

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

News on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval Base

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At the Climate Justice March in Seoul on Sept. 24. Photos by Fr. Pat Cunningham(left) and Shin Yu-Ah (right)

The problem is inequality

by Ddalgi

In 2018, Greta Thunberg's Friday School Strike for Climate turned into a global movement. In Korea in 2019, teens took to the streets calling for climate action and civil society launched a Climate Crisis Emergency Action Network. The first climate justice march since COVID was held on Sept. 24, and over 30,000 citizens gathered to call for immediate response to the climate crisis. People talked about how the climate crisis is not just an environmental issue, but an inequality issue against which all those who call Earth home should struggle together. People agreed that capitalism's global system of exploitation and competition has been expanding and hastening destruction and that capitalism causes inequality, which is directly connected to the climate crisis. During the march, a siren sounded, and everyone lay down for a die-in performance. They lay in silence for four minutes, then shouted passionately that all the destruction of capitalism must stop ASAP.

On Sept. 21, many irregular workers joined a march with the motto "Scare the Hell Out of the Climate Villains" in Gangnam, at the headquarters of SPC, Samsung, and POSCO, three of Korea's leading exploitative conglomerates. For the sake of profit, these influential companies force workers to work in dangerous environments. With one voice, the workers told how these companies infringe on workers' rights in Korea and abroad, and shared about how power plant exports to Myanmar have financed the military regime. While we were in Korea's richest neighborhood with lines of expensive cars driving by, news of record setting rains flooding Pakistan and of the drought killing crops in Gwangju seemed to overlap.

The crisis is experienced unequally today. We must change our lifestyle in every sector, but in the future we must be more proactive to address the formidable global military sector. The climate crisis calls for global collaboration, but around the world, competition for military hegemony continues. As the war in Ukraine approaches one year, I feel keenly how nationalist security and military competition fail to keep anyone safe. Korean military spending has reached a new height of 55 trillion KRW (42 billion USD), and Korea has been zealously exporting all kinds of weapons. The biggest obstruction blocking our response to the climate crisis is militarism, by which those in power endanger our future with astronomical military spending every year. Let's reject the state's threats to our future, and shout together for our right to live here today, safely and without discrimination.

Cheerful Energy Brought by Sept. 24 Jeju Climate Justice March

by Manong, 10th grade student, Sungmisan School

While studying in an alternative school in Seoul, I've heard so many times about the "Climate Crisis," yet rarely felt it closely in daily life. However, our field learning in Jeju helped me to realize how close the crisis is to our life, by seeing that Korean fir trees have withered out while broad-leaf bamboo has been spreading across Mt. Halla. More than feeling grief, I sensed danger when I witnessed how severe drought has caused the carrot farming of one villager we met in Jeju to fail for a fourth time. Now I started my own process to find my motive and raise my voice louder. I used to feel helpless in the face of outpouring news about the climate crisis, which made me question whether my little voice and actions would accomplish any change to overcome all this mass of problems. At the Sept. 24 Jeju Climate Justice March I was awakened by the great energy among the crowd who gathered to invite people and the government to pay attention and request for changes in our life and policy. Hundreds of people danced, sang, and chanted together. Full of energy and inspiration, I decided to share them with other people, including the readers of the Gangjeong Village Story here. Let us continue our movement to bring changes and justice in the climate crisis, cheerfully and all together!



People of various ages marched on the street in front of Jeju City Hall chanting for climate justice. Photo by Doto

Scrap the Saemangeum New Airport, Protect Sura Tidal Flat, and Oppose US Military Base Expansion

by Oi

At the 2022 Gunsan Climate Peace March on Nov. 26, citizens who oppose the Saemangeum New Airport wore hats modeled after birds living in the Sura tidal flats and marched noisily through the alleys and plazas of Gunsan. The government is trying to build a new airport in the Saemangeum area, on Sura tidal flat next to Gunsan Air Base. This evil project would, in this era of climate disaster, destroy mudflats, kill the beings that live there, and build a new airstrip for the US military. Citizens who choose preservation over development and peace over war bases marched to expose the truth.

Last September, citizens started a lawsuit to cancel the Saemangeum New Airport, and they have been holding a tent sit-in in front of the Ministry of Environment in Sejong City for nearly 300 days. Every month, they go to see the Sura tidal flat and hold a Paeng-Paeng cultural festival to oppose the base expansion. Director Hwang Yoon's "Sura: A Love Song," which tells the story of the Sura tidal flats, is finding new audiences.

Sura is the last remaining tidal flat in Saemangeum. It is swarming with all kinds of life. Over the years, we have seen Saemangeum tidal flats and Haje village destroyed by development and US base expansion. Let's stand with Sura tidal flat to face this crisis.



