more security, they bring more war and terror. Peace camp ended with a declaration: "To make a peaceful sea, all the islands should be demilitarized."

After That Day

By Son So-hee, Seongju Anti-THAAD Resident Committee

Why am I like this? Sleepless days go on. In the middle of night, I suddenly wake up and feel thirsty. Then I try to swallow but I can feel something coming up from deep in my throat. I feel like vomiting, but nothing comes up. At dawn, I hear the footsteps of military boots. I again see the vague figures who destroyed the tent and forcibly pulled us out one by one as we were sitting and wailing there. When I get up in the morning, I feel pain as if I was beaten so badly. On the way up to Soseong-ri, I start sobbing before the village comes into sight. I come to realize that enormous violence has been done to me and I have collapsed. Although I fought for stopping the deployment of THAAD, I also trembled in fear much of the time. We were infuriated much of the time but our fury couldn’t stop THAAD. Their military boots trampled on us. The place where state power rampaged has fallen into ruin. We try to sweep, wipe and organize our living place but can’t get rid of the traces. The memories of those days are not sounds. Our body remembers them. Hold myself together! Do not lose myself! Therefore, I can remember everything.

(Excerpt from the original which Son So-hee wrote days after the forceful deployment of additional THAAD launchers in Soseong-ri on Sept. 7 when 500 people resisted against it for 18 hours. See page 1. She has been fighting to stop THAAD since the struggle began last year. She visited Gangjeong in May as a member of the Seongju Women’s Committee against THAAD and attended the Grand March with an artist peace group from Seongju and Gimcheon.)

Publication of a Report on Soft Corals

On July 26, the Jeju soft coral task force team released a report on the status of soft corals in the Gangjeong Sea due to navy base construction. The survey was carried out since 2007 when the village was chosen for base construction. According to the report in 2015, the numbers, sizes, and activities of soft corals in directly affected areas have greatly shrunk. In 2016 and 2017, people carried out various protection activities based on the survey. The Gangjeong Sea has been designated for seven protection zones including the UNESCO biosphere reserve.



On July 25th, 3 months after the start of the new base landfill project, 151 people participated in the Sit-In-On-The-Sea at Oura Bay, Okinawa to protest. On that day, construction work was temporarily stopped. Activists held solidarity signs sent from around the world with messages like “Sea of Life” and “Save the Dugongs”. Henoko Blue will hold the next Sit-In-On-The-Sea on October 25th. Photo by Henoko Blue.

A solidarity peace trip to Korea

By Will Griffin, Veterans for Peace

We, the Solidarity Peace Delegation organized by Stop THAAD in Korea, concluding our July 23-28 visit to South Korea, called for immediate US-South Korean action to de-escalate growing military tensions on the Korean Peninsula. We had 3 demands: 1. Remove the THAAD anti-missile system 2. End the annual war games (Joint US-ROK military exercises) 3. Have the US-ROK engage in diplomacy with North Korea. [...]

I feel our delegates are becoming more invested in Korean struggles. Recent Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein already understands the devastating consequences that are happening here. Medea Benjamin of CODEPINK is bringing a lot of knowledge from her experience with Women Cross the DMZ in 2015. Reece Chenault is the main event because so many labor organizers here in Korea have heard a lot about US Labor Against the War. And I'm meeting many activists that I met on previous delegations, strengthening our relationships. Our delegation met with Representative Jae Kwon Shim at the National Assembly, who is chairman of the foreign affairs and unification committee to talk about our opposition to deployment of THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea. He was surprisingly rational. To sum up, he said we need to change public opinion and force him and the government to remove THAAD. Also, he mentioned that we need to work together to create an environment in which we don't need THAAD. We plan to do that. The trip was successful in building solidarity, learning about organizing in South Korea, helping to build awareness of the significance of Korean Peninsula issues, and preparing for future resistance to militarism.

(Above are excerpted from longer articles. For more, refer to ‘Quick Review of my latest trip to South Korea,’ by Will Griffin, Peace Report, Aug. 4, 2017)

