

I. Country Reports

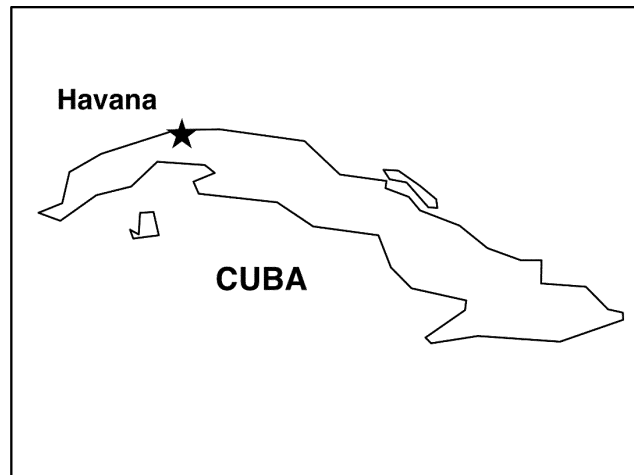
The delegation from each country represented at the Summit was invited to send a brief written report. This document contains the responses received. Country reports address: a) the status of the basing agreement with the United States, b) what is known about military contamination; c) its impact on communities, and d) the nature of the citizen movement there.

Cuba

**By Dr. Jorge Ramón Cuevas,
Pro-Naturaleza**

In the present world, where there are more than 3,000 military bases around the Earth, their environmental impact contributes to the threat they impose on mankind.

Most of the military bases have common features regardless of the country they belong to, and were set up according to the dictates of military strategy. In few cases was their impact on natural resources and their effect on human communities are taken into account.



The damage from military activity comes from both the inconsistency of these actions with the natural environment, and to the poor cultural and academic preparation of military personnel regarding environmental problems and ecological culture.

A significant number of military bases belong to big military powers and are established outside their frontiers by international treaties. Once undersigned by both parties, these treaties imply the loss of jurisdiction by the host country upon those areas, to the extent that in most of the cases the activities which are carried out there are unknown.

These reasons which force a country to accept a military base within its own territory can be manifold, ranging from the political and economic pressures exerted by the big powers, to arguments based on alleged economic profits derived from the activity, namely, input consumables, among other job advantages. However, neither the environmental cost that the host country should pay, nor the negative social impact it implies, represented in some cases by prostitution, drug trafficking, smuggling and other social evils, are taken into account.

Most military powers cannot guarantee environmental protections. The harmful effects to the environment and the human health derived from these activities are known most often once time has passed, when the effects are so obvious and cannot be hidden and it is much more difficult to find a proper solution.

When environmental damages are revealed through the mass media, the civil population is the last to be informed but it is the first to undergo environmental contamination and its evil consequences.

In addition, the communities located around those bases are constantly submitted to psychological stress, especially where these are air and sea bases, where low-level flights, detonations and daily military activity scale up during the periods of military maneuvers, which are indeed very frequently held, and are the cause of accidents threatening the population. The recent accident that took place in the Island of Vieques is a good example.

From the legal point of view, the host countries lack a group of regulations that would enable the protection of civil population and their territory from environmental impact caused by the presence of the bases, not to mention the laws needed to demand liabilities to the military guests for environmental damages as well as any other harms resulting from such actions.

Once a military base loses its strategic importance, or the decision is made to transfer the base or finally close it, that territory is left completely devastated, in most of the cases showing so high a degree of pollution that makes its recovery highly expensive.

The closing of the military bases in Panama according to the Torrijos-Carter Agreements has once more brought to the surface the seriousness of the situation created by the military bases. The high number of polluted areas and old shooting grounds with a great number of unexploded projectiles further deteriorates the situation of the communities near these areas.

Proof-positive of the above are the discussions held since 1998, in the United States, between the Department of Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency, when the decision was made to close over a hundred bases within the U.S. Fortunately for American citizens, there are a number of laws that call for environmental cleanup of bases on U.S. territory. However, the price that the taxpayer has to pay for the sanitation action is very high. An article issued by the National Journal, dated October 1992, in its section on National Security, reveals the millions of dollars spent in cleanup efforts.