A large flag with "Scrap Saemangeum New Airport" written on it and a traditional Pungmul percussion team led the Gunsan Climate Peace March. Photo by Chae Min

A year-round Jeju March for Climate and Peace begins

by Bomal



People gathered at the Gangjeong-2-gyo bridge construction site during the Jeju Climate & Peace March. Photo by Bomal

Jeju Climate & Peace March began in Gangjeong on Nov. 19. A colorful crowd coming from many different areas gathered at the daily human chain where the march started. The wish to make a change in the current climate crisis was clearly shared by all, from teenagers to caregivers with toddlers and from Gangjeong locals to people from overseas. After having a delicious vegan meal prepared by local members of Hansalim co-op, participants walked from Gangjeong Peace Center to Gangjeong-2-gyo bridge where a new bridge is currently under construction despite an illegitimate environmental impact assessment. Then the march went along Gangjeong stream, and people shared stories about how the ongoing construction of roads to the navy base is affecting the ecosystem, including endangered species and the source of water for humans and other beings. At the end, the group sat near the stream to share thoughts and feelings. Some recognized Gangjeong stream as the forefront of climate injustice and as being colonized by militarist policies. The March is planned to continue for the next year on the third Saturdays of every month. The next march will take place in Woljeong-ri village on Dec. 17.

Civilian-military complex port access road linear improvement construction

By Lee Kwang-hee



The whisk fern (*Psilotum nudum*) is an endangered species living on the cliff walls along Gangjeong River. Photo by Lee Kwang-hee

Gangjeong River is an ecological preservation area where many animals and plants such as the *Elaeocarpus sylvestris* tree, a natural monument, and whisk fern, an endangered species, as well as mandarin ducks, sweetfish, and yellow-billed egrets live from the upper stream to the coast. Since the completion of the base in 2016, the navy has been frantically expanding and building roads around the base under the name of a community recovery project. Due to naval base access road construction, which started in 2019, muddy water has risen in the village spring water, the number of mandarin ducks has decreased, floating matter in the river has increased, and the fishy smell has intensified. In the meantime, the Jeju provincial government and the navy are also promoting the construction of another new Gangjeong bridge for the sake of improving the alignment of the existing road entering the eastern side of the village. This new road construction would mean demolishing the mass tent, an important site of the movement against the naval base, as well as damaging the river cliffs. If this construction is enforced, the destruction of the ecosystem and the damage to the landscape in the lower reaches of Gangjeong River cannot be prevented. In the environmental impact assessment for this construction, intentional omission and false reporting are also suspected in the investigation of natural monuments and endangered species. Contrary to the evaluation that the whisk fern colony “has been recorded in the literature, but was not found in the field investigation,” the whisk fern colony has been constantly monitored by villagers and activists since 2012. I can't help but doubt the provincial government's intentions. The community restoration they claim is just a pretentious excuse, and in fact, I think it is part of a project to expand military facilities by securing communication lines and linking the base to other military facilities.

Deceptive ‘Civilian-Government-Military mutually beneficial soccer tournament’

by Go Gwon-il, Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base

From 10 am on Nov. 27, Gangjeong Village Association, Jeju Provincial Office, Jeju Police Agency, and the 7th Task Force of the Navy held a friendly soccer tournament at the sports field in the civilian-military complex at Jeju Naval Base, advocating mutual prosperity between the public, the administration and the military. Jeju Governor Oh Young-hun, who participated in the soccer tournament as a Gangjeong Village player, said, “We will work harder for a new leap for Gangjeong Village toward reconciliation and coexistence” and will work on “various projects” for a “happy community.” This cannot be said without accepting the premise that the conflict in Gangjeong Village following the construction of the Jeju Naval Base has already been resolved. However, conflict during the construction of the Jeju naval base was not limited to conflict between the navy and residents, the administration and residents, and the police and residents. Conflict between pro-base and anti-base in the village led to discord among relatives, neighbors, and friends. More than 200 village groups and clubs collapsed and the culture of cutting the grass around ancestral tombs, as well as family holiday gatherings, ancestral rites and ceremonies nearly disappeared. Conflicts that had lasted for 10 years during the naval base construction process escalated into 100-year conflicts during the 2018 Jeju International Fleet Review. The main point of the conflict in Gangjeong is that the state intervened and intensified the conflict between the pro- and anti-base people, breaking the village community. Jeju Provincial Government, Seogwipo City, the police, the navy, the National Intelligence Service, and the Defense Security Command were all involved, so the responsibility is heavy. However, the fact that the Gangjeong Village Association sympathized with and participated in a friendly football tournament that seemed to be planned as evidence that all problems were resolved was truly devastating and regrettable for its stupidity. The Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base issued a statement strongly condemning Governor Oh Young-hun's audacity on the day after the friendly soccer match was held under the banner of deceptive harmony.



Colorful banners reading "Scrap the civilian-government-military co-prosperity agreement!" "Save Gangjeong River!" and "Close the naval base built illegally, through lies and violence!" were visible from the soccer tournament. Photo by Lee Kwang-hee

Deceptive 2040 Jeju City Basic Plan Draft

On Nov. 24, a public hearing on the 2040 Jeju City Basic Plan (draft) was held in the cities of Seogwipo and Jeju, Jeju Island. The plan is important because it decides the supreme plan for the zoning of Jeju Island by the year 2040. However, to people's shock, the draft provided by the Jeju government was prepared as if the 2nd Jeju airport is a fait accompli.

A statement by the Jeju People's Assembly Against the 2nd Airport condemned the draft for positioning the 2nd Jeju Airport project at the center of the eastern region of Jeju, which makes a fool of the Jeju people and would only increase conflict among the islanders. Last year, the majority of islanders opposed the project in a public opinion poll. Also last year, the Ministry of Environment returned the project's Environmental Impact Assessment back to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT). Even though the MOLIT has lost any justification to continue the project, it has been driving it to the people's fury.