Alliance for Arms Deal

From Aug. 21 to 31, United States and South Korea carried out the world's biggest computerized annual war exercise called the UFG (Ulchi Freedom Guardian), ‘a highly aggressive exercise,’ against North Korea. People have demanded a double freeze: US-ROK should stop the war exercise against North Korea and North Korea should stop nuclear and missile tests in turn. What was quite unusual during the UFG this year was the visit by top US Commanders including Adm. Harry Harris, head of the U.S. Pacific Command, to South Korea at the start of the war exercise. Further, on Aug. 22 heads of U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Missile Defense Agency, and U.S. Forces Korea, all joined Harry Harris in

the Osan US air force base in Pyeongtaek and held a press conference with the patriot missile system in the background. Then they flew to Soseong-ri, Seongju, to inspect the area of THAAD. Later it was clear that they were to pressure the deployment of THAAD in South Korea. Also important but not noticed during this period was a one year extension of GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement) with Japan on Aug. 24. Also, the Moon Jae-in administration’s plan to build nuclear submarines and the defense minister’s mention on deploying tactical nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula emerged in the media (although the Moon government says that is not the government position). The Moon government’s plan to increase the defense

budget 6.9%, the biggest increase rate since 2009 was also made public. All these are understood as the Trump government’s dangerous build-up through arms deals with ‘allied countries’ with the excuse of North Korea nuclear and missile tests. Trump tweeted on Sept. 6 that he was “allowing Japan & South Korea to buy a substantially increased amount of highly sophisticated military equipment from the United States,” right after his approval to lift limits on South Korean missile payloads. And finally, there was the ROK-US Summit meeting in NYC, in the name of ‘alliance.’ The lesser known central theme of that meeting was ‘arms deals.’ And it was held tragically on Sept. 21, the International Peace Day.

The Strategic meaning of the Jeju Naval Base and THAAD

After the June 20-22 visits by US and Canadian warships to the Jeju navy base for joint war exercises on the southern waters of Jeju, there was growing concern whether the Jeju navy base is becoming a strategic military foothold for the United States. To connect the dots between the Jeju navy base and THAAD, Gangjeong invited Mr. Koh Young-Dae, co-representative of SPARK (Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea) on August 26 to make a speech titled, "The Strategic meaning of the Jeju naval base and THAAD." Some important points were:

- In 2006, the United States pressured the Roh Moo-hyun government with the policy of Strategic Flexibility, extending the activities of United States Forces of Korea beyond the Korean peninsula. The Jeju navy base became the outpost of such Strategic Flexibility for the southern area.
- The Pacific Dragon ROK-US-Japan BMD (Ballistic Missile Defense) maritime exercise was held east of Jeju and west of Kyushu, Japan in 2013. US assault ships are stationed in Sasebo at the same latitude as Jeju.

Together with Iwakuni (recently consolidated massive US marine base), they are hot spots during any outbreak of war. Holding this war exercise near Jeju shows that the Jeju navy base is a foothold of the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense in Northeast Asia.

- THAAD (especially its radar) is a Missile Defense system that can collapse the stability of the strategic balance between the US and China, and is much more dangerous than any other strategic assets
- Our task is not to leave Pyeongtaek, Seongju, and Jeju to be the footholds for US domination.

Dugong Lawsuit Revived in US Courts

By Curry

On August 21, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reopened a suit against the US base construction at Henoko in Okinawa. The case was remanded back to the District Court which had refused to consider the case because of its foreign policy implications.

The suit charges the US military with failure to adequately consider the destruction to the habitat of Okinawa’s critically endangered dugongs, which are similar to manatees. “The court today affirmed the right to sue to prevent the U.S. government from... harm[ing] an endangered species of special importance to people in another country without giving serious consideration to the possible effects,” said Martin Wagner of Earthjustice.

There may only be 3 remaining dugongs in Okinawa, and one of them has not been sighted since 2015. In Okinawan mythology dugongs are revered as messengers of the gods. Plaintiff Takuma Higashionna stated, “Today, leaving their feeding trails in the construction site, I believe, our dugongs are warning us that this sea will no longer provide us with such abundance if the base is constructed.”

Unilateral Government Information Meeting on the 2nd Jeju Airport Dissipated by the People

In late fall of 2015 the Park Geun-hye government chose Seongsan in the east of Jeju for the 2nd airport without consulting the local residents. Five villages including Susan-ri, Shinsan-ri, Nansan-ri, Goseong-ri, Onpyeong-ri would be greatly affected by the decision. This March, Jeong Kyung-doo, then Air Force chief of operation and now chairman of the joint chiefs of staff said that he wishes a Southern Search and Rescue corps (Air Force base) in the 2nd airport. The planned size of the 2nd airport? more than 10 times bigger, 4 times more money to build, compared to the Jeju navy base. The government is planning to build it by 2025.

Unfortunately, the Moon Jae-in government is continuing this unwelcome project by force as shown in this attempt for a unilateral information meeting in Seogwipo on Sept. 18. The location is far from Seongsan and residents were infuriated that such an unwelcoming event is being held with no consultation with villagers. Many Gangjeong people joined the people of Seongsan to protest and dissipate the unjust government presentation meeting. Many government officers and policemen in civilian uniform blocked people to go on stage, which we did not expect EVEN under the Lee Myung-bak and Park Gun-hye governments. People fought to make their voice heard on stage, surrounded by hundreds of government officers. The Government information meeting was finally dissipated. A small victory for the people.

