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先住民による抵抗運動についての解説

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Determining Oceania: A Commentary on Indigenous Struggles in Guam and Okinawa

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オセアニアを「決定」する： 先住民による抵抗運動についての解説

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オセアニアでは様々な形でアメリカ合衆国の軍事化が進行しているが、本論はこうした軍事化の渦中で起こっている「先住民の抵抗運動」について、民族誌的な考察を呈示することを目的としている。我々の民族誌は、個人的な思索や、帝国主義と抵抗に関する文献の知識、そして我々の社会変革への貢献を通して得た知見にもとづいている。本論では「先住民の抵抗」という包括的表現を使用するが、「先住民性」についての概念やその解釈、その使い方は、人々や場所によって異なることは認識しているつもりである。そのうえで、過去数十年間のグアムと沖縄における先住民の抵抗の状況が、予備段階的にどう評価できるかについて解説する。最も特徴的なのは、これらの先住民運動を通して、トンガ出身の批評家であるエベリ・ハウオフアが言う「歴史と文化が帝国主義的現実と具体的実践行動に結びつく」オセアニアという場所に、もうひとつ新たな地域的アイデンティティが生じているという点である。こうした運動は、海を遺産として共有しているという認識のもと、包括的で順応性に富んだアイデンティティのありようを模索し続けてきたが、このアイデンティティはグアムと沖縄に駐留する米軍を批判する手段ともなると言える。

Introduction

A recent report concerning United States geopolitical interests across the islands of Oceania declared that “Washington cannot afford to neglect its long-standing links with these saltwater states and should better employ the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) — its principle lever of military and diplomatic power in the Pacific — by elevating the region’s importance and making current ‘theater security cooperation’ more robust”

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(Thomas, 2010, p. 97). Writing for the *Naval War College Review*, the author of the report, a Marine intelligence officer named Captain Thomas, urged his readers in Washington to take more seriously Oceania's growing significance in international affairs. Couched in both developmental and diplomatic terms, Thomas argued that strengthening Washington's "security cooperation" in Oceania could increase American relations with the region's independent island nations, marine fish stocks and deep-sea mineral resources. The author then suggested that should the U.S. fail to bolster its military apparatus against its perceived security threat, the People's Republic of China (PRC), then America's economic, diplomatic and military interests in Oceania could wane in the future. Contrary to Thomas's assertions, however, the PRC has not militarized its borders beyond the Taiwan strait and beyond the energy supply routes that serve China's rapidly growing national economy (Wesley-Smith, 2010, p. 35). Nor do any of the independent island nations of Oceania, many of which have strong diplomatic ties with the PRC, lie close to China's commercial, military or strategic sea lanes.

It is thus debatable whether China poses a credible security threat to the U.S. or to the island states now or in the future. What remains certain about Thomas's claims are the ways in which the U.S. continues to determine its presence in Oceania vis-à-vis the logics of militarization. This is certainly the case with respect to the transfer of U.S. Marines from the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa to the U.S. territory of Guam, a bilateral agreement established between the governments of Japan and the U.S. in 2009 (Taira, 2009). By 2014, the relocation is expected to partially demilitarize Okinawa in favor of remilitarizing Guam into a "hub for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike operations" (Burgess, 2007). This is one of several attempts by the U.S. to deter Chinese maritime militarism. As much as we dispute this arrangement, we also recognize that the logics of American militarization have created this reality for the peoples of Guam and Okinawa.¹ It is a reality premised on the U.S. military's alleged guarantee of peace, stability and prosperity for the peoples of these and other islands. In this essay, we intend to share some of our ethnographic observations about "indigenous struggles" within and against these forms of U.S. militarization (Lutz, 2006, p. 593). Our ethnography is informed by our personal reflections, our knowledge of the literature on empire and resistance, and our contributions to social change.

By using the inclusive phrase "indigenous struggles," we acknowledge that various concepts, interpretations and applications of "indigeneity" differ from one people and locale to another. As a commentary, then, we offer preliminary assessments regarding the state of indigenous struggles in Guam and Okinawa. Most notably, we are finding that these indigenous struggles are creating another regional identity of Oceania that, as the Tongan critic Epeli Hau'ofa once put it, ties "history and culture to empirical reality and practical action" (2008, p. 55). Taking the sea as their single common heritage, these struggles have been searching for accommodating, inclusive and flexible identities as a means to critique the U.S. military in Guam and Okinawa (Hau'ofa, 2008, pp. 50–51). By employing the logics of indigeneity, some peoples in Guam and Okinawa are imagining

alternative realities for Oceania beyond those offered by the *Naval War College Review* and other extensions of U.S. militarization.

The Logics of Indigeneity

The political genealogies of contemporary indigenous struggles in Oceania are inextricably tied to the colonial doctrines of “discoveries,” “conquests” and “treaties” in the region and elsewhere (Iverson, Patton & Sanders, 2002, p. 12). Whereas the former doctrine justified European New World acquisitions of lands (and especially lands deemed *terra nullius*), the latter doctrines respectively entailed acts of warfare and diplomatic agreements between two or more sovereign entities. For better or for worse, other aspects of these doctrines involve the displacement of indigenous peoples, the introduction of diseases, the spread of religions, the settlement of immigrants, the exchange of commodities and gifts, the development of land and sea trade routes, and the manipulation or abolishment of treaties. All of these doctrines produced, as distinct or interrelated processes, histories of colonialism — and their consequences — from which the logics of indigeneity emerge. These consequences, variously construed as discriminations, injuries and/or genocides, have often reduced indigenous peoples to their present status as “wards of the state” (García-Alix & Hitchcock, 2009, p. 101).

