

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

Bimonthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base

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As part of our memory action for the 5000 days of the Gangjeong struggle, Gangjeong activists, Grace, Bandi and Curry organized online conversations with 11 people who have had solid connections with the Gangjeong movement over the years. The video conversations were recorded and posted online at “Gang-Jeong Il-Gi” youtube channel. The videos also include solidarity messages from Hong Kong Social Movement Film Festival, Sungmisan School, East Asia Ecotopia and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. Video still collage by Grace.

Islanders Choose a Sustainable Jeju, Rather than Over-Tourism and Reckless Development

By Park Chan-sik, Jeju People's Assembly Against the 2nd Airport

The poll asking Jeju islanders' opinions on the Jeju 2nd airport project, jointly sponsored by the Jeju Island government and Jeju Island Council, was carried out for three days, Feb. 15 to 17. Two opinion poll agencies' each contacted 2,000 islanders, and the opposing opinion prevailed over the favoring opinion. More precisely, one poll reported 43.8% in favor vs. 51.1% opposed.

This put the brakes on the Jeju 2nd airport construction. Two years ago, the ruling party and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (hereafter, MOLIT) agreed with each other to respect the islanders' opinion. In the debate and negotiation process prior to the public opinion poll, high-ranking MOLIT officers declared that they would not push forward the Jeju 2nd airport without the islanders' agreement. Even after the poll, representatives of the ruling party and local National Assembly members expressed their respect to the results of the poll. Still, we must watch and see whether the MOLIT will rightly withdraw the Jeju 2nd airport construction, accepting the results, or whether it will leave the project as a task for long-term review.

The public opinion poll was the final step in the process since islanders began demanding a public opinion poll with a petition to the Jeju Island Council in the summer of 2019. The islanders rejected the central government's unilateral decision in 2015 and since then have pressured the central government to reflect the islanders' opinion, which is meaningful in the sense that they made progress in democracy and civil autonomy as a result of their next-to-impossible struggle. Further, the controversy over the Jeju 2nd airport has been connected to the broader, long-term vision for the future of Jeju. MOLIT, Jeju Island government, and pro-2nd airport groups supported the developmentalism which has continued for the last 30 years. They especially allured islanders by asserting the economic benefit of investing around \$4.4 billion USD, which is equivalent to the annual Jeju island budget.

In response, the opposition groups pointed out the reality that the natural environment and community are being destroyed due to over-tourism and over-development. They also called for a new Jeju in which the quality of residents' lives and sustainability should be central. The islanders' choice through the poll was a milestone. Remarkably, the overwhelming majority of women chose opposition to the 2nd Jeju airport, which determined the public opinion. I expect that women will play a great role in the period of transition from being development-centered to care-centered.

(Update: On Mar. 10, Jeju governor Won Hee-Ryong announced that he would continue to promote the 2nd airport, which made people furious. More will be updated in the next issue.)

Solidarity Messages for 5000 days of Gangjeong Struggle

Jan. 23, 2021, marked 5000 days since the Gangjeong Village Anti-Navy Base Committee formed on May 18, 2007. For 5000 days, the anti-base movement endured attacks on local democratic decision making, false representation in the media, division of the village community, state violence, destruction of the environment (notably of the Gureombi Rock coastline), and the militarization of Jeju, the supposed "Island of World Peace." During this time, this peace movement was sustained through candle-light gatherings, rallies, marches, community meals, religious ceremonies, appreciation of nature, creative expression through poetry, visual arts, music and dance, and an outpouring of solidarity from all over the globe. The following are just a sampling of the messages sent to us in honor of the Gangjeong struggle's 5000 days.