Table 1. Costs of Cleanup in Territories with U.S. Military Bases

(millions of dollars)

Closing Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
1998	38	251	256	134	130	86	---	---	895
1991	---	---	245	308	153	209	28	31	974
Total	38	251	501	442	283	295	28	31	1869

The situation is rather different in the case of closing or returning occupied lands when the host country is void of a set of laws dictating their environmental cleanup. This shows the differences between poor and rich countries as established by treaties regulating them. That is, such treaties entail contract disparities.

Around the world, however, countries relatively rich as well as poor have suffered environmental damage from military bases, and have called for a revision of the treaties governing them. These include Spain, Turkey, Pakistan, Libya, The Philippines, Japan, and Cuba.

Cuba and the Caribbean

Most of the military bases in the Caribbean are located on islands. It is a real fact that tropical climate, smaller landmass and fragile ecosystems worsen the situation. In such settings, temperature, high humidity, condensation and other climate factors yield the possibility that undetonated munition and projectiles remain hidden in the forest for decades. In this situation, increased soil contamination because of the effect of detonated explosives, oxidation of bomb splinters, and undetected unexploded ordnance are potential risks for nearby communities.

Guantanamo Naval Base was the first military enclave in the Caribbean area. Before referring to the influence on regional environment, allow me to briefly speak of its natural characteristics and history.

Guantanamo, the easternmost province of the country, holds 30 percent of Cuban flora and fauna. It stretches along the south and from Namesake Bay towards the east along a coastline known as Maisi-Guantanamo coastline plain, one of the driest areas in the country, featured by a variety biodiversity.

Guantanamo Bay is located in the southern coast of Namesake Province. It is a big bay, the third largest in the country. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus in his second trip to America, on 14 April 1494, who named it Bahia Grande (Big Bay).

The bay is located in the municipality of Caimanera. It is shaped as a double bay, the Base occupying the part closest to the sea. It has a wide entry and an average depth in its central axis of 10 meters in low tide, facilitating access and maneuvering of any vessel of U.S. Navy, including aircraft carriers and submarines.

Major port facilities are located on Corinaso inlet towards the east of the bay, in the vicinity of McCalla airport.

There is no drinking water in the area and its western part is crossed by Guantanamo river whose water are saline towards the mouth on San Nicolis Swamp in the area of the Base.

Guantanamo Bay is located in a highly endemic area. In February 1999, the National Conservancy Foundation, in cooperation with Pro-Ambiente, a Costa Rican environmental organization, published the results of a detailed study on the ecology of the areas occupied by the Base. 194 plant species have been identified, 21 of which need urgent protection. Abundant cactaceous plant species are highly significant. Some of these species are endangered due to the small size of their populations. Wildlife accounts for 101 bird species, of which 27 are migratory, and among them 8 are endemic. A sizable part of the natural resources are threatened with extinction, so the suggestion is made that they should be immediately protected. Alongside and towards the East there is the Maisi-Guantanamo plain, a real botanic garden of cactaceans: the prehistoric valley of the Cuban flora, which is at the same time a crossroad for migratory species in the settlement of aboriginal species.

On both sides of the Bay are the natural reserves of Boquerón and Hatibonico, an attempt by Cuba to preserve the undeniable values of flora and fauna in the area.

It is necessary to emphasize that Christopher Columbus recorded in his diary the existence of an important aboriginal chieftainship towards the east of bay's entrance. Therefore, there should be interesting aboriginal traces that have been overlooked. That is, the area has also very interesting archaeological values that have never been studied.

From the historical viewpoint, its destiny was sealed when in 1740, during the seizure of the Havana by the British, Admiral Edward Vernon and his troops made surveys and explored the depth of Guantanamo Bay, and further scientific studies were conducted of its flora and fauna, to eventually verify the strategic importance of the Bay to control the Caribbean. Later, on July 9, 1898, during the Hispano-Cuban-American war, six marines under the command of Admiral Sampson, landed there—the first evidence of an American presence in this bay.