Concomitantly, very few indigenous peoples around the world are in control of the governments in the countries where they reside. Similarly, they lack the legal rights to participate in civil, political and socioeconomic decision making (García-Alix & Hitchcock, 2009, p. 101). Invoking these histories of discrimination, genocide and injustice, indigenous peoples have presented themselves in public spheres as recognizable collectives who have suffered under the colonialisms of nation-states rather than as minority peoples who have contributed to the making of nation-states. While peoples other than indigenous societies have also endured the consequences of colonialism, indigenous societies have distinguished themselves from minorities by claiming that they hold inalienable rights for the controlling of their lands and sovereignties (Weaver, 2000, p. 231). As Joanne Barker explains, “refuting minority status was a refutation of the assimilationist ideologies that constructed indigenous peoples as ethnic minorities under the governing authority of the nation-state and a claim of the attributes of sovereignty customarily associated with nations” (2005, p. 19). As early as the 1950s, several international organizations have supported these indigenous struggles, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). These international organizations have advocated on behalf of indigenous peoples as non-minorities who seek to renew their stewardship, ownership or management of lands.

While these organizations may have advanced the local, national or regional efforts of indigenous peoples, no entity has granted indigenous peoples as strong an international profile as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hereafter

cited as Declaration). Since its passage on September 13, 2007, the Declaration has identified the range of colonial violations directed toward indigenous peoples on a global scale. Although the Declaration lacks the power of a convention, and is therefore not binding on states, the Declaration nevertheless accomplished several goals heretofore not acknowledged in international law (García-Alix & Hitchcock, 2009, p. 106). The core objectives included (1) addressing the rights of indigenous peoples as collectivities rather than as individuals; (2) outlining measures to protect the dignity, well-being and cultural survival of indigenous peoples; and (3) delineating frameworks for indigenous forms of self-determination (*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2009). In this respect, the logics of indigeneity have gained political and economic significance over the years because of the various international mechanisms that have highlighted or supported indigenous claims to culture, land, resources and nationhood. In fact, the notion of “indigenous peoples” may become a new legal international category because of its increasing usage by marginalized societies (Muehlebach, 2003, p. 250). As Andrea Muehlebach aptly suggests, “the reason so much power inheres in the concept of ‘indigenous peoples’ is because a specific set of rights flow from this term — rights much stronger than those that flow from the concepts of ‘autonomy’ or ‘self-government,’ or those that accrue to minorities” (2003, p. 252). Along with the rising importance of “indigenous peoples” as a possible legal category, the Declaration may also become customary international law in the future. This presents another opportunity for indigenous peoples to compel states to comply with their concerns and with the human-rights standards outlined by the UN (García-Alix & Hitchcock, 2009, p. 106). Of course, the key question is whether states are willing to engage indigenous issues in the first place, let alone follow human-rights protocols.

As much as the futures of indigenous struggles at the international level may prove promising, the present political conditions for most indigenous peoples are far from ideal. Despite the contributions made by indigenous peoples at both the local and international levels, Lola García-Alix and Robert K. Hitchcock remind us that states still determine the domestic and international laws upon which the rights of indigenous peoples are accorded, transformed or deprived (2009, p. 103). Of all the major issues facing indigenous peoples, they argue that states usually express fears about the perceived dangers of indigenous self-determination and self-governance. The potential dissolution of states, the potential secession of indigenous peoples from states, the potential granting of indigenous peoples control of oil and mineral exploration, and the potential reopening previously established agreements between states and indigenous peoples are some of the fears commonly expressed by states (García-Alix & Hitchcock, 2009, p. 103). Rather than engage these issues from indigenous rights’ perspectives, from which matters of redress, reconciliation and survival prove paramount, most states have either rejected or prolonged indigenous calls for self-determination (Alfred, 2005, p. 36).

In Oceania, for example, states such as France and the U.S. have retained their sovereignty over island societies in order to protect their diplomatic, economic and, most

especially, military interests in the region (Wesley-Smith, 2007, p. 33). Even the UN has failed to grant the process of self-determination to indigenous peoples in Oceania who reside in settler-dominated areas (Wesley-Smith, 2007, p. 33). The Aborigines of Australia and the Māori of New Zealand are two notable examples. That the UN and some of its member states have developed politically ambivalent relations with some indigenous peoples pointedly demonstrates that domestic and international laws have yet to fully reckon with indigenous struggles. On the other hand, some island societies in Oceania have productively used the principle of self-determination to create their versions of self-government since the 1960s, such as Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Sāmoa. On our trip to Guam and Okinawa in June 2009, then, we traveled to these islands with the understanding that the logics of indigeneity offer modes of being for peoples and nation-states alike. In this regard, these logics produce ontologies — what Vicente M. Diaz calls the “cultural, historical, and political condition of being indigenous or native to a place” — that bear multiple interpretations, consequences and applications (2010, p. 4). As our commentary intends to show, the ways by which Chamorros and Okinawans differently discern themselves as “indigenous” has much to do with their militarized environments as much as with their participation in UN frameworks for indigenous self-determination.