5000 days of everyday resistance, 5000 days of protest, of tears and joy, of disappointment and hope. 5000 days of prayers and lunches and dance. Visitors come and go, some from mainland, some from across the continents, but you stayed, you stayed rooted but not static. Respect to your resistance to militarism, to war and to empire. Respect to all of you beautiful people who have persevered for the rock, for the dolphins, for the sea and for all of us. Your daily struggle inspires us all! Strength and power to you all from Ngunnawal and Ngambri country from so called Australia. (Lina Koleilat)

As if going to Gureombi Rock was my only purpose in life, I went to Gureombi, only to Gureombi. Except for the sun-rise mass, which was the most touching mass in my life, I would be arrested by the police every time I came out from Gureombi Rock, then confined into the police station custody room. Still, I was so happy about that at the time. (Song Chang-Wook)

I was inside the naval base on 7th March 2012 when they blew up the Gureombi rock. It was a sad and shocking day when the military and corporations showed their abusive power to destroy. But it was also a time of solidarity and connection across cultures and between global peace lovers. We did not stop the explosions that day but we spoke truth to power, acting together, as we continue to do, for a better more humane and compassionate world. (Angie Zelter)

In the process of next-to-impossible struggle, the Samgeori community restaurant was the place which soothed the tired mind and body, whether in situations of sorrow and anger, or in the moment of somebody's release from prison and the moments full of small joys[...] This place is also the root of strength for the Gangjeong struggle to succeed (Rev. Lim Bora)

"They may build the base on your land and waters, but do not let them conquer your spirit!" I spoke this at the Closing Ceremony of the Grand March for Life and Peace which I joined in 2015. Since then I have expressed my solidarity by writing and speaking about your brave struggle in the Philippines and other venues. You inspire me because you continue to plant seeds, harvest and dance to show that you will never give up. I can see that the forces of tyranny will lose their power, but the villagers of Gangjeong will not! (Merci Llarinas-Angeles)

For the last 5,000 days, people were with us in solidarity for every day's 100 bows, mass, and human chain. [...] Shutting down the Jeju navy base in Gangjeong is the answer for the peace of our country. For a demilitarized peace island, a port that welcomes a US nuclear submarine, which is a vacation spot for soldiers returning from ROK-US war drills, and which empties whenever a typhoon watch is issued, that is evil itself. (Jeong Seon-nyeo)

After the deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) [in 2017], the place named Jinbat, Soseong-ri village, Seongju, in the main land of Korea, was surrounded by wire fencing. The US THAAD base construction is going on continuously. The residents there are protesting. Like the Gangjeong residents and Gangjeong-loving peace keepers, the residents and peace keepers in Soseong-ri are living together in different time and space. (Yeolmae)

I think that the Korean government denied us entry as we were going to Gangjeong from Okinawa and Japan because they were extremely frightened that the whole world would hear about the problem of the outrageous Jeju naval base construction. With support from people seeking peace all around the world, we struggle against the Jeju Naval Base, and through international solidarity for human rights and peace in Okinawa, we will resist against the new base construction at Henoko, as well. We are with you. Be strong! Peace! Solidarity! (Takahashi Toshio)

I learned something in this huge history of failure. That something is courage. Even when the emergency siren rings, even when I freeze under spine-chilling cold gazes, and even when I am so frustrated that I can hardly stand up, the courage to keep up the daily human chain together, that was the courage that I could take up for myself. (Peaceberry Han)

All of us in the struggle to preserve Jeju Island have this goal in our daily consciousness, and maintain the friendships formed during our struggle to support the villagers of Gangjeong, those most threatened by the U.S. naval base. Thanks to the Gangjeong resistance, our friendship spawned many more pathbreaking peace initiatives, including the creation of Women Cross DMZ and the Korea Peace Now! transnational feminist campaign. On this historic anniversary of 5,000 days since the struggle began, we hope you can look back at the incredible impact you have made on so many people's lives, peace movements, and our world. (Gloria Steinem and Christine Ahn)

We can defend Seongsan with the power to overcome the sorrow of Jeju April 3rd Uprising and Massacre

By Oh Eun-ju, a resident of Seongsan, Jeju

In November 2015, the government announced that the 2nd airport would be located in the Seongsan area, eastern Jeju. The decision never reflected the opinions of the inhabitants. Still, it was ordered as a national project and the residents in the area were bound to give up their farm lands while schools were to be shut down.