After the war, Cuba was seized and the Treaty of Paris was signed. Cuba was asked to draft the Constitution. But the Platt Amendment was imposed, this being the embryo of Guantanamo Naval Base, leasing the land at a cost of 200 pesos-gold, equivalent to about \$3,687 dollar a year which Cuba has refused to accept.

On May 29, 1934, the Caffery-Batista-Mendieta coalition and U.S. President Roosevelt's Administration signed in Washington the Treaty of Relations which sealed the retention of the Base. The treaty signed between Cuba and the United States has become obsolete because of the radical change of terms and conditions under which it was undertaken. Therefore, it is necessary to call for its annulment.

According to the original U.S. naval doctrine, the Base is considered to defend the Caribbean, as a security zone, and leaving it could mean a military threat to the Gulf of Mexico, the mouth of the Mississippi River and the vicinity of Panama Canal. However, only a few experts now consider the Base to be of militarily strategic significance. Hanson W. Baldwin, an expert in Pentagon issues, has argued that the Base's political and psychological importance has overrun its military usefulness.

The Base has an area of 117.5 sq. km, 21.8 km of lands, 49.4 km of water and 38.8 km of wetlands. The environmental impact of Guantanamo Base is not seen differing from other air- sea bases in any other country. But its effect multiplies due to very specific situations on and around the Base.

First of all, military activities on the Base are carried out in a scenario where two hostile armies contend, in contrast to military facilities in other countries where agreements were made by common consent. This results in serious psychological stress for local communities.

Frequent military maneuvers have a disruptive effect on the area. And there is a high potential for accidents. In addition, some parts of the base are used for activities that go beyond the objectives initially undertaken for its development. Such inappropriate use adds to its environmental impact.

In addition to the exercises, the high population density on the Base contributes to environmental decay. The Guantanamo Bay population amounts to 150 inhabitants per sq. km. compared with the rest of the municipality where the base is located, which accounts for 26.6 inhabitants per sq. km.

With the use of the Base to receive Haitian, Chinese and Cuban immigrants (there was a time in which 16,000 Haitians, 30,000 Cubans and 100 Chinese immigrants were located on the Base), the

population amounted to over 700 inhabitants per sq. km., thereby increasing the anthropic activity nearly seven times.

Such use of the base has a tremendous environmental effect, not only on the natural resources of the area but also on all types of waste drainage generated by this population, which dangerously affects the whole area.

Furthermore, the San Nicolas Swamp, located to the northwest of the bay was drained in order to build a firing range. The swamp is the natural drainage system of the so called Guantanamo Valley. This drainage has brought about harmful effects on its hydrology. The big losses caused by the overflowing of the rivers of this region have resulted in huge floods that have devastated local settlements and contribute to the salinization of this valley, which is of a high agricultural importance for this province.

These are just a few examples that show how the presence of military bases, together with the increase of the air and sea traffic with its parallel pollution, the increase of tensions in the region, the potential danger of accidents and harms to the territory and to the human health, may be the cause of other ecological damages from actions that have nothing to do with military objectives.

The Guantanamo Base is just one out of about 20 military bases that have been set up in the Caribbean region. Though its situation is quite special, due to the relationships between the two countries involved, the effects of the base on the environment are similar to those on any other military base in the area; the activities on the base and the individual character of the military personnel is similar in all of them.

The dismantling of the foreign military bases will improve the local and global environment while at the same time will strengthen international peace and security.

Achieving the dismantling of the military bases abroad in the near future will require the creation of awareness in all sectors of society at a world level of the limitations foreign military bases impose on sovereignty and their direct harms to the environment.

Civil society should play an important role in achieving this end, by strengthening the cooperation among all its members in the subregional, regional and world levels.

Governments housing foreign military bases should implement programs and actions aimed at lessening the impacts of environmental destruction derived from the activity in the military bases. Activities should include: enhancing the cooperation of the academic institutions and professional organizations, develop databases and information systems to improve the exchange of knowledge among the scientific and technological community as well as with the public at large. A main role in this campaign for the dismantling of the military bases in foreign territories should be played by the educational system and mass media.

