

GUAHAN

Historical Context

Guam covers 212 square miles and is the largest and southernmost island in the Mariana Islands chain - the ancestral homeland of the indigenous Chamoru people for the last 4,000 years. Guam was cut off from its natural archipelago in 1898 when it was ceded to the United States after the Spanish American War. Despite this relatively recent political divide, the Chamoru people of Guam and the northern Mariana Islands - now politically organized under the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) - are one people with one language, culture, and history. Today, Guam is an unincorporated territory of the United States. Guam does not have its own constitution. Its government was drafted without the input of the indigenous Chamoru people and was established by the U.S. Congress through the Organic Act of 1950. Although the Organic Act provided the basic framework for civilian government by establishing a Government of Guam consisting of the three branches (i.e., executive, legislative, and judicial), the Organic Act granted Guam only the illusion of self-government, as "The Congress of the United States reserves the power and authority to annul [all laws passed by the Territory of Guam]." In reality, Guam remains under the purview of the U.S. Department of the Interior. As an unincorporated territory, the U.S. Constitution, on its own, does not apply in Guam. Instead, the U.S. Congress has broad powers over the unincorporated territories, including the power to choose what portions of the Constitution apply to them. All residents of Guam, indigenous and non-indigenous, are denied both the right to vote in U.S. presidential elections and effective voting representation in the U.S. Congress. In 1946, the United States placed Guam on the U.N. list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, or colonies whose people have yet to exercise the fundamental right to self-determination. Accordingly, the colonized people of Guam have a right to self-determination under international law that the United States, at least in theory, recognizes. As Guam's Administering Power, the United States accepted as a "sacred trust" the obligation to guide the people of Guam toward self-government. Today, the Chamoru people make up 37% of the entire population of Guam, estimated in 2008 at roughly 175,000 people. Current U.S. plans to hyper-militarize the island threaten to further dilute the Chamoru population. It should also be noted that both "Chamoru" and "Chamorro" are used to describe the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands.

Present-Day Context

Today, the United States is readying Guam for the largest military build-up in recent history, a build-up in part premised by the United States' concern over any potential altercation with China. The United States plans to transfer a military-related population estimated at 59,000 people to Guam - which includes 19,000 military personnel, 20,000 of their dependents, and roughly 20,000 foreign workers on construction contracts.¹⁷ These 59,000 people will join the roughly 14,000 military-related people already living in Guam,¹⁸ giving a total U.S. military-related population of 73,000. Put plainly, by 2014 this population will outnumber the entire indigenous Chamoru population, estimated in 2008 at roughly 65,250.¹⁹ In addition, six nuclear submarines may be added to the three already stationed in Guam.²⁰ While the U.S. Navy plans to enhance its infrastructure, logistic capabilities and waterfront facilities, the U.S. Air Force plans to develop a global intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance strike hub at Andersen Air Force Base,²¹ and the U.S. Army plans to place a ballistic missile defense task force in Guam.²² Although massive, this build-up only complements the impressive Air Force and Navy show of strength, occupying a third of Guam already. Indeed, as foreign policy analysts report, "all of the Pentagon road maps lead to Guam."²³

Canberra, Newcastle, and Brisbane) regarding the U.S. military buildup of Guam, particularly in light of its implications for the human rights struggle of the Chamoru people of Guam. They spoke with a wide variety of audiences, highlighting Australia's emerging role in the militarization of Guam and organizing a letter-writing solidarity campaign through which Australian citizens could participate in exposing relevant human rights abuses in Guam to prospective lawmakers.

In July 2008, a delegate from *I Nasion Chamoru* was invited by members of Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC) to present at the Toyako G8 Alternative Summit activities and to participate at the Indigenous People's Summit in Aini Mosir.

In August 2008, *Madolien I Lina'ka' Kotturan Chamoru*, a Chamoru cultural immersion center, hosted *Pulan Festival*, a local event celebrating culture and language through immersion education and demonstration of traditional and contemporary Chamoru art, language and history.

In September 2008, the 3rd annual Chamorro Conference was held in Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Citing the decades-long struggle for Chamoru self-determination, scholars, activists, artists, and community organizers reiterated that the federal government's pronouncement that Guam will be American "tip of the spear" is a cause for concern, and collectively called for decolonization from the islands' political relationship with the U.S.

In October 2008, a small delegation of Chamoru scholars and teachers testified before the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on the question of Guam's continued colonization, in light of the U.S. military buildup of the island. For the first time in years, Guam's official testimony included a statement from an elected official of the Guam Legislature. The delegates discussed the cumulative adverse impacts of U.S. colonization and the current military build-up, highlighting such issues as environmental contamination, Chamoru displacement, alarming cancer rates, and the infrastructural strains expected from the island's unprecedented population boom. The group also met personally with Fourth Committee Chairman Jorge Arguello of Argentina, and world leaders from the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Virgin Islands, to discuss ways to successfully expedite the Chamoru self-determination process. These presentations are again a part of a decades-long process to achieve self-determination within the U.N. decolonization apparatus. In addition, in November 2008, this group reported to a gathering of about 200 Chamorus and allies in the Bay Area at the Brava Theater in San Francisco, California. The "report back" event was coupled with a discussion panel as well as entertainment highlighting both the culture and political struggle of the Chamoru people.

In October 2008 and again in February 2009, the University of Guam's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, in partnership with its Division of Social Work, sponsored two public forums at the university at which panelists comprising various sectors of Guam society critically assessed both the sources and prospective ramifications of the U.S. military buildup of Guam. The forums were titled "Critiquing Guam's Military Build-up Public Forum Series" and drew large audiences.

In February 2009, Dr. Lisa Linda Natividad, President of the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice, presented at the "Security Without Empire: National Organizing Conference on Foreign Military Bases" Conference at American University, in Washington D.C. Natividad's presentation was part of a panel entitled "Peoples' Movements for Withdrawal of U.S. Bases in the Asia-Pacific Region" and was supported by the Global Fund for Women. As a result of discussions emanating from this conference, Guam was designated as the location of the 7th meeting of the International Network of Women Against Militarism (September 14-19, 2009).

In March 2009, members of the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice presented a panel discussion at the annual National Association of Social Workers Conference titled, "An American Colony: The Case of Guahan and Her Struggle for Indigenous Rights". The panel highlighted the negative effects of Guahan's hyper-militarization on Chamoru self-determination and the environmental consequences of military practices on the island.

In April 2009, Brown University Professor Catherine Lutz gave a well-attended lecture as part of the University of Guam's Presidential Lecture series, during which she located the current U.S. military buildup of Guam at the center of a U.S. enterprise of Empire-building that is at once global in scope and unparalleled in history. Lutz revealed findings from her own extensive studies of the hazardous effects of militarization on communities that surround U.S. military bases as well as shared her new book on the topic, entitled "The