There are 12 villages in the Seongsan area. Among those, the villages of Susan, Shinsan, Nansan, and Onpyeong would be directly affected, so the residents there established committees opposing the 2nd airport project. Meanwhile, neighboring villages conversely anticipated that the 2nd airport project would boost the business and real estate market. Additionally, the Jeju People's Assembly Against the 2nd Airport was also launched. Over the years, little by little, public sentiment opposing the project has been building up as a result of people's hard work and struggle.

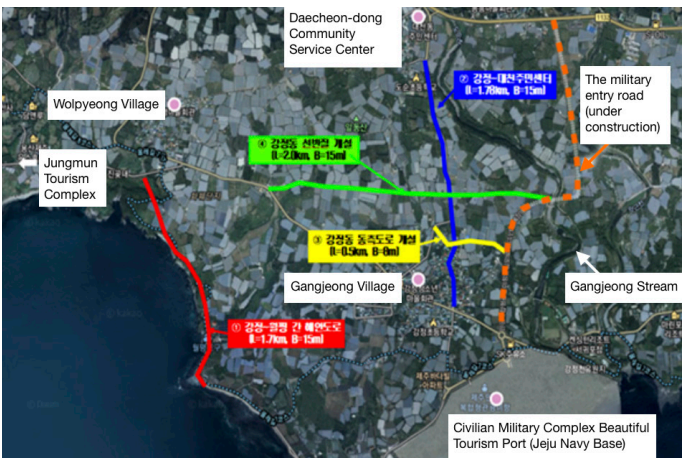
After the public poll this February, people have questioned why so many Seongsan residents were in favor of the 2nd airport construction while the poll results showed more Jeju islanders overall opposing rather than favoring the 2nd airport project. However, it should be remembered that when the project was first announced in 2015, around 80% of Seongsan residents supported the project. Now it has been reduced to 65%, as a result of people's hard work against the 2nd airport for the last 5 years.

Conflict has been created between villagers who support and those who are against the 2nd airport during this time. I believe that people will reunite and heal themselves with the help of their past experience of overcoming the sorrow of the Jeju April 3rd uprising and massacre period. Their healthy community spirit is intact. I will do my best to be with them on the journey.

The Jeju local government, The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the President must respect the people's will and withdraw the decision to build the 2nd airport.



"3 steps 1 bow" marches were held Feb. 2-9 in the Seongsan area and Feb. 11-15 in Seogwipo to urge citizens to oppose the 2nd airport in the polls held Feb. 15-17. Photo from Feb. 13 in Seogwipo City by Oum Mun-hee.



Seogwipo City plans to install four connection roads in and around Gangjeong Village with a total budget of around 40 million USD from 2021 to 2025. The roads, with a total length of 5.98km and width of 8~15m, are marked in red, blue, yellow and green on the map. Two years ago when the civilian military complex port (Jeju navy base) area development plan was changed, this project was put on hold because it was not related to 'national defense.' Some routes on the map had been residents' long cherished wish before the building of the base. However, would the roads in the map meet only civilian needs once they are built? It would be naïve to believe so. Map source: Seogwipo City Hall, edited by Curry



On Feb. 14, a press conference and 100 bows ceremony at Jeju City Hall called on Jeju residents to oppose the 2nd airport in the polls. On Feb. 19, after results showed majority opposition to the airport plans, a press conference at the Jeju Provincial Government office called on the government to "Follow the will of the people and immediately withdraw the plans for the 2nd Airport." Photos by ijejutoday and Jeju Sori.

Bringing Legal Action Against the Military Road

By Oum Mun-hee, People Protecting Gangjeong Stream

Citizens appealed to the courts on Jan. 14 this year, with proof regarding environmental problems and damages caused to local residents by the construction of the military road above the water supply source of Gangjeong Stream. They got replies from the Legal Affairs Division of the ROK Navy Headquarters on Feb. 24 and Jeju Provincial Government on Feb. 25. Both repudiated the charge. The navy claimed it has no legal obligation as it handed over the project to the provincial government. This road construction has been an object of concern since 2009, even before the Naval Base construction was buckled down. With local residents' ability to fight the navy limited, the navy persistently requested alteration of the National Cultural Heritage designation around Gangjeong Stream, where the military road would be constructed. When the legal deadline to start the construction had passed and the plan was on the verge of coming to nothing, the navy dumped the responsibility on the local government.