Our regional community should become aware of this situation and protect its natural resources as well as the welfare of their peoples, in the face of the environmental and social impact of these bases.

Germany

By Rainer Knoll, Zusammenschluss umweltbewusster Buerger (ZuB)

This is a short introduction of our group called “Zusammenschluss umweltbewusster Buerger” (ZuB). This means a group of citizens, being concerned with their surrounding, especially with environmental and health problems, caused by the most important European training area of the U.S. Army in Grafenwoehr/Germany.

We were founded in 1992. We are a self-financed nonprofit organization. Our aim is to sensitize the public to the threats to nature and their health caused by this training area. We try to reach our aim with respectable and scientifically founded public relations, mainly in the local press. There we report about details of environmental pollution and our attempts to induce the responsible authorities to act. We are also present on the internet, where we publish our press statements and details (see <http://home.t-online.de/home/rainer.knoll@t-online.de/zub.htm>)

Our chief work area is the U.S. training area Grafenwoehr with its typical environmental threats, for example noise and contaminations (like chemicals, heavy metals, depleted uranium) of ground and groundwater. A special concern is an old landfill, called “Haderbuehl”. Since we were founded we have tried to stop the groundwater contamination. There have been several discussion meetings with the responsible German authorities and many requests to solve the very difficult problem of groundwater contamination at a U.S. landfill in an exempt area. Up to now we have got nearly all analytical data, checked them with respectable scientists, publish the results and tried to force the authorities with detailed requests of concern. Some days ago we tried to involve the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) in the USA, but the results are up to now not very helpful.

In March 1999 we presented this topic at “1st North African and Middle Eastern Symposium on Environmental and Sanitary Analytical Chemistry” in Hammamet, Tunisia.

We reported on a military landfill at the most important European NATO training area in Grafenwoehr, Germany. It was used up to 1990 and contains a volume of 712.000 m³. The dump is overlying a 200 m mighty groundwater aquifer of New Red Sandstone without any sealing at the base. It with typical garbage as well as with ammunition, CKWs, waste oil, sludge out of tank-wash installations, heavy metal waste, PCP wooden ammunition boxes, debris, toxic ashes and more.

In the late 1980s groundwater contamination with a high biological toxicity were found. German authorities ordered therefore to cap the landfill to prevent the infiltration of rainwater. Covering was done with mineral material, two layers of geotextile, drainage layer and integrated gaswells. No sealing was done on the bottom.

Since 1992 groundwater quality has been measured four times a year. Groundwater samples were taken out of twenty wells with different depths around the dump. About thirty parameters like pH, heavy metals, inorganic and organic compounds and general biological toxicity were analyzed.

We show the development of the concentrations of mercury, copper and biological toxicity. Even more than five years after covering the dump there is no improvement of groundwater contamination; for example with heavy metals, not even a tendentious change could be found. A second step of cleaning the emissions from the landfill seems to be necessary, for instance by

installing a groundwater purification system. But up to now German authorities and the U.S. Army as the owner of the military landfill still hesitate.

(See this poster at <http://home.t-online.de/home/rainer.knoll/poster.jpg>)

Here are some more topics the ZuB was concerned about in the past years:

- The contamination of citizens with Pentachlorophenol (PCP) from wooden U.S. Army munition boxes.
- A request that an epidemiological study be conducted to determine why many German employees of the U.S. Army, having contact with PCP-treated munition boxes, died of cancer. This request was supported by many medical doctors around the training area. Nevertheless nothing happened.
- Resistance against a new period of military low-altitude flights in and out of the training area of Grafenwoehr.
- Did the U.S. Army use depleted uranium at the training area Grafenwoehr? ZuB published appropriate testimonies.
- Contaminations at the impact area.
- Noise from shooting. Unfortunately this subject became actuality in the last weeks. Shooting noise goes on all over the night, seven days a week, together with overflights of carrier aircrafts and helicopters. All in all, training activities that resemble former times of the “cold war”.