Update on the navy lawsuit

August 11th was the 1st pleading regarding the government/navy’s claim for damages against 116 individuals and 5 groups including Gangjeong Village Association in Seoul Central District Court.

That day, the attorney for the government said he would provide measures to make agreement points with the villagers. He mentioned that such measures could include withdrawal of the lawsuit. The 2nd pleading is planned on Oct. 25, this year.

Last March the navy filed a lawsuit on the so called ‘right to indemnity,’ demanding 3 million USD from the people and groups above. It said that the individuals and groups should be counted as responsible for paying part of the costs incurred during the construction of the Jeju Navy Base because of their obstruction of construction. However, the current President Moon Jae-in, born out of the candle light revolution this May, had promised to withdraw the ex-government’s lawsuit against the people when he visited Jeju before the election.

On August 22nd during an extraordinary session of the National Assembly, Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon suggested three solutions for Gangjeong: withdrawal of the lawsuit, resumption of local support projects and reinforcement of functions as a civilian/military complex port. However, the village association has constantly called for unconditional withdrawal of the lawsuit, government’s apology, recovery of honor for the people, local support projects not connected to the navy base, and non-expansion of the navy. The government does not have a concrete plan to drop the lawsuit yet.



Two more captive Jeju dolphins returned to their home sea of Jeju on July 18, making them the 6th and 7th captive dolphins released back to the wild. The Dolphin School participants watch wild Jeju dolphins swim in the ocean. Photo by hotpinkdolphins



Gangjeong activist and artist Emily held an exhibit titled "After the Rain" in Gangjeong's Salon de Moon gallery reflecting about farewell, remembrance and newborn-ness from September 4 to 27. Photo by Bandi.



A US navy pathfinder class oceanographic survey ship called the USNS Henson surveyed the Jeju waters from Aug. 15 to 31, which had no precedent and was not known to the islanders until the anti-base groups inquired about it to the governments. While the navy says it is a regular survey by the ROK and US and a preparation for submarine attack, people raised the question whether it was for the future deployment of ships such as a US aircraft carrier to the Jeju seas. The ROK-US UFG war exercise was held around the Korean peninsula from Aug. 21 to 31. Additionally, the USS McCain collided with a civilian oil tanker near Singapore on Aug. 21, the fourth time the US navy 7th fleet had such a maritime disaster this year. Photo by Park Inchun.



This beautiful painting was drawn by artist Ana Maria Vasquez, about the 10 year struggle of Gangjeong. Thanks to Felice Cohen-Jappa, United States, who mailed the painting to Gangjeong. According to Anna "Jeju Island is the heart of this blue diver-She is the Earth gently holding the Island." Photo by Our Mun-hee.

How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to close the Jeju base and to the US government to stop the use of it.
2. Write letters to the South Korean government to drop the lawsuit of USD 3 million against the people of Gangjeong.
3. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
4. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
5. Then share about it on social media.
6. Visit Gangjeong!
7. For other ways to help and more visit us on the web.

For More Information

<http://www.SaveJejuNow.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/NoNavalBase>
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju>
<http://www.twitter.com/SaveJejuNow>

For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Vimeo/Youtube users :

Vimeo : cho sung bong / DH Song / Regis Tremblay
Youtube : Gang-Jeong II-Gi / Shalomsea / 1234yz100 / Sungbong2012

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Sept. 2 was the 6th anniversary of when the road to Gureombi Rock was blocked by the navy base construction fence. On that day, we lined up parts of the fence which the navy had removed on Aug. 10 this year from Metburi (east of the village where the navy base starts). We put a large banner with a photo of Gureombi behind the mock fence, and we made a performance of entering Gureombi by opening that fence. Photos by Choi Hye-young and Pang Eun-mi.



Keep Space for Peace Week, Oct. 7 to 14, 2017, is an 'International Week of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space.' This year's theme is "No 'Missile Defense' in Korea, No THAAD in Seongju." For more details, see Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. space4peace.org

On Sept. 19, Cho Young-sam (58) self-immolated, leaving a 4 page letter to President Moon Jae-in. In the letter, he strongly appealed for President Moon to stand up against THAAD. He passed away on Sept. 20, just a day before the ROK-US-Japan Summit meeting in New York City and the International Day of Peace. May He Rest in Peace! No THAAD! No War!