Last October, the Gangjeong water purification plant replaced its equipment as larvae were found in its tap water. All were shocked when they found larvae again on Feb. 25. According to a media report, the main water supply facilities were damaged around the Gangjeong area during the construction of the road to the naval base. To make matters worse, a lava bed at Gangjeong Stream was destroyed as the roadwork progressed. Mandarin ducks have been observed taking refuge in the nearby Cheonjiyeon Falls area during daytime when the roadwork is being done and coming back to Gangjeong to feed.



Mandarin ducks in Gangjeong stream at the end of Jan. 2021. An Environment Office investigation in Jan. 2020 confirmed that around 1,500 mandarin ducks inhabit in the stream in the winter. However, the numbers have dropped sharply to less than half that number this year. Photo by Oum Mun-hee



A columnar joint 200 meters downstream from the construction site is visibly damaged. The location is just beyond the Naetgiliso spring. Additionally, columnar joints have been damaged in 10 places upstream. Photo by Oum Mun-hee

Activists Opposing the 2nd Airport on Trial

On Feb. 3, the Jeju local court sentenced seven peace activists of the Tent Town Across from the Island Government Hall with fines from 700,000 to 2 million KRW. The charges against the seven were 'refusal of eviction' and/or trespassing. At dawn on Feb. 7, 2019, six people, including two women hunger strikers, climbed up on the portico of the Island Government Hall and held a press conference, denouncing the unilateral forceful drive for the 2nd airport (suspected to be an air force base) by the island government and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport. They also demanded the island government not to threaten people's peaceful rallies and protests. The six came down after five hours, but the island government accused them along with another two people who were holding signs under the portico on the same day. The peace activists appealed to the higher court, claiming that the local court's decision was in violation of the constitution which guarantees the freedom to rally.

People appeal for the release of Song Kang-ho

On Jan. 23 when Gangjeong remembered its 5,000 days of struggle, Song Kang-ho met his 300th day of imprisonment. On Mar. 7th, 2020, Song Kang Ho and Ryu Bok Hee entered the Jeju Naval Base to pray for peace on the remaining part of Gureombi Rock. It was the 8th anniversary of the blasting of Gureombi rock, the precious coastline of Gangjeong Village, which was destroyed in order to build the navy base. On Sept. 24, 2020, Ryu Bok Hee received a suspended sentence, which means she will have 3 years probation, but Song Kang Ho was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment. They appealed to the Higher Court and their new trial started on Jan. 27. People had gathered around 15,000 letters appealing for his release, which were submitted to the court before the trial. An on-line petition was carried out also. Jan. 27 was the day when Jeju was designated as the Island of Peace in 2005. It was also the day when the People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island (of which Song was the main founder) was created in 2013. In his writing in remembrance of the day, he was passionate to propose the enactment of the Jeju Peace Charter, for the 'people who want peace in Korea and Northeast Asia,' 'the spirits of April 3rd,' and 'the wellbeing and peaceful lives of the next generation.' His next trial is on Mar. 10. Otherwise, to see the full text of Song Kang Ho's appeals trial petition, see savejejunow.org.

New U.S. Marine Force Structure to Challenge China's Navy

By Ann Wright

The U.S. Marine Corps is reorganizing its forces in the Pacific to be “fast moving counterweights to China’s growing navy fleet.” Senior Marine leaders have stated that the Marines are now organized for past land wars and as a part of its new mission and force realignment, the Marine Corps is removing its 74-ton tanks from its force structure. The new strategy in the Pacific is for Marines to operate in ‘littoral operations’ or operations around shorelines from the islands around the Western Pacific in small units with ‘ship-killing missiles.’ The Corps is testing missiles fired from smaller, rapidly moving tactical vehicles which, according to the Marine Corps, will “make it incredibly hard for the enemy to find us. ... We will have dozens and dozens and dozens of these platoons and vehicles placed strategically throughout the region.” In 2021, Hawaii’s will become the home of the Marine Corps’ first Marine Littoral Regiment, with initial operating capability in 2023. The Hawaii-based 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment will be composed of 1,800-2,000 Marines from the 3rd Marine Regiment at Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, which has about 3,400 Marines.