Concerning resistance and citizens movements

Years ago, citizens around the training area founded many movements - like “mothers against shooting noise” because the noise caused by the U.S. Army was intolerable, specially for children, ill and old people. At this time there was a split among the citizens, which was supported by the U.S. Army emphatically. On the one side there were the movements against contaminations and stress caused by the Army. On the other side there were those citizens working for the U.S. Army. The Army is up to now the most important employee in this area. There are no alternative jobs available. The reason for this is historic. When the U.S. Army decided to use this training area (being founded in 1913) after World War II, an agreement was reached between the Army and German authorities: no promotion for creating jobs in the private sector was allowed, to guarantee that there would always be enough civil workers available for military purposes. Nowadays the Army is reducing the civil jobs wherever it is possible. This results in an increasing retaliation to anybody saying something critical about the situation around the training area. Once, this resulted in direct threats against individuals and their families. The lack of jobs and the fear to lose a job with the Army, together with the fear of local authorities to lose economic prosperity - the Army spends quite a lot of money in the area, although the amount is decreasing – and the chance of being elected again, created an atmosphere of suffering acceptance: ideal conditions for an Army having no respect for nature, health and well-being of the citizens to do whatever they want.

Iceland

Former U.S. Army Radar Station, Mountain Heidarfjall in the east of Iceland. By Bjorn Erlendsson and Sigurdur R. Thordarson

Brief History

In 1974, a group of 5 young men decided to devote their lives to building up a new business venture, a salmon ranching and fish farming project which at that time was a rapidly growing industry in the coastal areas of the North Atlantic ocean.

A priority condition in this respect was to find a location in which to develop the facilities for the project. Such a location seemed to be found when purchase contracts for the farmlands at Eidi and Artun, near Heidarfjall in the Langanes area in northeastern Iceland, were signed in April 1974.

This area seemed to fulfill not only all the highest demands regarding a good site situation and the best fresh water resources needed for the venture. It also had a 200-acre fresh water lake, connected to the North Atlantic ocean by short outlet which would obviously be easy to control both for smolt releases and the return of migrating fish.

But there was unfortunately one hidden defect, which turned out to have very serious consequences for the entire enterprise. This was the presence of the former U.S. radar station H-2, which had been located on the top of mountain Heidarfjall. Gradually, the ugly truth came to our knowledge that our allies, the U.S. Army, was continuing to use the site, storing on our private property thousands of tons of concealed military waste. At that time, no one in the group was aware of the fact that military wastes, including toxic wastes, had been buried 200 meters above the farm's fresh water resources and freshwater springs, which were the main fresh water supplies and were used both for human consumption and also for the salmon breeding.

This particular U.S. military unit called the DEW-line (Distant Early Warning Line) was a link in a chain of up to 30 U.S. radar stations covering the Northwest Territories in Canada, Greenland and Iceland, where 4 such radar stations were located. This radar station at Langanes, Iceland, was in operation from 1954 to 1970. During this time a whole village, with a permanent presence of 140 men, on average, was located on the top of the mountain.

In 1970, when after 16 years of operating the site, the U.S. Navy, chose to discontinue its activities at the radar station on the Langanes Peninsula, it made the necessary arrangements with the Icelandic Government, which then undertook to handle formalities such as terminating the land lease contracts, etc.

Four years later, in 1974, we (the group) took over the operation of the estates Eidi and Artún, which also include mountain Heidarfjall. At that moment we realized that the dismantling of the radar station and the so-called cleanup action had in all material respects been a total disaster. The whole mountain area had been left like a big garbage heap. The mountain-top was virtually covered in all kinds of scrap, such as remains from steel constructions, construction elements for houses, asbestos construction elements, oil tanks, oil drums with used oil, steel barrels, led batteries, cables, rusted machinery, full and empty containers for lubrication oils and chemicals etc.