In another statement, the Jeju Green Party criticized above all that the draft has no comprehensive and concrete plan toward the national target of net zero emissions by 2050. The South Korean government declared its 2050 carbon neutral strategy in 2020, and the carbon neutral basic law was legislated in 2021.

The Jeju Green Party also criticized that the draft lacks plans for the sustainable use of underground water and management of sewage. The party is concerned that Jeju is facing a crisis of increasing aquifuge (impermeable layers) and rapidly increasing pollution sources due to reckless development.

On Nov. 24, islanders held signs at the public hearing halls and demanded the prompt cancellation of the Jeju 2nd airport project, calling for the deceptive 2040 Jeju City Basic Plan to be abolished.

No More Killing, Repeal the National Security Law, The Epitome of Human Rights Abuses

by Kim Myeong Ho, Jeju Progressive Party



On Nov. 5, people gathered in Jeju City to remember the victims of the Oct. 29 Itaewon Tragedy. Photo by Lee Kwang-hee

The Itaewon disaster, which killed more than 150 people on Oct. 29, shocked the world. In response, the Yoon Suk-Yeol regime began to suppress dissidents, using the excuse of public security as the perfect scapegoat.

On Nov. 9, the National Intelligence Service forcibly raided the home of Kang Eun-Joo, a progressive figure in Jeju and terminal cancer patient. Kang Eun-Joo, whose health condition makes it difficult to move alone, had to handle dozens of people for 16 hours from when her family went to work in the morning until she was taken to the hospital in an ambulance at 1 a.m. the next day. Kang Eun-Joo has been fighting the disease since autumn 2021.

On the same day, raids were conducted against a total of seven people across the country. They are accused of having formed an anti-state group, but they have not given any official explanation so far, 14 days after the incident. Kang Eun-joo is a prominent progressive politician and former

leader of the Progressive Party's Jeju region who ran in parliamentary elections.

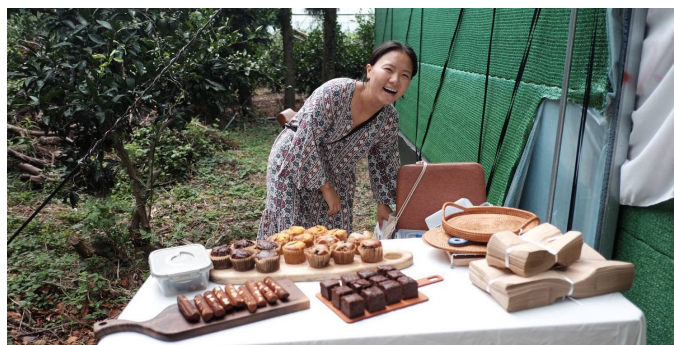
The National Security Law is an abominable law that the United Nations and other international human rights organizations have recommended to be abolished or revised several times. The law has been notorious for maintaining the dictatorship of South Korea, the only divided nation in the world. For the past 70 years, it has been used as a means of illegal suppression and human rights abuses against democratic citizens, a means of removing opposition to the regime, and a tool to avoid a regime crisis.

Six months after the inauguration of the regime, the Yoon Suk-Yeol administration is facing its biggest crisis due to the Itaewon disaster, pro-chaebol policies, and economic crisis. The regime recognizes the incident as a tipping point and accordingly has proceeded to abuse power to maintain control.

It is time to repeal the human rights-violating National Security Law.

Memories of Gureombi bring people together

by Jungjoo Gang Park



Inhye baked delicious vegan desserts for the Gureombi Festival market. Photo by Jungjoo



Everyone marveled at the beautiful sunset as they gathered for the Gureombi Festival peace concert on Sept. 17. Photo by Kim Jong-Hwan

The 1st Gangjeong Gureombi Festival was held on Sept. 16-17. The host group set up five different places to celebrate the festival in Gangjeong. The first place was Gangjeong Peace Center where a flea market was run by several sellers selling food, drinks, vegan bread, jewelry and handmade souvenirs. The second place was the St. Francis Peace Center where other ongoing issues were introduced by different organizations such as the soft coral monitoring project, the Green Party, The Frontiers and Help Syria. The third place was the Gangjeong community kitchen where people could see the history of the Gangjeong struggle and leave an encouraging message on a large paper. At the port, there was a participatory event for children. They could draw and write on two old kayaks to express their interest in peace and the ocean. The last place was the Gonggan Café where a poetry exhibit was going on. All these events took place during the day and a peace concert was the last program. As the music was playing, the sun was setting. It was the most beautiful moment to close the festival. People enjoyed the beautiful music and children danced together with the music. It was such a peaceful and beautiful night. Some participants were new to Gangjeong village and learned about the struggle just on that day, and the music also attracted people who were walking along the coast at sunset. All people mingled with each other!

Only kindness and peace will save the world from hatred

by Herb



Holding a rainbow flag at the festival. Photo by Herb

I am living a vegan life in Gangjeong Village with the 'Peace Finder' program. Being vegan has been one of the first experiences in my life to place me in a minority position. Everyday began to be made up of invisible struggles. In a carnivore society that lacks awareness of veganism, I've had to explain myself everywhere and I realized that a life where I did not have to struggle was a privilege. When the Jeju Queer Culture Festival came up on Oct. 23, I was hesitant to participate. I'm heterosexual and didn't identify as queer. However, I could sympathize with those who do not belong to 'mainstream' society and are therefore denied their existence. So I decided to stand in solidarity to create a society where minorities are respected.