Currently, the Marines have two regiments on Okinawa and one in Hawaii. In the next two years, the new strategy calls for one littoral regiment each on Okinawa, Hawaii and Guam. The new strategy not only redesigns units but it also is redesigning the transportation for the forces. According to the Congressional Research Service, the Light Amphibious Warship, a proposed new class of navy vessel, will be between 200 and 400 feet long and cost \$100 million to \$130 million, much cheaper than a destroyer that costs more than \$1.5 billion. The new ship would carry 40 Navy sailors and at least 75 Marines. It would have 4,000 to 8,000 square feet of cargo area for equipment and supplies and a minimum un-refueled range of 3,500 nautical miles. The Navy wants to have 28 to 30 of these smaller amphibious ships which will have the capability to pull up onto beaches. How many ships would be based in Hawaii, Guam and Okinawa remains unclear, as is where they would practice beach landings in the islands, which would be watched closely by local environmental activists. (Reference: Feb. 23 article by William Cole in The Honolulu Star-Advertiser)

Pleas to honor war victims and stop base construction in Okinawa

By Curry

Briefly introduced in the last Gangjeong Village Story, the petition started by six religious organizations, “Don’t build a new US military base at Henoko, Okinawa on war victim’s remains” (www.change.org/protectourancestorsfromusmilitary) is still open. Not only are the precious coral reefs and dugong feeding grounds at Oura Bay threatened with destruction by the Henoko base construction, the seafloor is so soft (“like mayonnaise”) that the construction plans may not even be possible. Revised plans submitted by the Japanese Ministry of Defense in April 2020 called for a dramatic increase in the amount of landfill to be used. Much of this soil would come from the southern part of Okinawa, from the city of Itoman, where over 200,000 people were killed during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, more than half of them civilians. The war victims include Japanese and American soldiers, and many victims were forcibly conscripted by Japan from Korea and Taiwan. Many remains have not yet been found or identified. Takamatsu Gushiken, head of the volunteer organization Gamafuya, or ‘cave diggers,’ has been recovering the war victims’ remains for nearly 40 years, but this fall, the site where they were working near Konpaku Memorial Tower was blocked off by a quarry company. The Gamafuya and the “Association of Religious Leaders Calling for Peace” held a press conference on Feb. 15, calling on Okinawa Prefecture to reject the plans submitted by contractors to collect soil from Itoman City. “To use the ground filled with the blood of those killed in battle in land reclamation [for a military base] is a mistake on a humanitarian level. I believe that the remains are calling for us to help them,” pled Takamatsu Gushiken. He started a hunger strike on Mar. 1 outside the Okinawan Prefectural Office. (References: “Volunteer Group...” Feb. 16, in Ryukyu Shimpo, and Maia Hibbett, “In Okinawa...” Feb. 18, in The Nation.)

COVID 19 and Gangjeong

COVID-19 is affecting Gangjeong, also. The daily 100 bows for life and peace at 7 AM, mass at 11 AM, and human chain at noon were paused for the last two months. This was because confirmed cases of COVID-19 occurred not only in the navy base but in the village as well. Otherwise, the opening ceremony of the new Gangjeong Peace Center is being delayed to April or May due to COVID-19. Including some internationals, many people have gathered their will to sponsor the building of the center.