Chamorro Resistance to U.S. Militarization

During the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. acquired Guam after defeating the island’s former colonizer, Spain. From 1898 to 1941, the U.S. Navy maintained a coaling station in Guam, the southernmost island in the Marianas, for American vessels traveling throughout the Pacific. Drawing on the colonial doctrine of conquest and white American assimilation policies of the period, the Navy established a local government premised on a military code of laws and regulations. Chamorros and other residents of the island thus fell under a military government that deprived them of any legal and political rights. As early as 1901, several Chamorro individuals and organizations separately petitioned the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Navy to address these and other unequal socio-political conditions in Guam (Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, 1993, p. 24). Employing the logics of civil rights, some Chamorros believed that full incorporation into the U.S. nation as citizens would eradicate the naval government and grant them greater control of their political future. Indeed, the imparting of U.S. citizenship to Chamorros in 1950 eliminated the U.S. Navy’s direct control of the island as well as bolstered Chamorro political rights within the U.S. legal framework. Despite these political accomplishments, however, the U.S. still viewed the residents of Guam as secondary in importance to the military’s war-waging missions throughout Asia and the Pacific.

After World War II, for example, the U.S. military seized lands for the construction of bases without due regard for the Chamorro land tenure system (Hattori, 2001, p. 189).

Initially, the military created the bases to house military personnel, ammunitions, combat machinery and supplies intended for the U.S. invasion of Japan. Whereas a few bases were built in the 1940s, most of which were airfields, other bases were proposed, developed or renovated from the 1950s to the 1970s. After the war, the bases served similar roles for U.S. conflicts in Vietnam, Korea and Iraq. Because of the base construction, nearly 15,000 of the island's 20,000 residents were displaced from their village homes, family ranches and coastal fishing areas in the 1940s (Hattori, 2001, p. 189). Only a few families sold their lands according to their terms, itself a rare occurrence. As the Chamorro educator Robert A. Underwood argues, many people lost their lands through a process of "arbitrary decisions, fraudulent promises, and inadequate and irregular compensation schemes" (2001, p. 211). Although Guam's demographics have changed since the aftermath of World War II, with Chamorros presently comprising less than 40% of the population, several Air Force, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Marine Corps and Navy installations have been built since that time. These bases take up approximately one-third of the island, making Guam an island where militarization persists seemingly unabated (Lutz, 2009, p. 6).

By the 1970s, some of the island's educational, political and religious leadership realized that their attainment of U.S. citizenship failed to prevent the ongoing militarization of their environment. Some even questioned the very presence of the U.S. military and federal government, calling the U.S. a "colonial power" and requesting the UN to immediately intervene in Guam. In turn, a plethora of grassroots organizations, legislative referendums, media debates, public polls and political status plebiscites emerged from the 1970s to the 1980s. This was a new social movement that appropriated the logics of indigeneity, as expressed by the UN principle of self-determination, as a means to address Guam's colonial status (Ada & Bettis, 1996, p. 200). With lands claims constituting one its central components, indigenous self-determination easily resonated for Chamorros, especially those whose lands were occupied by the U.S. military. In the Chamorro vernacular, these political ideas reinforced the ways in which Chamorros understood themselves as *taotao tano*, or the "people of the land." Coupled with self-determination, the notion of *taotao tano* has thus infused Chamorro political consciousness in ways that reaffirm their native connections to the lands and seas of Guam. But unlike the previous social movement to garner U.S. citizenship, which pushed for Chamorro inclusion into the U.S. nation, the Chamorro movement for self-determination imagined political futures in and beyond the U.S. (Perez, 2001). First, the movement cast doubt on the political power of U.S. citizenship in the context of militarization. Second, the movement recognized Chamorros as an "indigenous people" with human rights under international law. And third, the movement established that only Chamorros, a society with cultural and historical ties to their lands, possessed the political right of indigenous self-determination (Cristobal, 1993, p. 147).

As scholar-activists now located in the continental U.S. but with cultural and historical ties to Oceania, we visited Guam with these issues in mind. Our trip started with a one-

week stay in Guam during June 2009. Because of our limited time frame, we prepared a modest agenda that began with Wesley Ueunten's lecture at the University of Guam (UOG) on June 17. With the assistance of Lisa Linda Natividad and Nicole Santos, two advocates for Chamorro self-determination, we reserved a room at the university's library and publicized Ueunten's talk to Guam's wider public.²⁾ Ueunten's lecture, titled "Re-Writing the Genealogy of Okinawans: The Koza Uprising of 1970," examined a major uprising in Okinawa during the U.S.'s direct rule over Okinawa (Ueunten, 2010). With approximately fifty people in attendance, he discussed the ways in which Okinawan political activism and the Black Panther movement merged during the Vietnam War to confront American racisms. Drawing on historical evidence of African-American and Okinawan coalition-building under the U.S. occupation, Ueunten presented the uprising as a budding "Third World" social movement in Okinawa. Although the uprising only lasted one day, he demonstrated that the processes involved in the making of the event challenged American discriminatory policies at the time. That African-American soldiers in the U.S. military, Okinawan political activists and Okinawan victims of military violence were able to come together was itself an act of great solidarity. The Koza uprising illustrated that demilitarization occurs among peoples who might not necessarily share a common heritage, language or religion.