During the festival, I felt a peace that I could be accepted as I am. A feeling of liberation and freedom filled the air. When we marched at the end of the festival, we faced some oppositional forces. We shouted back, "Let us just love." We responded to hate with love and laughter. I have learned that only kindness and peace are the key to saving the world.



Morae and other songwriting workshop participants performed their songs at the Bisugi Festival on Oct. 1. The festival also included a market with food, drinks, crafts, books and hand poke tattoos, and a screening of the film "Small Bird and Mr. Pig." Photo by Grace.

Woljeong overlaps with Gangjeong

By Oum Mun-hee

Residents of Woljeong-ri opposing the east Jeju sewage treatment plant expansion project gave up nearly all daily life activity throughout this fall. The construction company contracted by the Jeju government filed a lawsuit against the residents' Woljeong Village Opposition Committee for a "provisional injunction to prohibit construction obstruction," and Woljeong Village also filed a lawsuit for a "provisional injunction for suspension of construction." In addition, a lawsuit was filed to confirm the invalidity of the construction based on illegal contents submitted by the government regarding the expansion of the east Jeju sewage treatment plant.

However, the court accepted the provisional injunction against obstruction of construction which was filed by the construction company. This ruling requires that anyone who protests pay a large amount of money, 1 million won. This is a clear violation of human rights and a violent ruling that ignores the right of citizens to resist. Moreover, Governor Oh Young-hun is putting the private sector first, removing the role of Jeju Island, and creating a conflict between the construction company and the residents.

This project violates the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, the World Heritage Act, and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Suspicion of manipulation of the location of Yongcheon Cave, a World Natural Heritage Site, was also raised. Other analysis suggests that the expansion of the eastern sewage treatment plant is actually a second airport infrastructure project. Anyway, today's situation is a disaster caused by the structural injustice of the Jeju provincial government and lazy and mechanical bureaucracy.

In response, on Nov. 29, Jeju residents and Woljeong residents held a press conference to unite as citizens to resist all attempts to destroy Jeju. However, Jeju Provincial Hall was full of police and a metal barricade was stretched across the front gate. Except for the police cars and police busses that had entered in advance, all people and vehicles were blocked from entering. Enraged by this, elderly women divers and citizens of Woljeong fiercely protested against the police and even had a physical fight, and they eventually entered the provincial government building.

It was the first time since the Gangjeong anti-naval base protests that the Jeju provincial hall barricaded all access. In addition, there was also a lawsuit in Gangjeong that burdened residents with fines on the pretext of obstructing construction. Currently, as a referendum approaches, Woljeong Villagers are concerned about the division of the community between project opponents and supporters.



Woljeong residents at the entrance of Jeju Provincial Hall hold banners reading, "Resistance is a survival instinct of all who live and breathe" and "Protect Woljeong-ri." Photo by Oum Mun-hee

Alternative Habitats Indulging Development Desires

by Kim Soon-ae, Jeju Green Party

The expansion of Bijarim-ro, a road linked to the 2nd Jeju Airport, began in Aug. 2018 but was suspended for four years due to strong opposition based on grounds of environmental damage: in particular, the confirmation that a number of protected and endangered species would be affected. However, recently, the site of Bijarim-ro is again noisy with the sounds of heavy machines and excavators. The construction has started again.

The Ministry of Environment approved the Jeju government's plan to catch all baby dung beetles directly affected by the construction and move them to alternative habitats in similar environments. The plan also proposed to relocate trees (with the exception of cedar trees). It said 184 trees were deemed to need transplantation and were to be moved to another place. So far, Jeju trapped 408 baby dung beetles in 2020 and 1,078 in 2021, and moved them to alternative habitats. Trees have also been moved and re-planted.

The purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment Act was to "predict and evaluate the impact on the environment in advance and prepare environmental conservation measures" when conducting large-scale development. However, even if significant impact, such as destroying the habitats of legally protected species, does occur due to large-scale development, alternative habitats are treated as the perfect cure-all. Despite finding endangered species' habitats in these development sites and serious destruction predicted due to development, the Ministry of Environment uses these alternative habitat plans to protect their image of "developing while preserving the environment."

However, the Ministry of Environment does not ask whether transplanting these legally protected species from the development sites make environmental or ecological sense. The 'alternative habitat' excuse that gives indulgence for development must be abolished. A radical change of perspective on development and conservation must take root; it is imperative.

Active 'protection' of MPAs is needed

by Shin SooYun (Green Korea United)

The Jeju Island region is directly affected by climate change. Over the past 30 years, the average sea level along the entire coast of Korea has risen by 3.03 mm each year, rising by an average of 9.1 cm, and the rate of rise continues to accelerate. In addition, over the past 50 years, Jeju surface water temperature has risen by an average of 1.13°C. This is more than twice as high as the 0.49°C increase in global average sea surface temperature during the same period.