(Left) The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force on Jan. 22, 2021, the same day that construction materials were forced into the US THAAD missile/radar base at Soseong-ri. We called on South Korea to come out from under the counter-productive American nuclear umbrella and join the TPNW. Photos by Hati and Curry

(Right) With a sign declaring “Food not weapons for Yemen,” people in Jeju joined the “World says no to war on Yemen Day of Action” on Jan. 25. Photos by Curry and Choi Sung-hee

Campaign to Stop the US-ROK War Drills

By Curry

Joint US-South Korean (ROK) military exercises provoke North Korea, undermine diplomatic efforts for peace on the Korean peninsula, waste precious resources, and damage the environment and local communities. Furthermore, throughout the history of the division of the Korean peninsula, these war drills have statistically correlated with increased threats from the North, while cancellation of the drills has led to substantial de-escalation and has opened opportunities for dialogue. Cancellation of joint military exercises in 2018 provided an opening for productive negotiations later that year. In 2019, the war drills restarted, though on a smaller scale, and the COVID-19 pandemic limited the scale of the drills again in 2020.

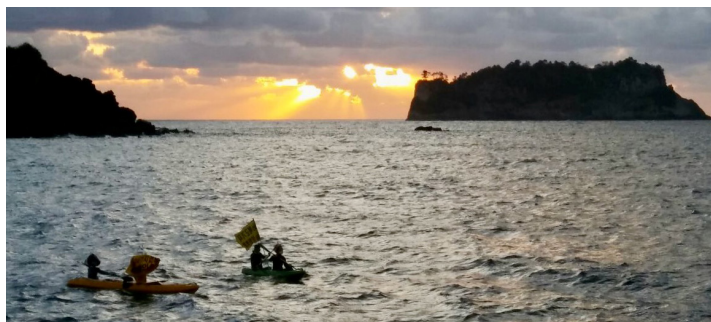
In January and February of this year, civil society organizations in South Korea the US campaigned for the cancellation of these provocative exercises, scheduled to be held in early March. A photo campaign extended across the world. An international statement called on President Biden to suspend the combined military exercises, to “remove a formidable obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the ongoing 70-year-old Korean War and allow all parties to focus on other intractable global issues facing our nations today, such as creating a nuclear weapons-free world and resolving the current COVID-19 pandemic.” During a webinar on Feb. 19 titled “For Peace in Korea No More War Drills” (available on youtube), Cheong Wooksik of Peace Network shared the history of US-ROK war drills, Catherine Killough of Women Cross DMZ analyzed precedents for suspending the drills, and Jovanni Reyes of About Face: Veterans Against War shared about his experience participating in the joint war exercises. On Feb. 23, a press conference outside the US embassy in Seoul presented a statement by 27 Korean organizations including Gangjeong Peace Network and Peace Wind, calling for the cancellation of the war drills in order to “build trust, restart dialogue, and provide impetus for the Korean peace process” and to open a “spring of peace for the Korean peninsula.” (Update: On Mar. 5, a 20 km march, '10,000 steps for peace to stop the ROK-US joint war drills' was held from Camp Humphries to Osan Air Base, but on Mar. 7, the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that joint military exercises would be held Mar. 8-18. The exercises are to be 'indoor computer-simulated command post exercises' and include partial preparations for the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) from the US to South Korea, which is a goal of the Moon Jae-In administration. Once again an opportunity was missed to build trust and reopen the peace process.)

Soft Coral Monitoring

The people conducting the underwater monitoring of soft corals around the Jeju navy base achieved three major projects in 2020. Firstly, they carried out underwater soft coral monitoring around the Jeju navy base three times. Secondly, Choi Hyea-yeong, secretary of Gangjeong Friends and member of the monitoring team, published a photo booklet titled ‘Coral Blue,’ which is a record of the soft corals observed in 2019 and 2020. Lastly, they made a short film titled ‘Coral Love’ (directed by Lee So-jeong), a record of the monitoring team activities. A long-length film is in progress. Otherwise, the Gangeong Life and Peace Movement Archive Committee recently published a booklet chronicling the Gangjeong struggle. Both activities were chosen for sponsorship by the Beautiful Foundation.



On Feb. 2, citizens of Suseong-ri in Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province, Korea, used tractors to block the entrance to a US firing range to protest resumption of Apache helicopter firing practice and call for the closure of the firing range. Photo by Yonhap news.