Based on the dialogue that ensued after the talk, we realized that many people in the audience had developed a general consciousness about U.S. militarization in Oceania. They were especially interested in understanding the implications of Ueunten's discussion about coalition-building, given that interactions among Chamorros and Okinawans have gradually developed over the years. Of course, thousands of Okinawan plantation laborers and their families once populated the Mariana Islands of Tinian and Saipan. As part of an emerging global diaspora, they formed a crucial, settler component of Japan's sugar economy of the 1930s (Shinichi, 2007, p. 5). Some elder Chamorros and Okinawans who resided in these islands remembered that period with nostalgia and loss, friendship and hardship. Only a few relationships exist today because many of the elders have passed on. While these earlier exchanges seldom challenged Japanese colonial governance, we are finding that some Chamorros and Okinawans (like ourselves) have begun to share information with each other about the co-constitutive nature of American and Japanese militarization in the western Pacific. Lisa Linda Natividad and Nicole Santos, as well as the indigenous and women's organizations they represent, are making these cross-cultural exchanges possible in Guam. Because of their collaborations, they are creating welcoming spaces for dialogue at and beyond UOG.

After Ueunten's public lecture, we then traveled around Guam's villages, such as Barrigada, Dededo, Sumay and Yigo. As we toured the island, we visited sites of historical significance, almost all of which revolved around American, Japanese or Spanish forms of militarization. Some of these places included Fort Nuestra de la Soledad (a seventeenth-century Spanish fort), Japanese anti-aircraft guns of the 1940s and the U.S. War in the Pacific National Historical Park (Herman, 2008). Road-side posters of U.S. patriotism

were likewise ubiquitous, illustrating Guam's role during the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (see figure 1). We then spoke with individuals who have been critical of what the media calls the "military buildup," such as the noted attorney Therese Terlaje and the esteemed organizer Debbie Quinata. Judith T. Won Pat, a Guam senator and co-founder of Fuetsan Famalao'an, was another key person. As an advocate for women's and Chamorro rights, she has attended conferences with political leaders from Okinawa, Japan and the U.S. In our conversation with her, Senator Won Pat expressed deep concerns about the U.S. military's disregard for the survival of the Chamorro culture and language. As she explained, "when you really listen to all of the reports given by the military and government subcommittees, you see nothing that has to do with the culture, the language and the survival of the indigenous Chamorros. You don't see that. You only hear certain laws that need to be introduced so that things run smoothly for the military transition from Okinawa to Guam. That's all they talk about. You don't hear about the impacts" (Won Pat, 2009).

These impacts range from the overcrowding of schools, housing and roads to the straining of a poorly maintained sewage, water and power infrastructure. The largest impact concerns the possibility that Chamorros may become a "minority" in their own homeland. By "minority," we do not necessarily mean a numerically small demographic,



Figure 1

which is already the case for Chamorros. We are more wary about the socio-political meanings of minority, wherein Chamorro political agency becomes marginal to the makings of everyday life in Guam, the Asia-Pacific region and the broader world. Although the U.S. military has held public hearings in which these topics about the military buildup have been discussed, Senator Won Pat argued that the military has failed to incorporate these issues at the level of policy-making.³⁾ Instead, the federal agencies supporting the military — that is, the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Interior — have been actively waging a propaganda campaign about the supposed economic benefits of the military buildup (Murphy, 2006). Attempting to blunt Chamorro criticisms about the violence of militarization, these federal agencies have been claiming that the construction projects needed to build military facilities would economically benefit the island. With a struggling tourist industry, the military's ongoing and proposed construction projects are already generating tax revenues for the government of Guam. But because these construction projects rely heavily on “foreign labor” and imported supplies, construction companies from Japan and the continental U.S. primarily stand to profit from the military buildup. As one economic report indicates, these construction companies plan to absorb the projected \$15 billion in costs needed for this massive relocation (Laney, 2008, p. 5). Lou Leon Guerrero, the president for the Bank of Guam, concurred with these estimates. Like many of the individuals we met, she acknowledged that on- and off-base construction projects have greatly raised the value of property. Local residents are now having a difficult time securing “affordable housing” on the island, a process that may lead to widespread gentrification, increased homelessness, inter-ethnic conflicts and other urban problems.

What are we to make of these indigenous struggles in Guam? We already know that nearly forty years have passed since Chamorros engaged the logics of indigeneity at various local, national and international levels. By the late 1970s, the UN had begun to acknowledge that Chamorros are an “indigenous people” suffering from the consequences of U.S. militarization, which is one reason why Guam remains one of the non-self governing territories of the world. Yet Chamorro self-determination has not been realized because of the U.S. refusal to address its colonial status in Guam. The relocation of 17,000 military personnel and their dependents from Futenma, Okinawa, to Guam can thereby constrain Chamorro efforts to determine their political future (Aguon 2008, p. 142). In this way, the military buildup appears inevitable, as does the American removal of Chamorro political agency from matters of international significance. Ironically, though, the military buildup of Guam has actually internationalized Chamorro indigenous struggles in productive ways. The debates surrounding the buildup have been receiving the attention of academic, grassroots, media, non-profit and women's organizations from around the world.⁴⁾ Clearly, discussions about Chamorro indigenous struggles in and beyond Oceania have increased. As our trip to Guam illustrates, there is a small but significant group of Chamorros and Okinawans who have been organizing against U.S. forms of militarization (Alexander, 2008, p. 90). As we departed Guam for Okinawa, we

reflected upon these series of events. That is, if the logics of Chamorro indigeneity have produced symbolic acts of resistance toward U.S. rule, then what can we say about the relatively new appropriation of “indigenouslyness” by some Okinawans? How might the logics of indigeneity influence Okinawan ways of being under U.S. and Japanese forms of militarization? And how might Okinawan articulations of indigenouslyness transform how we understand these logics as they have conventionally been perceived by the UN and other international forums?