According to the 2021 World Meteorological Organization report, key climate change indicators such as sea level rise, ocean acidification, ocean heat, and greenhouse gas concentrations are at record highs. In this situation, we should pay attention to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). MPAs play an important role in responding to climate change and restoring ecosystems as they are accompanied by intensive protection policies to prevent pollution and destruction of habitats due to excessive development.

What is the status of MPAs in Korea? Despite international agreements' goal to designate 10% of the national land area as marine protected areas by 2020, the current domestic MPAs are only 2.21%. Quantitative expansion is also necessary, but more important is to manage it according to the purpose of the designation. There are several protected areas that are not 'protected' properly. Due to their outstanding ecological value, Munseom and Beomseom [Tiger Island] areas have been repeatedly designated as protected areas by the Jeju Provincial Government, the Cultural Heritage Administration, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, and UNESCO, but there have been damages caused by tourism, recreational fishing and the naval base. Active protection measures are now necessary for the residents and all of us who will face changes in the sea of Jeju.

Strong Protest of Jeju Farmers

By Haneul



Jeju farmers call for an apology at Jeju Provincial Hall. Photo from Jeju Today

a press conference on Oct. 13, Jeju Provincial Council hurriedly scheduled a meeting to hear opinions from the farmers' group, and an unofficial apology was made at this meeting. Also, the Jeju Women Peasants' Association has been trying to preserve native seeds and holds a harvest festival every year to enjoy authentic Jeju dishes and encourage people to plant native seeds. This year, it was held on Nov. 12 in Jeju City.

Appearance of Sharks

by Song Kang-ho

Recently, sharks have frequently appeared at the shores of Jeju Island. Experts have suggested that one of the causes is the change in the habitat of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. "The appearance of sharks at Jeju seashores is an infrequent phenomenon," said Kim Byeong-Yeop, a leading marine biology expert and professor at Jeju National University's School of Marine Science. Kim analyzed that sharks only hover around the waters of Jeju Island and cannot come close to the shore because the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins, which live in groups, act as a barrier. Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins live in various parts of Jeju's waters, and compete with sharks, making it difficult for sharks to approach. The change in the dolphins' habitat is due to the destruction of the marine environment, and the indiscriminate installation of artificial coastal structures such as the Jeju Naval Base must be the cause.



Deulso made little signs for the flower boxes installed at the entrance of the Jeju Naval Base with a quote popularized by Brazilian Pres. Lula, "The powers that be might kill one, two, or three roses, but they will never be able to stop the Spring from coming. And our struggle is a quest for the Spring." Photo by Deulso

Dramatic Re-escalation of War Drills

by Curry

Large scale US-ROK joint war exercises resumed this year, exacerbating tensions with North Korea and ending five years of comparative restraint and diplomacy. The USS Ronald Reagan nuclear aircraft carrier (which came to Jeju Naval Base in 2018) docked in Busan on Sept. 23, then joined US-ROK joint naval exercises and trilateral US-ROK-Japan naval exercises in late September and early October. This series of exercises involved over 20 vessels including the nuclear-powered submarine USS Annapolis. Then, US forces joined the ROK's Hoguk Exercises involving the army, navy and air force and extending into late October. Throughout these war exercises, North Korea responded with missile launches, and the US, ROK, and Japan responded with more war exercises.

Amid these war drills and missile launches, citizens of Gangneung City, Gangwon Province, were left terrified by an unexplained explosion all night on Oct. 4, until the Joint Chiefs of Staff finally explained the next morning that a South Korean missile had crashed at a base near the city during a training exercise.

On Oct. 31, despite being just one day after a national mourning period was declared to remember the Oct. 29 crowd crush tragedy in Itaewon, the massive air exercise Vigilant Ace, which had also been stopped since 2017, was resurrected as Vigilant Storm. The exercise brought together 240 US and ROK aircraft and one Australian air refueler for around 1,600 sorties, even more than in previous years. In response, North Korea also fired a record 23 missiles in one day on Nov. 2. For the first time, a missile landed south of the Northern Limit Line, near South Korean waters. South Korea responded by firing three missiles north of the maritime border, near North Korean waters, and the US responded by extending Vigilant Storm for one more day and sending two B-1B bombers from Guam to join the exercise.

On Nov. 3, the US promised to deploy "strategic assets to the level equivalent to constant deployment" around Korea. "Strategic assets" refers to aircraft (such as B-1B bombers) and vessels (such as nuclear aircraft carriers) that are capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and their deployment in Korea had also been stopped amid denuclearization talks in 2018.

Amid these escalating drills and threats of war, 704 South Korean religious and civil society organizations released a statement on Oct. 27 declaring, "We firmly insist that the military action provoking war must stop. [...] There is no other way but to stop the hostilities and return to the spirit of the Panmunjom Declaration and the Singapore Joint Statement. If we stop now, the crisis can turn into an opportunity. Let's never give up hope for peace on the Korean Peninsula." (See: endthekoreanwar.net/posts/121)



On Oct. 27, civil society organizations held a die-in at the Yongsan Presidential Office denouncing escalating war drills for holding "all lives on this land as collateral." Photo by the Korea Peace Appeal Campaign.

The Danger of Trilateral Alliance and Asian NATO

By Choi Sung-hee

On Oct. 27, the US Defense Department released public versions of the National Defense Strategy, Nuclear Posture Review, and Missile Defense Review. Among them, the NPR stated, "Any nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners is unacceptable and will result in the end of that regime."