On Jan. 15, as the sun rose behind Tiger Island, kayakers paddled out from the mouth of Gangjeong Stream to meet the sunrise with the first kayak protest of the year. Photo by Curry.



Despite the threat of COVID-19, on Jan. 22 and again on Feb. 25, hundreds of police forcibly removed Soseong-ri residents and their supporters who attempted to block the entrance of construction materials into the US THAAD missile / radar base. Determined resistance has impeded the construction of the new base since 2017. Photos by the No THAAD Situation Room on Jan. 22 (above) and Feb. 25 (below).

The National Satellite Integrated Operation Center should be refused

By Choi Sung-hee

According to the media, the Jeju Island government and Korea Aerospace Research Institute held a presentation for local residents regarding the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center (hereafter, 'Center'), in the Deokcheon-ri village hall, Gujwa-eup, Jeju, on Feb. 23, 2021. Reportedly, the villagers' main questions were whether the Center would involve military satellites or not; as well as whether it would affect health and cause environmental damage. The presenters answered no, leaving the people with many questions. The presentation was held only after the Island Council raised the issue of the Center last December. It was shocking that such a national project, known to have been decided in 2018 by the National Space Committee which reports directly to the President, had not even been noticed by the Island Council, not to mention local residents and islanders. The Jeju Island government said that it would install the Center according to its 'will to lead the space industry.' However, even the affiliated Island government staff and a local Island Council member acknowledge that the 'center' is a 'security facility.' Last year, a national defense researcher wrote that it is the military's task to connect reconnaissance satellites to the Center. And even though there is no mention on the military or military satellites in the official proposal on the Center's building project, we should be reminded that Jeffrey A. Kruse, the director of intelligence of the United States Indo-Pacific Command in 2019, has said that "the commercial [satellite] imagery gains" have been "absolutely crucial" to "get the most out of the national architecture," (VOA, Jan. 2021), which means all the satellites could serve for the dual use of civilian and military. What is the real purpose of the Center? And why now?

Otherwise, the media reports that the related committee of the Island Council has recently asked the central government for free use of Alddreu airfield in exchange for selling of Island-owned land in Deokcheon-ri for the building of the Center. The Island Council discussion on the sale of the land will be very soon. In April 2009, the Jeju Island Governor, Minister of National Defense and Minister of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs jointly signed an MOU regarding the construction of the 'civilian military beautiful tourism port' (Jeju navy base) and included an article by which the Minister of National Defense allows the Jeju Island Government to 'use' Alddreu airfield in Daejeong-eup, Jeju, which had been used by the Japanese imperial military in the 1930s and is now under the jurisdiction of the MND. However, even after the completion of the Jeju navy base, that article has scarcely been realized. The Jeju Islanders have gone through enough fabrication and deception of such 'conditioned' peace. The building of the Center would be a disaster anywhere in the 'Peace Island' Jeju. Would the peaceful use of Alddreu airfield guarantee peace if it is realized on the condition of disaster? (For more on the 'Center,' see page 5, Nov./Dec. 2020 issue)

US Space Force in Korea

On Feb. 3, Scott L. Pleus, Deputy Commander, U.S. Forces Korea, and Commander, Seventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, Osan Air Base, South Korea, made public that US Space Forces ('guardians') were officially deployed in South Korea. There are 8 known US Space Force personnel in Osan base. Pleus said that the US space force is working in the 607th Air Operations Center (607th Air Intelligence Group) of US Osan base for 24 hours daily to maintain 'fight tonight' ready posture. He also said that the US Space Force in Korea would help Fifth Air Force stationed in Japan and Eleventh Air Force in Alaska to unfold in Korea in an emergency. It is also known that three US soldiers in Kunsan were assigned exclusively to the US Space Force on Feb. 1. Otherwise, the chief of staff of the US Space Force, the chief of the staff of the ROK air force and the chief of staff of the Japanese air self-defense force secretly met in the headquarters of the Pacific Air Force Command, Hawaii, in Nov. 2020, and concluded a MOU between the US Space Force, the space operation unit of Japanese air self-defense, and the space operation unit of the South Korean air force. (Source: Jaju Sibo, Feb. 2021)

