

US GROUP REPORT TO 7TH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK MEETING
GUAM, September 14-19, 2009

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **2008 election campaign.** This absorbed a great deal of time, money, energy, and generated unprecedented excitement and hope, especially in communities of color. Many progressive people also saw the limitations of Obama's policies, which are much clearer after 6 months in office – especially foreign policy.
- **U.S. ongoing wars.** Continuing U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to growing numbers of U.S. deaths, severe injuries and trauma; some US troops refusing to serve, others moving to Canada; and a significant number of suicides. The increasing use of drones against so-called "military targets" in Pakistan, means that military personnel working at Creech AFB in Nevada are actually on the "front line" though they go home each day for dinner. The mainstream media pays very little attention to deaths and injuries of Iraqi and Afghan people. This is something the peace movement, though generally weak, does expose. CodePink is the women's anti-war organization with the most public visibility.
- **The Economy.** Financial crisis has led to the down-sizing of major companies and non-profit organizations, businesses closing, increasing unemployment, people losing their homes, huge government bail out of banks and financial institutions (\$700 billion +). Military recruitment in the U.S. is getting easier as civilian jobs are harder to find.
- **Increasing U.S. military budget.** Under the Obama administration, the U.S. military budget continues to rise. In 2008, the U.S. accounted for 41.5% of world total of \$1,464 billion (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute).
- **Continued U.S. alliances with South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines.** The U.S. continues to pressure the Japanese government to pay for the proposed heliport in Nago and to pay for the transfer of U.S. Marines to Guam. It remains to be seen how the recent change of government in Japan will affect these efforts. In Korea, U.S. military continues to consolidate its forces at Camp Humphrey (Pyeongtaek area) and Osan AFB. U.S. troops are stationed in the Philippines, despite the ousting of Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base in 1991/92. The U.S. continues military aid to the Philippines despite egregious human rights violations and extra-judicial killings under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's government. U.S. applied pressure on the Philippine government and lawyers to shield and release Daniel Smith, the only convicted perpetrator in the "Nicole" rape case.
- **U.S. military bases.** Currently the United States is estimated to have around 1,000 military bases and facilities worldwide, on all continents. A new U.S. military command focusing on Africa—AFRICOM—is currently housed in Germany as African governments have refused to "host" it.

On May 30, 2000—over a year before the attacks of September 11, 2001—the United States announced a policy of “full spectrum dominance” or “the ability of U.S. forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations” on land, at sea, in the air, and in space.

- **Militarism and the Environment.** Despite growing interest in environmental issues, there is little awareness of the devastating environmental impacts of U.S. military operations. The U.S. military is the world’s largest landowner, largest consumer of energy and fossil fuels, and largest polluter. It is the single largest consumer of gasoline in the world, using 2 million gallons of oil a day on military vehicles, planes, etc.

WGS ACTIVITIES, 2007-09

Since the 6th International Network meeting in the Bay Area in 2007 our activities have focused on

1. Continuing to inform U.S. audiences about the impacts of U.S. bases abroad, especially the military build-up in Guam

- **Newsletter:** In March 2008, WGS launched an on-line newsletter, entitled “(Re)-Collection” -- some editions were also printed and mailed to our list. All newsletters are currently archived on the website: www.genuinesecurity.org
- **Educational events** on militarism in different contexts, linking the struggles (e.g. “Resistance to Militarism: Guam, Puerto Rico, Diego Garcia,” 5/19/09)
- **Published articles:** *Foreign Policy in Focus*, “Gender and U.S. bases in Asia-Pacific,” 3/14/08- by Ellen-Rae Cachola, Lizelle Festejo, Annie Fukushima, Gwyn Kirk, and Sabina Perez (see: www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5069)
Foreign Policy in Focus, “Fashioning Resistance to Militarism” 3/9/09 – by Christine Ahn and Gwyn Kirk (see: www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5929)
Feminist Africa, issue on women and militarism, edited by Amina Mama and Margo Okazawa-Rey – short article on the network (Gwyn Kirk, June 2008).
- **Film Screening:** Two clips of the WGS film by Lina Hoshina have been shown: the pieces on Guam (Lisa Natividad) and Texas (Diana Lopez)—at a WGS Open House, “Walking the Fenceline” 11/17/08, and a brown-bag lunch with staff of Global Fund for Women June 2008.
- **Presentations:** workshop on militarism and the environment (Debbie Lee and Gwyn Kirk – 1/24/08); “A Woman’s Plight”: Comfort Women of WWII (Annie Fukushima, 3/28/08); Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom – SF branch (Annie Fukushima, 12/08); Pacific seminar, University of California, Santa Cruz (Annie Fukushima, Gwyn Kirk, 5/25/09).