In January 1976, when the group gave up applying verbally for the needed improvements of the situation on the mountain by the Icelandic Foreign Ministry, we wrote the minister the first letter complaining about the situation, and also asking to have some clean-up measures carried out. At this time we were certainly unaware of the hard facts we have learned since then:

1. That the situation on the top of the mountain, was only the tip of an iceberg: 13 years later (in July 1989) we found out that thousands of tons of military waste had been dumped in concealed dumps on the mountain top. In these dumps, over a period of 14 years, repeated attempts were made to burn the waste, by using all kinds of waste oils to fuel the slow burning process. Though it has not been proven, this is very likely to have released dioxins.

2. That as early as 1970, the Icelandic Foreign Minister had signed an agreement with the officials of the U.S. Army, by which the Icelandic Government waived all possible claims by Icelandic citizens and the future owners of this particular land against the U.S. Army. This agreement excludes the landowners from having their constitutional rights of having their land cleaned up, and from receiving fair compensation for the damage and their financial losses. A copy of this extraordinary agreement, made by U.S. and Icelandic officials behind the back of the landowners, who in this case are the ones who are suffering from these acts, will be sent with this document as an attachment.

3. That this act, on behalf of the Icelandic authorities, was also just the tip of an iceberg, as regards their dishonesty and impudent behavior in all their actions against us, in order to prevent us from having any corrections or clean-up measures undertaken on our land. Far less were they prepared to support us in obtaining any compensation for having our lifetime commitments and financial bases for fish farming destroyed.

This unattractive nature of the Icelandic foreign policy, in which the government authorities use their full influence and power in the service of the U.S. Army's interests instead of supporting the claims of their own citizens, only seems to confirm the rumors here, in which the leading Icelandic politicians and officials, have been characterized as corrupt common thieves. This has even officially been described on couple of occasions in editorial articles in respected Icelandic newspapers.

4. That this year we are "celebrating" 25 years of an unfair fight against the U.S. superpower, in which our real enemies are nevertheless our own fellow citizens, who have, legally or illegally , been chosen to administer the foreign policy of this country. In this struggle we have produced thousands of documents, reports, chemical analyses and other relevant material to support our fight through the courts in Iceland and also before the European Commission on Human Rights in Strassbourg. Every single one of these attempts has either been dismissed or turned down through the powerful support against us by the Icelandic authorities. We are now planning to summons the U.S. Army in an Icelandic court and also in a U.S. court in the United States. Where that attempt will lead us only the future can tell, but we do not anticipate any changes in the policies of the Icelandic Government.

We, the representatives of the group, are planning to attend the International Grassroots Summit on Military Base Cleanup in Washington this fall. At the summit we would certainly like to draw attention to our case, also to present as much of all our documents and support material as possible.

We would also be very keen to enlist the support of organizations or individuals attending or related to the summit, who might through their experience be able to advise or support us in our campaign.

As already mentioned, we have now spent a good deal of the best years of our lives in fighting the Icelandic and U.S. authorities for a fair solution to this problem. We hope that we will live long enough to see a fair solution to our claims. Assistance from the Grassroots Summit could be very valuable for us, since we are only a few individuals with very limited financial means to fight our way through.

Japan

Berth 12 in Yokosuka U.S. Naval Base and the home porting project of U.S. nuclear-powered carriers.

By Mashiko Goto, NEPA Coalition of Japan

NEPA Coalition of Japan is a public interest organization with 1,000 members who reside primarily in the vicinity of Yokosuka working in order to eradicate environmental harm caused by U.S. Navy activity in Japan, especially Yokosuka Naval Base area and also to publicize information about this problem.

In Berth 12 of Yokosuka Naval Base where carriers have anchored, serious heavy metal contamination has been found for the past ten years; no countermeasure has been taken. In October 1988, U.S. Navy launched the construction to build a kingpost in Berth 12. But the construction was canceled the next year because they found the excavated soil was seriously contaminated with toxic heavy metal, etc.

A 1991 GAO (General Accounting Office) report on environmental contamination of foreign bases considered this problem “serious heavy metal contamination.” It pointed out that this contamination “had effect over the relationship between both countries, and U.S. might need to perform cleanup.”