US Indo-Pacific Strategy and South Korea Arms Development

The United States is working to establish the ROK-US-Japan military alliance to contain China. It is also working to establish regional military alliances such as the Quad, centered around the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, and Quad plus (combined with South Korea). The light aircraft carrier, advanced submarine, and nuclear submarine, which South Korea is to develop with an expectedly tremendous budget, are aggressive in nature and would eventually serve the United States Indo-Pacific strategy in the region. In his writing titled, "The ROK and the Indo-Pacific Strategy," Erik French, Director & Assistant Professor, International Studies at the State University of New York at Brockport, asserted that the "ROK should seek to step up its military support for a free and open Indo-Pacific region." He wrote that the "ROKN's planned development of an LPX-II carrier (light carrier) capable of launching STOVL (short take-off and vertical landing) aircraft, including the F-35B, is an essential step in this direction." (Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy, Oct. 12, 2020). The reason that South Korea has hurried to introduce the F-35B is not irrelevant to the design of light aircraft carriers. And the light aircraft carrier would eventually be deployed to Jeju navy base. The military is to expand the seventh task force (currently stationed at Jeju navy base) to become a task fleet by 2025. The navy's imaginative graphic of the future task fleet includes the KSS-III attack submarines which are planned to be used for a South Korea-made SLBM (submarine launched ballistic missile) test later this year. The navy is also planning the "next batch of KSS-III submarines" (Erik French) which would very likely be nuclear-propelled. (Reference: SPARK)



Kim Jin-suk, Korean trade union leader and dismissed worker from Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction, walked 400 km from Busan to the presidential Blue House for workers' rights. On Dec. 30 2020 she began the walk despite her ongoing battle with breast cancer and many joined her on the way. Over the next 34 days more than 500 supporters, including Gangjeong activists, walked together with her. She arrived at the Blue House on Feb. 7. Photo by Seolhae.



Gender Minorities Suffer from Hatred and Discrimination

Kim Ki-hong, a Jeju queer activist and former South Korea Green Party proportional representation candidate for the 2018 general election, was found dead on Feb. 24. From their testament, it was clear that they chose death at the end of their long struggle to resist against society's hatred and discrimination against gender minorities. Kim has been a founder and main figure of the Jeju Queer Culture Festival for years. Throughout Jeju and Korea, some politicians and religious figures have interrupted people's efforts to institutionalize equality for all genders. Kim's death was followed by that of transgender soldier Byun Hee-soo, who last year courageously claimed her right to remain in the military after gender reassignment surgery. The Jeju People's Solidarity to Enact the Anti-Discrimination Law, had a press conference on Mar. 5, expressing their will to change the social culture which pushes gender minorities to their death. In February, Island Council members expressed their will to be educated on gender and human rights. Rest in peace, Kim and Byun.

In Memory of Baek Ki-wan

Baek Ki-wan (1933-2021), a highly respected activist for peace and unification in Korea passed away on Feb. 15. For decades, he was a fierce fighter against injustice, a beacon in the dark eras, and a friend of all the oppressed. He was also a poet, writer, calligrapher, charismatic speaker, and a friend of Fr. Mun Jeong-hyeon. Part of Baek's legacy is left in the lyrics of the song, 'March for the Beloved' which was born from the Gwangju Uprising in 1980. Various versions of this song are now sung in many countries' democracy movements. See baekgiwan.net (Korean).

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. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
3. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
4. Then share about it on social media.
5. Visit Gangjeong!
6. 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 Il-Gi / Shalomsea / 1234yz100 / Sungbong2012

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 Email: gjeongnews@gmail.com

Check endthekoreanwar.net for updates and resources from the Korea Peace Appeal campaign to End the Korean War

JOIN GANGJEONG FRIENDS!
[HTTP://CAFE.DAUM.NET/GANGJEONG79S/POK7/1](http://cafe.daum.net/gangjeong79s/pok7/1)