Okinawan Resistance to U.S. Militarization

The history of the Japanese militarization of Okinawa began in earnest in the late 1800s. In 1879, a garrison of Japanese soldiers forcibly removed the last Ryukyuan king, Sho Tai, after which the soldiers immediately occupied Shuri Castle. The former Ryukyuan Kingdom was remade officially as “Okinawa Prefecture” following the collapse of the Sino-centric international order of that period. The inclusion of Ryūkyū into the modern nation-state of Japan was not done out of any genuine feeling of shared kinship between the Japanese and Okinawans. In fact, there had been voices against the annexation of Ryūkyū before 1879 because it was felt that it would put a strain on national finances as well as generate discomfort over bringing Ryukyuan into the nation. Okinawa’s strategic geopolitical location, however, trumped all arguments against its incorporation into Japan; annexation was necessary in the interests of securing Japan’s southern borders (Oguma, 1998, pp. 20–21). Invoking the doctrines of conquest, discovery and treaty, the Japanese cast Okinawa as a “subject state” and Okinawans as a “subject people” (Uemura, 2003, p. 122). As Hideaki Uemura argues, “although the Japanese government had not effectively ruled the Ryūkyū or its people, Japan conflated the Asian concepts of ‘subject state’ and ‘subject people’ with European-style ‘effective rule’ to justify Japan’s territorial ambitions” (2003, p. 122).

By the early 1900s, Japanese journalists and others who visited Okinawa tended to characterize Okinawans in their writings as a “backward” and “uncivilized” subject people. Okinawans became “*dojin*,” or “primitive natives,” separate from the racial category from which Japanese mainlanders constructed their own identity as “civilized,” “progressive” and “Western” (Ōta, 1987, p. 268). When Japan ruled the former German colonies in Micronesia from 1914 to 1944, which included the Caroline, Mariana and Marshall Islands, Japanese political discourse then broadened the meaning of *dojin* to encompass Okinawans and the “kanakas” of Micronesia. As the *dojin* of Japan’s overseas government, Chamorros, Chuukese, Marshallese, Palauans, Yapese and other Pacific Islanders became racially homogenized in ways similar to the U.S. Navy’s classification of Chamorros as native wards of the state. For the purpose of maintaining Japanese racial hierarchies, the term *dojin* marked Okinawans as being closer culturally and geographically to the kanakas of the “South Seas” (e.g., Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands). As Gary Y. Okihiro explains, “Okinawans, as so-called ‘Japan kanaka,’ formed

a link with those natives of the ‘South Seas,’ revealing an unbroken line, a continuum along the spectrum of alleged difference between the contrived polarities of ‘Japanese’ and ‘kanaka’” (2010, p. 10). Historically, then, Okinawans have held deep ties to Asia and Oceania because of their “southward as well as northward bearings from possible migrations and linguistic and cultural affiliations to commercial and political relations” (Okihiro, 2010, p. 10). But because of the Japanese colonization of Okinawa, much of these historical linkages have been severed unless the connections served to uphold Japanese economic, military and political interests. Up to World War II, the Japanese usage of *dojin*, rather than the more positive term, *senjūmin* (indigenous), as a racial category of control is a case in point.⁵⁾

Japanese colonial apathy toward Okinawans continued during the war and the post-war onslaught of U.S. militarization. The lack of attachment felt by Japan towards Okinawans was tragically demonstrated when Okinawa was used as a breakwater to hold U.S. troops during the Battle of Okinawa. Approximately 160,000 Okinawans died from warfare, starvation or illnesses, reflecting Japan’s wartime view of Okinawans as an expendable, non-grievable population (Butler, 2006). From 1945 to 1972, the time frame in which the U.S. military constructed its major bases in Guam, the U.S. military then directly occupied and controlled Okinawa. Lands which could have supported Okinawan entrepreneurs in the aftermath of World War II were used by the U.S. military to build bases. Along with Guam, Hawai‘i and South Korea, Okinawa became a “virtual colony” of the U.S. (Akibayashi & Takazato, 2009, p. 250). As Kozue Akibayashi and Suzuyo Takazato assert, “Okinawa is the largest home of U.S. military bases in Japan; 37 facilities, comprising 75 percent of all those exclusively used by the U.S. military, are located in Okinawa, occupying about 20 percent of the main island” (2009, p. 245). Currently, up to 45,000 military personnel and their dependents are stationed in Okinawa. These are distressing statistics given that the land struggles of the 1950s, the labor and peace movements of the 1960s, the Koza Uprising of 1970 and the “reversion” to Japan in 1972 all attempted to demilitarize Okinawa. In fact, many Okinawans expected reversion to Japan to demilitarize Okinawa, much like how many Chamorros believed that their attainment of U.S. citizenship would eradicate all forms of military rule in Guam (Ota, 2000, p. 154). Contrary to their projected goals, however, Japanese citizenship for Okinawans in the post-reversion era did little to remove the military’s occupation of Okinawa. Of the 145 bases constructed since the end of World War II, only 34 bases were deactivated after the reversion (Ota, 2000, p. 154). Presently, the main bases include Kadena Air Base and Futenma Air Station for the Marine Corps. For several decades, the status quo of U.S. militarization in Okinawa remained largely intact. This was the case until three U.S. servicemen raped a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl on September 4, 1995.