We should take note of the United States' openly hostile policy against North Korea (DPRK) and so-called nuclear deterrence policy (which indicates, in fact, nuclear preemptive strike) as background to the DPRK's 'nuclear law' this August which advocates nuclear preemptive strike and her unprecedented number of missile launches in the 2nd half of the year. The ROK-US combined forces' operation plan 5015 which took effect in 2015 is a super-aggressive campaign premised on a preemptive strike against the DPRK, which even includes an operation plan for removal of DPRK leadership, in violation of UN Charter Article 2 which prohibits 'threat or use of force.'

Otherwise, the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review states, "An important goal is to identify opportunities for trilateral (United States, Japan, ROK) or quadrilateral (plus Australia) information sharing and dialogue [...] The United States will continue to field flexible nuclear forces suited to deterring regional nuclear conflict, including the capability to forward deploy strategic bombers, dual-capable fighter aircraft, and nuclear weapons to the region and globally."

On Nov. 13, the Phnom Penh Statement on US-Japan-Republic of Korea Trilateral Partnership for the Indo-Pacific came out right after the 54th ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (Nov. 3), the ROK navy's participation in the Japanese military-hosted fleet review (Nov. 6), and the unveiling of a new ROK Indo-Pacific strategy (Nov. 11). The statement made clear that the meeting of this Trilateral Partnership is an "unprecedented level of trilateral coordination" to "secure the Indo-Pacific and beyond" and "reiterate[d] the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

It is dangerous that South Korea is unwittingly drawn to a US scheme to foster confrontation with China, making the Taiwan strait and other parts of the Pacific into international conflict zones. The statement also clearly indicates that the three partnership nations would be against China, Russia, and North Korea, which would intensify the danger of war in the region and world. Strikingly, reporters were not allowed to cover the ROK-US and ROK-Japan Summit meetings. While domestic democracy is being gradually destroyed, the Asian version of NATO is gearing up.

Jonah's Whale's Lap Around Jeju: Or Why Sailing Matters

by Jonathan Seungjoon Lee, Peace Voyagers



Jonah's Whale welcomes everyone. Gangjeong friends Susan and Jero sail at night. All crew members take turns as skipper. Here, Peace Voyager Seungjoon takes the wheel. Photos by Jero.

From Nov. 2- 9, Jonah's Whale's crew embarked from Gangjeong and completed the 3rd and final journey around Jeju Island. In a short summary, it was both arduous and inexpressibly joyous. We spent long days moored on Gapa-do, sailed into the night with the full moon guiding us, and experienced the lunar eclipse passing overhead captivating us with its beauty. However, the questions that I think might be more important to address here are the ones that begin with why. The most direct of them all, and maybe at times hardest to answer, is why do it at all? What do we hope to achieve by sailing? Especially with our dreams of sailing to Okinawa and Taiwan next summer, these questions might be all the more pertinent.

Perhaps what we have done and accomplished in our time at sea, circumambulating around Jeju Island, was in a sense a form of prayer. Whilst I cannot speak for all the participants of our journey, I think this prayer is both spiritual and secular as it is public and private. Put another way, it's about dreaming and living in good-faith (sincere intentions) with radical imagination all the while restraining the tides of cynicism.

I feel that the word dream is important to address here. It's easy to dismiss dreaming as a practice best left for naivety, but I would like to reaffirm the word and its meaning. Dreams matter because they determine the boundaries and distances of our reality. Our journey across the Indo-Pacific beginning in June of 2023, circumambulating and stitching together Jeju, Okinawa, and Taiwan matters because of its ability to make an impossible narrative of peace on these highly militarized islands into a lived reality. Our scheme of sprouting rhizomal networks for peace (here and elsewhere) might fully depend on our ability to radically dream and put our feet into motion, or in our case raising our sails.

THAAD base normalization will never happen!

By Kang Hyun Wook, No THAAD Situation Office

As of Nov. 24, we reached the 220th time that people were pulled from the road by the police during their dawn struggle to stop the completion of the illegally installed THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) base and its normalization. Since the Yoon Suk-Yeol presidency started, the police, mobilized five times a week, now remove the protestors at all times on weekdays, weekends, day and night time. Since the Yoon government's declaration of THAAD base normalization, oil for THAAD operation, which used to be carried by helicopters, has repeatedly moved into the base through the land route. Oil had been one of the three things which could not enter through the Soseong-ri village road, along with THAAD equipment and the US military. On Sept. 3, the 13th nationwide people's peace action against THAAD was held, and the next day was the 2,000th day of prayer at Soseong-ri's Jinbat Peace Temple.

Along with the start of the oil transfer, the government formed an environmental impact assessment council with a supposed village representative whose identity is secret to the residents, and thanks to a trick of land-splitting, it provided left-over land to the United States Forces Korea for the 2nd time. Additionally, they moved THAAD upgrade and Patriot system equipment into the base.

Amid that, the mothers of Soseong-ri who are at the forefront of the peace struggle against THAAD received the Peace and Human Rights Award at the 19th Geochang Peace and Human Rights Art Festival. The USFK currently aims to stabilize the base through free transit on land routes. However, it will not be easy as long as there are residents of Seongju and Gimcheon, including the Soseong-ri mothers and peace activists. That's because it takes tens of police for each US soldier to pass the land route.