In 1993 and 1994, U.S. Navy made investigations on the spread of the contamination as well as on the groundwater contamination. As a result, it was made clear that there was serious groundwater contamination with lead in the land of Berth 12, which exceeded the Japanese environmental standard by 250 times (2.5mg/l). Other toxic heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury were found as well.

A U.S. Navy report of '94 stated this serious heavy metal contamination had been caused by an oil leak from the oil tank on the hill behind Berth 12, and from an overage gasoline tank built in Berth 12, which were not properly closed. According to the report, heavy metals such as lead included in oil had spread all over the berth.

Though there has been such serious heavy metal contamination and the possibility of its spreading, U.S. Navy had taken no countermeasure against soil contamination for ten years; instead they only repaved contaminated soil of Berth 12 with asphalt and performed periodical monitoring tests on the contamination.

However, the investigation on the contaminated Berth 12 started suddenly in 1997. In November 1997, it was made clear that there was a project to extend the berth to 414m and renew cranes and utilities to fully equip the berth with money from the budget of Japan. And the GAO report of August 1998 revealed that this project is part of a plan to make Yokosuka a home port of nuclear-powered carriers in the future.

The result of this investigation on the environment was reported in September 1998. It was made clear that the whole Berth 12 is extremely contaminated.

In the soil of Berth 12, the following substances were detected; toxic lead exceeding the Japanese standard by 150 times at the highest spot, arsenic by 10 times at the highest spot, mercury by 440 times at the highest spot, organic chlorine compound, a carcinogen, exceeding the Japanese standard.

Also in the groundwater, the following substances were detected; lead exceeding the national standard by 520 times near the extension construction site, arsenic by 2.7 times at the highest spot, mercury by 24 times. The land of Berth 12 is contaminated as a whole with heavy metal, especially the site near the sea.

In addition, .02 mg/l lead (exceeding soil contamination standard twice), 2.4 ppm total mercury and .2 ppm PCB were detected in sludge soil under the sea. These high level toxic contaminations of soil, groundwater, and undersea pose threat over the health and life of residents and workers in this area.

As they found the contaminations with heavy metal, etc. highly exceeding the national standards, the Japanese Defense Facility Agency postponed the construction to extend Berth 12 on the sea which was to be launched within 1998. They also announced they were going to take comprehensive countermeasures against the contamination of Berth 12 as follows:

- 1) remove the contaminated soil, mix the cement for prevention of dissolution, and return it.
- 2) enclose Berth 12 with a waterproof wall of steel pipe and mortar, and pave the surface with concrete.
- 3) draw the groundwater and remove contaminated substances such as oil and organic chlorine compound.
- 4) perform monitoring tests both during and after the construction.

However, the following problems have been pointed out about the plan above.

The first problem is the actual possibility of preventing contamination only by enclosing the soil of Berth 12. There are various hazardous contaminations but the cause and range of them haven't been defined yet.

The second is the effectiveness of preventing contamination from spreading by enclosing contaminated soil with waterproof wall of steel pipe and mortar, and the waterproof basic layer of silt rock as the bottom.

The third is that the project to extend Berth 12 is to drive 300 piles into the underwater basic layer of rock and build a concrete pier on them. This investigation revealed the basic layer of silt rock in this area includes arsenic exceeding the national environmental standard. There is a danger that arsenic will dissolve in seawater when the piles are driven into the underwater basic layer of rock.

The fourth is the effectiveness of pouring water into contaminated soil with oil and organic chlorine compound and drawing the groundwater to remove contaminated substances. There is also a

question whether one year is long enough, as the government says, to finish this process to cleanup the soil.

Therefore, we, the NEPA Coalition, request the followings and ask for your support.