The rape attracted the attention of international human and women’s rights organizations, many of which criticized the U.S. military for its acts of violence against women. Linking the rape incident to the military’s histories of sexual violence in the

Philippines, Korea and elsewhere, increasing numbers of Okinawan women protested the rape and demanded justice (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2004). Already considered the spiritual protectors of the community as expressed in their *unai* belief system, more Okinawan women began to make ties with women from other militarized areas (Tanji, 2006b). Centered on the perspectives of women and children, the U.S. militarization of Okinawa was shown to be a threat to the safety and sanctity of human life in Okinawa. Because of organizations like Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, the rape incident demonstrated that protecting the lives of Okinawan women and children was more important than defending U.S. strategic interests in Okinawa (Fukumura & Matsuoka, 2009, p. 51). Propelled onto the international stage, the rape incident in 1995 further highlighted the concerns of Okinawan women and children under U.S. military occupation (Tanji, 2006a, p. 159). As a result of the political criticisms surrounding the rape, the governments of Japan and the U.S. have been attempting to demilitarize some (but not all) aspects of the U.S. military in Okinawa. In this regard, the transfer of U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam was partly meant to placate Okinawan protests. As Masa'aki Gabe states, "the most effective solution to the Okinawa Base Problem would be to withdraw the U.S. Marines from the island, though perhaps not the other troops and personnel" (2005, p. 17).

During our one-week trip to Okinawa, we presented Gabe's "solution" to many of the individuals we met. As in Guam, we conversed with as many people as we could within a brief period. Our gatherings were also informal so as to generate inclusive venues for discussions. We credit Katsunori Yamazato, Suyuzo Takazato, Yoshikazu Makishi, Gary Okihiro, Yukino Chinen, Doug Lummis, Kazuki Ōshiro, Tsugiko Taira, Chihiro Sakihara and others for arranging some of our meetings. Whether we were in a museum or in a coffee shop, we then introduced ourselves to people and asked them where the Marines are moving to. Without hesitation, many people said, "Guam." When we pressed for detailed explanations, we received two, interrelated responses. First, some people believed that the elected officials from Guam openly welcomed the Marines. They premised their assessments based on the media's popular yet contested position that the military buildup will economically benefit Guam.⁶⁾ On November 10, 2006, for example, the *Ryukyu Shimpō* covered a visit by a six-person Chamber of Commerce delegation from Guam. The leader of the delegation reported that 86% of respondents in a Guam public opinion poll favored the moving of troops from Okinawa to Guam; the delegation also expressed enthusiasm for the military's improvement of Guam's infrastructure (Guamu shōkōkaito ga kaiheitai iten ni kitai, 2006).⁷⁾ Beyond these sentiments and the notion that Guam was a destination for Japanese tourists, the first group knew little about the violence of U.S. militarization in Guam, let alone Chamorro struggles for self-determination. Despite their limited knowledge of Chamorros, however, these Okinawan views were accurate given that many of Guam's elected officials support the military buildup.

Whereas some Okinawans construed Guam as a tourist destination where the U.S.



Figure 2

Marines might be transferred, other Okinawans approached our questions with a more nuanced understanding of U.S. militarization in Oceania. To this effect, the second response suggested that U.S. militarization in its entirety must be abolished for greater world peace, a position that frowned upon the moving of Marines from Okinawa to Guam. They related that although the Japanese Regional Defense Bureau in Okinawa held public meetings to “discuss” U.S. military base construction projects, very little discussion with locals was actually allowed. Keith L. Camacho then raised the point that U.S. military officials in Guam held similar “scoping” meetings in which the military wooed the public with food in order to gain their support. Yet the U.S. military rarely took seriously any of the written questions and comments submitted to them. These examples of military propaganda prompted the Okinawans to recall that Takae residents were once invited to the local mayor’s house for a party hosted by Japanese Defense Ministry officials and served Okinawan *awamori*. These meetings reminded us of the urgency to share information about the U.S. military’s propagandizing tactics in Okinawa, Guam and elsewhere. Suyuzo Takazato, the renowned Okinawan feminist, and Lisa Linda Natividad, the Chamorro scholar-activist, are two notable individuals in this regard. When we were in Okinawa, they kindly invited us to tour the island’s militarized sites, such as Henoko, Naha and Futenma (see figure 2). We encountered farmers, artists, educators, fishers and

environmentalists, many of whom contributed toward the building of partnerships among Chamorros and Okinawans.

While the responses we received provide a small sampling of Okinawan views, these discussions collectively showed Okinawan concern for the future of their island. Whether the debates revolved around electoral politics, sexual violence or multi-ethnic coalitions, the relocation of Marines from Okinawa to Guam has compelled more Okinawans to question the role of U.S. militarization in the twenty-first century. Central to this ongoing dialogue has been the rise of Okinawan coalitions with indigenous peoples, such as American Indians, Australian Aborigines, Hawaiians and, more recently, Chamorros (Hein & Selden, 2003, p. 27). As these networks increase in scope, Okinawa's relations with Oceania and other indigenous worlds are likewise expanding. One aspect of these exchanges has been the reassessment of Okinawans as a "Japanese" people. As an emergent process, some Okinawans have begun to appropriate the logics of indigeneity as part of their identity formation and political mobilization. Reflecting on the tenuous prospect of Okinawans construing themselves as "indigenous," Koji Taira notes that "both Okinawans and Japanese apparently subscribe to the primacy of Japan's territorial integrity and national unity. Support for the notion that Okinawans and Japanese are two different peoples distinct from each other but sharing one federal state appears rather thin" (Taira, 2007, p. 5). It is probable that the preeminent Okinawan scholar Ifa Fuyu's *nichiryū dōka ron* (theory of Japan-Ryukyu assimilation) may be responsible for discouraging public debates about "indigenosity" (read as "*dojin*"), as some Okinawans may prefer "Japaneseness" over "indigenosity" in terms of national identity-making (Oshiro, 2007, p. 46). Indeed, Japaneseness and indigenosity are two of the constitutive racial and political discourses by which Okinawans understand themselves as a collective group.