Congratulations to the Soseong-ri mothers who received the Peace and Human Rights Award for their fearless and constant fight against THAAD on Nov. 24. Photo by Soseong-ri No THAAD Situation Office

South Korea aims to be world's #4 arms exporter

By Choi Sung-hee

On Oct. 27, President Yoon openly emphasized Korea's package export of nuclear facilities and arms to the Middle East and Europe, mentioning the war in Ukraine and the soaring oil price. He even proposed the Ministry of National Defense change its title to the Ministry of Defense Industry.

South Korean arms are discovered in many conflict zones throughout the world. South Korea's biggest arms export was recently made to Poland, which stated that it would use them for the defense of NATO's east front. The US Department of Defense spokesperson "welcomes the ROK's contributions to NATO," while a US senator says that it is "encouraging to see our allies in Asia and Europe working together to strengthen their own defenses." Czech Republic media also reported on a South Korean arms export to Ukraine through the Czech Republic. According to the Wall Street Journal in November, the US will purchase shells from South Korea and deliver them to Ukraine.

Russian President Putin has warned that South Korea's arms provision to Ukraine would destroy the bilateral relationship. Despite all those risks, South Korea aims to leap to the status of world's #4 arms exporter. The military will be positioned for the post-sales.

Otherwise, it was confirmed that the total of the South Korean military's greenhouse gas emissions is bigger than that of the whole public sector. South Korea, already the #9 CO2 emitting nation, is aggravating climate disaster and threatening the democracy of the world through increasing militarism and arms exports.



During the DX Korea arms expo this September, peace activists played instruments on the South Korea-made armored vehicle in protest. Photo by World Without War, Korea.

The US Space Force goes to Korea

By Choi Sung-hee

On Nov. 22, the U.S. Space Forces, Indo-Pacific was "officially activated and assigned" to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Brig. Gen. Anthony Mastalir, commander of U.S. Space Forces Pacific, said, "Our task is simple: ensure that warfighters in INDOPACOM maximize the combat effects available from space capabilities - capabilities across all services, U.S. Space Command, the intelligence community, and commercial space."

According to the Command press release on Nov. 23, "The nation's newest service plans to establish two additional component field commands and present them to U.S. Central Command and U.S. Forces Korea by the end of the calendar year. Planning is also underway to establish USSF service components at each of the remaining combatant commands."

Therefore, it is not surprising that South Korea's air force made public its consolidation of space-related units into a Space Operations Squadron on Dec. 1, as well as seeking a 'ROK-US Space integration team' during ROK-US combined war drills. The space operation squadron is expected "to take a front role for national space power and space security, according to the South Korean Yoon Suk-yeol government's development plan for national



"Stop the Space Industry!" a protest during the international space experts' visit to the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center when the 40th IADC (Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee Meeting) was held in Jeju this October. Photo by the protest team. To keep space for peace, see space4peace.org.

space power which also includes promotion of the space industry."

On Nov. 28, Yoon made public the Future Space Economy Roadmap. South Korea plans to begin exploitation of resources on the Moon from 2032, and land on Mars in 2045. The arms industry is among those who expect profit from the space industry.

In Jeju, the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center, or Low Earth orbit satellite center, started operation this September while numerous space forums opened throughout the nation and Jeju. Some experts are even mentioning the need for a rocket launch site and space education training center in Jeju, saying its geographical features are similar to that of Mars. A green hydrogen economy is promoted for an eco-friendly space industry including rocket launches and Urban Air Mobility (UAM).

Otherwise, the revised space development promotion law which will be proclaimed this December defines sub-orbit which will be the legal basis of space travel in the future. Additionally, overseas companies like SpaceX and Virgin Orbit will start their business in Korea either in 2023 or 2024.

P.S. On Nov. 11, the South Korean navy announced its maritime manned and unmanned complex system: Guardian Harmonized with Operating manned Systems and Technology based unmanned systems- the GHOST.

Militarization rushes on in the Sakishima Islands

by Hideko Otake

On the Sakishima Islands [the southwest part of Okinawa Prefecture], people's actions to keep their peaceful life are facing much bigger challenges under the fear-mongering propaganda around the Taiwan contingency promoted by both US and Japanese governments. The militarization ignores the island residents' human security, but on each island non-violent and resilient protests never stop resisting.

On Ishigaki Island, with the support of the current mayor, who has notoriously provoked the Senkaku Islands territorial issue with reckless policies and behaviors, the construction of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) missile base is rushing to completion by Mar. 2023. The peace group led by grannies who have childhood memories of the cruelty of war is one of the most potent voices to stop the construction. Every day activists monitor the construction site. They try to find out the details of the facility, as many dangerous factors are hidden from the public. However, monitoring using a drone camera is now illegal, which restricts the anti-base protesters' actions.

Keen Sword, the large-scale US-Japan joint exercise this November, focused on the southwest Ryukyu arc islands with China in mind. Yonaguni Island, the closest to Taiwan, was in the spotlight. US Marines landed there for training for the first time since WW2. Also, two JSDF mobile combat vehicles developed for use in war on these islands drove on public roads. The protestors' voices opposing militarization had been silenced after the establishment of the JSDF garrison in 2016. However, people expressed their anxiety when they witnessed the shocking move of the forces, which escalated military tensions in the region. Conversations within the once-torn community have slowly resumed.