2. Participated in local and national anti-military organizing:

- **Joint event:** WGS launched our newsletter at a joint event with American Friends Service Committee/BayPeace who launched their counter-recruitment manual at the same time (3/26/08). Ellen-Rae Cachola contributed digital story entitled “Mapping Histories” to BayPeace “Boot Camp tour” (August 2008).

- **Local Policy Initiatives:** WGS hosted a local forum to discuss electoral campaigns linking JROTC (military education in schools) and decriminalizing prostitution (San Francisco ballot propositions V and K – 10/15/08).
- **6th anniversary of war against Iraq.** WGS hosted a vigil and passed out leaflets at Balboa Park station (with SF WILPF) as part of a Bay Area event at 27 stations organized by United for Peace and Justice (3/19/09).
- **Participated in planning national organizing conference,** “Security Without Empire,” held in Washington, DC at the end of February 2009; 8 of us attended from the Bay Area, with women from most Network countries.
- **Lobbying:** Lobbying at offices of local Reps, Senators (Terry Bautista, Lindsey Kerr, Gwyn Kirk--January 2009).

3. Created new materials

- Lina Hoshino visited all Network countries to do more filming. The film has the working title, “From Along the Fenceline: Women’s Voice for Peace and Security” to be shown in Guam (9/18/ 09).
- “Letters to Obama” project – after the inauguration of Barak Obama we wrote letters outlining our ideas about genuine security. Also distributed them to some staffers on Capitol Hill.
- Designed 4 new outfits, organized an anti-military fashion show (Washington conference), and produced postcards.
- Connect militarism to groups working on environment– Ellen-Rae Cachola made connections with youth of color in the U.S. working on issues of environmental justice, urban justice, domestic/foreign militarism at the Power Shift 2009 Washington Conference.
- Contributing to an article about the Network for a special issue of the journal *Peace Review* on U.S. bases (due 10/1/09).
- Sustaining ourselves and our work: activism and self-care (WGS All Day, collaborative writing, movement, visioning 12/7/ 08).

4. We continued our connections with women in the International Network

- Interviewing and featuring pieces in the newsletter.
- Supporting Lina Hoshino in filming 7 women from Network countries.
- Participating in the Washington, DC conference with women from Network countries. This included a plenary presentation by Suzuyo Takazato (“Winning International Campaigns: Lessons Learned”), presentations in workshops on military violence against women/trafficking (Annie Fukushima), environment and militarism (Ellen-Rae Cachola), building a movement (Debbie Lee, Gwyn Kirk, Suzuyo Takazato, Maria Reinat Pumarejo) and people’s organizing against US militarism in Asia-Pacific (Lisa Natividad, Ko Yu Kyoung, Suzuyo Takazato). Debbie Lee played a central role in organizing an opening ritual at the Pentagon. We organized an anti-military fashion show (with Christine Ahn). We were a strong presence at the conference; we lobbied Congressional representatives on Capitol Hill, and held an informal planning meeting for the Guam meeting following the conference (also with Terri Keko’olani Raymond and Darlene Rodrigues).

- Collective fundraising for the Guam meeting -- Global Fund for Women grant and efforts to fundraise together (Hawaii and Bay Area).
- Holding a day-long training on anti-trafficking work before the 2009 meeting, and initiate fundraising for network- affiliated groups doing anti-trafficking work (Annie Fukushima).

5. WGS has been supported by

- PANA Institute, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley
- American Friends Service Committee, San Francisco

Both these organizations have provided space for regular monthly meetings as well as public events. As of September 2009, our members at these organizations have had to leave them.

We have worked with several other local organizations:

- FACES (Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity) –demonstration outside Chevron shareholders' meeting (5/27/09); attended film showing, and other public events
- USAPAN (lobbying at local Congressional offices; attended Philippine community human rights gathering, timed to coincide with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Washington, DC--7/30/09).
- Famoksaiyan.

We invited various small Bay Area groups to talk about genuine security with the idea of doing future work together (6/1/09).

At the national/international level we worked with

- National Project on U.S. Military Bases (organized "Security Without Empire" conference—Debbie Lee and Gwyn Kirk).
- Institute for Policy Studies- Asia Pacific Freeze project (Gwyn Kirk). This is a Washington-based progressive think tank, seeking to influence U.S. policy toward N. E. Asia.
- Korea Policy Institute –endorsed End the Korean War/Peace Treaty Campaign.

U.S. Bay Area delegation

Erica Benton, Annie Fukushima, Lina Hoshino, Gwyn Kirk, Deborah Lee, Sina Uipi
September 2, 2009