The UN's recent recognition of Okinawans as an indigenous people now makes these distinctions clear — and for decolonial purposes, oppositional — in so far as they advance Okinawan struggles for self-determination. Assessing Japan's human rights record in October 2008, for example, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Committee called on Japan to "recognize the Ainu and Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous peoples in domestic legislation, adopt special measures to protect, preserve and promote their cultural heritage and traditional way of life, and recognize their land rights" (2008, p. 10). Earlier in 2006, the UN raised these issues to the Diet. Specifically, the UN advised the Diet to investigate if the U.S. militarization of Okinawa violates Okinawans' human rights. Drawing from their evaluation of petitions and testimonies submitted by Okinawans, the UN questioned if military noise and oil pollution, criminal acts by military personnel, and military accidents associated with air maneuvers constituted violations of Okinawan human rights (United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights, 2006, p. 14). The fact that the UN later acknowledged Okinawans as an indigenous people — itself a UN criterion for identifying groups who suffer from the consequences of colonialism — implicitly suggests that the

U.S. and Japan are responsible for these human rights violations in Okinawa. Although the UN has no binding legislation with respect to their Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, any recording of human rights violations still bodes well for indigenous struggles in Okinawa.

How Okinawans respond to the pseudo-legal category of “indigenous people” partly determines the kinds of political rights they might or might not attain at the national and international levels. This has been a concern for the Association of Indigenous Peoples in the Ryukyus (AIPR), the Okinawan Citizen Information Center and the Citizens Diplomatic Center for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. They are a few of the organizations that have been urging the UN to designate Okinawans as an indigenous people since the 1990s (Akiko, 2008). As the Okinawan peace scholar Konaki Morita explains, “when we the people of Okinawa become aware that we are the indigenous people of Japan and exercise our right of self-determination, we will responsibly be able to solve various issues such as the presence of military bases, the understanding of the Battle of Okinawa, the economy, the cultural and land assets stripped by outsiders, the destruction of communities by development, the destruction of cultural assets including sanctuary areas, the destruction of livelihoods and environment, and the crisis of the Ryukyu language’s extinction” (Akiko, 2008). As the references to cultural, economic and political self-determination make clear, Morita’s comments resonate with many of the indigenous struggles occurring in Guam and other militarized areas of Oceania. Yet, for the most part, Okinawans do not articulate their notions of collective identity, cultural survival and political sovereignty vis-à-vis the logics of indigeneity.

During our visit to Okinawa, then, we only encountered a few people who openly talked about the relevance of the UN framework for indigenous self-determination even though Okinawan demilitarization, environmentalist and feminist efforts all appear to engage this sphere. As one Okinawan activist at Henoko revealed to us, “at the time (of the Reversion), Okinawans didn’t even think about independence. . . . Now, under this plan to transfer troops to Guam, Okinawa has a disproportionate burden. There has been no referendum over this issue. It is mainly Yamatunchu making decisions regarding Okinawa’s future at the Diet. If we don’t start thinking that the way those decisions are made is strange, the present situation won’t change at all. That is where Guam and Okinawa have commonalities” (Ueunten, 2009). As this comment illustrates, the relocation of Marines from Okinawa to Guam has encouraged some Okinawans to reflect on their political power (or lack of) at the international level. The remark also suggests that so long as Okinawa fails to revise its political relationship with Japan, especially in terms of Okinawan self-determination, Okinawans will continue to be excluded from decision-making policies by and between Japan and the U.S. (Taira, 1999, p. 173). In response to their marginalization from the international sphere, another Okinawan said, “America proclaims itself to be a democratic nation, but in reality it is a colonialist nation. [Along with] Hawai‘i, Guam [and] Saipan . . . Okinawa experienced being colonized by

the U.S. Hawai'i's indigenous people (*senjūmin*), Guam's indigenous Chamorro people, and us, Okinawan indigenous people. If we get together as one independent nation, we can create a huge ocean" (Ueunten, 2009). Indeed, these criticisms reveal a growing regional consciousness in Okinawans' relationships with indigenous struggles across Oceania. But because Okinawans have not generally questioned their "subject status" as "Japanese citizens" in a militarized landscape, we speculate that this is one reason why they have not debated the political possibilities of indigeneity. On the other hand, should Okinawans choose to collectively foreground women's agency, consider *senjūmin* as a category of liberation, strengthen coalitions with indigenous peoples, and conceptualize Okinawa as a sovereign entity, then perhaps their militarized relationships with Japan and the U.S. may be further revised in their terms and for their benefit.

