

On the US Militarization of Guam

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[I Nasion Chamoru](#) **On the US Militarization of Guam**

...for [the International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases](#), Ecuador 2007

Today, the indigenous Chamoru people of Guam are bracing our selves against a storm of manic U.S. military buildup. Beginning this year, 2007, the U.S. will flood Guam?its colony?with 35,000 additional U.S. military personnel, half a dozen nuclear submarines, a strike and intelligence surveillance hub, fighter jets, B-2 bombers, Global Hawk aircraft, 20,000 foreign laborers on military contracts, and, inevitably, toxins to add to the array of cancerous contamination that have already claimed the lives of Chamoru people at record rates.

Guam is one of the few remaining colonies of the world. It exists today in a political nether zone as an unincorporated territory of the U.S., administered by the U.S. Interior Department. Today, we approach 500 years of colonization. Colonized by Spain for more than 300 years and the U.S. for more than a century (save a bloody three-year stint by Japan in the last world war), Guam today is the lamb tied closest to the war the white house is provoking in the Asia-Pacific region.

Two weeks ago, it was announced that the world's biggest anti-terrorism exercise will be held this year in Guam, underscoring yet again our thirty-mile island's strategic value to Empire.

Exercise TopOff4 is part of a series of large-scale maneuvers established to strengthen U.S. ability to respond to "terrorist" attacks involving weapons of mass destruction. It is being celebrated as the super-sized version of last year's Valiant Shield war games?also played in Guam waters?wherein the U.S. mobilized 22,000 U.S. military personnel, 280 aircraft, and 30 ships. Valiant Shield was already the largest joint military exercise since the Vietnam War. That weekend, water was cut off to a number of the villages on the Navy water line. The people of those villages went some thirty out of sixty days without running water.

At the center of this muscle flexing is the scheduled transfer of 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

Of the 10.3 billion dollars tied to the transfer, exactly zero dollars have been allocated to development of the local community outside the U.S. bases. Meeting after meeting with the U.S. Department of Defense officials have proved empty, as senior military officers repeat only that they lack the authority to commit to anything or answer our questions.

Recent testing has revealed high levels of agent-orange and purple exposure, radiation exposure, and illegal dumping of chemicals throughout the island as manifested in PCBs

found in Apra Harbor and Cocos Lagoon. The Environmental Protection Agency continues to issue public warnings to avoid eating fish caught in the southern waters of Guam due to dangerous levels of radioactive poison in the area. A renowned physician and professor at the University of Guam has recently received death threats and other harassment for publicly exposing the documented connections between U.S. dumping of radioactive waste and the extraordinarily high rates of cancers, dementia, and neurological diseases among Chamorus.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military has made clear its intention to proceed with the development of a global reconnaissance hub at Andersen Air Force Base on the northern end of Guam in direct violation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its own national environmental laws. It also plans to proceed with the construction of a landfill over seven natural rivers in the south of Guam, which will harm if not eliminate endangered species in the area.

Guam is called the land of the rosaries. She is a land littered with cemeteries. But her people have wrestled a truth to the ground: that what we love we can save.

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