At the time of the exercise, a few activists from Ishigaki and Miyako visited Yonaguni to support the islanders' protest. And in December, activists from Ishigaki and Yonaguni are planning to visit Miyako to join their protest against the JSDF's Blue Impulse air show.

The challenge for the peace movement on these islands is the lack of media attention. Even the major media of the Okinawa mainland seldom cover the people's struggle on the Sakishima Islands. The coverage from Japan's mainland is much less.

Under these circumstances, the islanders are eagerly seeking conversation and solidarity with the people of the world, especially with the neighboring areas and nations. They believe that's the only way to keep peace in East Asia and the world.



During the Keen Sword joint exercise, people protested against a JSDF combat vehicle driving on a public road on Yonaguni Island.

The Guahan struggle against open burning and open detonation

by Curry

For years, the US military footprint in Guahan (Guam) has been expanding, particularly as part of a plan to relocate about 5,000 marines from Okinawa. Construction of the new marine base Camp Blaz and five new live-fire ranges endangers the Northern Guam Lens Aquifer and has involved clearing of forests, desecration of sacred historical sites, and restriction of access to traditional lands. The CHamoru people's land has been stolen and poisoned throughout their history of Spanish, Japanese, and American military occupation and colonization. On Aug. 10, the PACT Act recognized the right of Guam's veterans to treatment for effects of exposure to toxic chemicals such as Agent Orange, but civilians still suffer without compensation. On Sept. 28, the US District Court in Guam threw out Prutehi Litekyan/Save Ritidian and Earthjustice's lawsuit to stop the the Air Force from conducting open burning and open detonation (OB/OD). The struggle continues in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and with letter-writing, sign-waving, community meetings and petitions calling on the Guam EPA to deny the air force's OB/OD permit and promoting a resolution in the Guam legislature which calls on the US government to protect the Northern Guam Lens Aquifer, the source of 85% of Guahan's drinking water.

New bases for US use planned in the Philippines

Though the people of the Philippines banned foreign bases in 1987 and kicked out the US military in 1992, the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement and 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement have allowed US troops to "visit" and use joint-use bases. On Nov. 21, US Vice President Kamala Harris met with Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and proposed to build five new military facilities near Taiwan and the South China Sea.

A new toxic leak in Hawaii

On Nov. 29, toxic firefighting foam containing dangerous PFAS 'forever chemicals' leaked into the porous tunnels of the US Navy's Red Hill fuel storage facility, barely one year after jet fuel leaked into the water of 93,000 residents. Over the last year, thousands of people got sick, thousands were displaced, and over a hundred are now suing the US government. Citizens struggling to protect the water are demanding to have a say in the Red Hill de-fueling process.

Gangjeong Book Village Friends disbanded

In 2012, villagers, citizens, and writers gathered together and decided to cultivate a Book Village in Gangjeong. In 2013, they opened the Peace Book Café and carried out a 100,000 Books project, bringing 100,000 books to the village, thanks to support from many citizens and publishing companies. They also opened Tongmul Library in Gangjeong. The Peace Book Café was closed in 2018 due to the lease situation, and Tongmul Library carried on the tasks of the Book Village Project since then. However, despite the efforts by the Gangjeong Book Village Friends steering committee to maintain Tongmul library, they faced a deficiency of human labor and finance. After much effort, the committee announced the dissolution of Gangjeong Book Village Friends, handing over the library to Seogwipo City this September. However, the Frontiers, an NGO peace group, proposed that they would manage the Tongmul Library. Now begins a 2nd chapter for Tongmul Library.

From Confrontation to Peacebuilding

In October, Women Cross DMZ published a report titled, “U.S.–China Competition and the Korean Peninsula: From Confrontation to Peacebuilding” which “explore[s] how rising U.S.–China tensions threaten the prospects for peace on the Korean Peninsula and, conversely, how peacebuilding in Korea offers an opportunity for cooperation between the U.S. and China.” The report notes that sanctions and the COVID pandemic have made North Korea even more reliant on China and that US and Chinese involvement in renewed conflict on the Korean Peninsula would lead to a catastrophic loss of life. The report urges the US and China to cooperate for peace in Korea and replace the armistice with a peace treaty, and it emphasizes the important role of civil society, particularly women’s groups, to “overcom[e] the ever-deepening structures of militarism in East Asia.” On Oct. 26, four of the authors, Kevin Gray, Dong Jin Kim, Youkyoung Ko, and Colleen Moore, discussed the report in a webinar which can be found on Youtube. Also, Crossings, the documentary about Women Cross DMZ’s 2015 journey across the DMZ, was shown at four screenings near the DMZ and in Seoul from Oct. 1-4.



Peace Finders and Peace Voyagers celebrated the end of their 3 month semester in Gangjeong. Photo by Jarita



As their semester came to a close, Peace Finders and Peace Voyagers turned the entrance of the navy base into a noraebang (karaoke) with lively singing during the human chain. Photo by Jungjoo

Stop the War in Ukraine!

How You Can Join

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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Published by the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base, 620 leodo-ro, Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace village, Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island, Korea 63563

Email: gjeengnews@gmail.com



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