Determining Oceania

Since as early as the 1980s, Okinawans across the world have been expressing their diasporic identities through the traditional Okinawan saying, *ichariba chōdē*. Roughly translated, *ichariba chōdē* means, "once we meet, we are family." Third and fourth generation Okinawans born in overseas communities have been proudly using this phrase to foster solidarity, as have Okinawans in Okinawa who participate in Okinawan cultural, language and arts festivals. We believe that this phrase — *ichariba chōdē* — applies to the critical partnerships we made or renewed during our trip to Guam and Okinawa in June 2009. As our commentary on indigenous struggles in Guam and Okinawa reveals, a new social movement has emerged among some Chamorros and Okinawans over the past decade. As Lisa Linda Natividad and Gwyn Kirk observe, "because the proposed build-up involves transferring Marines from Okinawa, alliances between Chamorro groups, Okinawan anti-base activists, and partner organizations in mainland Japan have strengthened opposition to military base expansion in all three places, as organizers stand together in solidarity trying to stop the military from pitting one community against another" (Natividad & Kirk, 2010). As these coalitions grow, it is very probable that the U.S. military will reconsolidate its propaganda campaigns to suppress resistance toward the military build-up in Guam and to other aspects of militarization in Oceania. That is why we must be vigilant about decolonizing the ways in which we foster coalitions across competing class, gender, political, racial, religious, sexual and social lines (Cachola, Kirk, Natividad & Pumarejo, 2010, p. 167).

Precisely because Chamorros and Okinawans have differently experienced U.S. forms of militarization, the coalition practices they consider must be critical, inclusive, creative and situational given the myriad ways in which demilitarization occurs. Whether or not this new social movement eventually subscribes to decolonial, pan-ethnic, feminist, indigenous, environmental or social justice methods, we know that its future will entail ideals, realities and consequences we have only begun to understand (Espiritu, 1992, p. 168). At this juncture, we can only reflect on the present conditions of these partnerships.

In this regard, we know that the logics of indigeneity have been informing, however directly or indirectly, how some Chamorros and Okinawans articulate their forms of activism against and within U.S. forms of militarization. They are creating another regional identity of Oceania that partly draws on these logics. At the same time, we fear that the U.S. and Japan will succeed in transferring Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2014, a process that is underway as we write this commentary. We remain confident, though, in the kinds of intellectual and political partnerships that increasingly account for the flow of ideas, bodies and technologies that cross Guam, Okinawa and beyond (Okiihiro, 2010; Hanlon, 2009; Taira, 2004). This might very well be an Oceania determined by a committed, vibrant and diverse group of people — Chamorros and Okinawans alike — who imagine their identities in ways that traverse and transform imposed nationalities, colonial militaries and artificial regional boundaries.

Notes

- 1) Although a majority of the U.S. military personnel from Okinawa are expected to be relocated to Guam, the U.S. Department of Defense is also examining the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) as another area to construct firing ranges, target practice sites and other military installations. The CNMI and Guam are the two political entities of the Mariana Islands, home to the Chamorro people and to a growing community of Asians and Pacific Islanders. Guam and the CNMI, however, have different territorial statuses under the US, a topic beyond the scope of this essay. For our purposes here, we are only focusing on “indigenous struggles” in Guam and Okinawa.
- 2) Lisa Linda Natividad is an assistant professor of social work at UOG and is a member of the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice. Nicole Santos is involved with the Chamorro women’s organization, Fuetsan Famalao’an.
- 3) In 2007, the first public hearings featured settings in which young, white women dressed professionally and presented poster-boards to the island’s public. The poster-boards included propaganda about the military’s supposedly impeccable record with respect to its treatment of peoples and the environment in Guam and elsewhere. The women’s presence attempted to “soften” the potential and real impacts of further militarization on the island. As of 2009, however, the military has used increasing numbers of indigenous women and men from Guam, Hawai’i and Micronesia to manage the poster-board presentations. Most of these individuals work for the US federal government or for the military. Whether feminized or indigenized, the settings used for the military’s public hearings have been clearly staged as a means to suppress critical thought and to preserve the status-quo.
- 4) The DMZ Hawai’i/Aloha ‘Aina, the International Women’s Network for Genuine Security, Democracy Now!, the U.S. Social Forum and the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, among other organizations, have publicized some of the issues regarding U.S. militarization in Guam and Okinawa.
- 5) The term *senjūmin* (先住民) is used as the translation of the English “indigenous.” “Sen (先)” generally means “prior” or “earlier” and consequently *senjūmin* refers to the people who lived in a particular region before their lands were incorporated into a nation or made into a nation. The term has come to replace *genjūmin* (原住民), which is a term used to translate the English “native” and “aboriginal.” Because of this association to “native” and “aboriginal,” *genjūmin* has inherited some of the discriminatory nuances of the word *dojin* (土人), which became racially charged during the period of Japanese colonial expansion into Hokkaido, Okinawa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.
- 6) One rare exception, however, was an article in the *Ryukyu Shimpō* on May 14, 2009, about the visit by members of the Chamoru Nation to Okinawa to express their solidarity in the struggle against base construction in Okinawa. Guamu kyotei kitai to hihan [Guam treaty hopes and criticisms]. *Ryukyu Shimpō*. Retrieved September 10, 2010, from <http://Ryukyushimpo.jp>.

- 7) Guam shōkōkaito ga kaiheitai iten ni kitai (2006, November 10) [Guam Chamber of Commerce Leader Expresses Hope Over Transfer of Marines]. *Ryukyu Shimpō*. Retrieved September 10, 2010, from <http://Ryukyushimpo.jp>.

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Determining Oceania

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