- 1) The U.S. government should take responsibility for this soil contamination and clean up the contamination of the base in the same way that it addresses these problems in its own country.
- 2) The Japanese government should not alter Berth 12 until they finish comprehensive investigations on the environment which are necessary to prevent the spread of contamination, and design proper countermeasures to prevent it.
- 3) Both Japanese and U.S. government should not extend Berth 12 or launch the construction for full equipment, which will lead to the spread of contamination, as well suspending the plan to make Yokosuka a home port of nuclear-powered carriers.

South Korea

By Dongshim Kim, Secretary of the National Campaign for the Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea

There are currently 36,000 U.S. troops based at 95 bases in South Korea, which cover a total area of 60,700 acres. The effects of those troops are not limited to the facilities and bases alone; they extend into the communities surrounding the bases. During the time from the posting of U.S. troops in 1945 to the present, environmental pollution has been constant, and the military has neglected to be concerned about the impact. Not only the water, soil and noise pollution produced on and near bases is of concern, but also the physical and mental health impairments of Korean citizens and the destruction of pre-existing community lifestyles brought about by the U.S. military actions that must be considered.

Those living near bases have been the recipients of the stress and discomfort caused by the polluting activities of U.S. military forces for a long time, and many are making efforts to improve the conditions. However, in a state of a divided nation strongly preoccupied with anti-Communism, efforts to improve conditions by criticizing the actions of the Korean-based U.S. forces are made difficult, in that the actually raising of questions is in itself difficult.

As an example of the destruction wrought due to the constant explosions over the last 47 years, I have included an example of the township of Mehyang Ri in Hwasong Kun, Kyonggi Province. As part of a movement over the past ten years, 15 of the 4,000 citizens affected by the noise pollution have made preparations for legal affairs seeking compensation. Though an initial fund of \$3 million was suggested, only \$150,000 was raised for the proceedings. Through this report I will introduce a number of facts and representative incidents of environmental degradation carried out in South Korea, with a focus upon the impact on everyday lives of those living near the bases.

For the month of October, 1996 the environment action group 'The Green Union' joined together with 11 regional groups to assess the real environmental damage caused by 30 U.S. military bases in South Korea. This was the first such research conducted since the establishment of these bases in 1945.

In the case of Chunchon in Kangwon Province, the Helgi Base exists side by side with the Kunwha Middle School divided by only a wall. The school is subject to noise levels at a maximum of 82.0dB with the occasional interruption of extremes of 89.3dB. Due to the noise the school is unable to conduct lessons properly--lesson length has been reduced to 30 minutes. The water pollution experienced in Uichongbu is severe due to chemical contamination and a deficiency of oxygen. The lack of attention paid to the cleanup of military bases following the withdrawal of troops has led to the discovery of residual amounts of carcinogenic asbestos. In the case of Pyongtek in Kyonggido, highest noise levels have reached 112.0dB. Both young and old are affected by this constant noise pollution, with the children developing sudden shock and nervous disorders and adults experiencing discomfort (especially among those with memories of the Korean war.) The nearby waste water outlets of some bases have registered up to 10 times the recommended levels of various pollutants. This water is also still being used for agricultural purposes despite the fact that it can not be used in any industrial activities. The following examples explicitly show the diversity of environmental pollution caused by the U.S. military forces in South Korea.

Example 1: U.S. Air Force Weapons Practice Range situated in Mehyang Ri, Hwasong Kun, Kyonggi Province

The Mehyang Ri Practice Range is situated on the West Sea where 310 acres of land, and 5,520 acres of sea has been set aside for the sole purpose of explosives practice. Every Monday through Friday an average of 600-700 trips are made each day by aircraft practicing gunfire or explosive drops. This practice has resulted in great land, water, and noise pollution. Not only are the 4,000 residents of the Mehyang Ri township directly unable to engage in any type of conversation during the week, but the explosive noise and vibrations have also resulted in major structural damage to homes. The U.S. Forces administrative authorities responded to resident requests with a sound tests that registered 90-110 WECPNL. (This is classified as an unlivable area by the Korean Aviators Association due to the excessive noise and discomfort which it provokes.) In August of 1997 a report registered up to 133.7dB.

In January of 1989 the Practical Humanitarian Medical Association carried a report on the negative impacts of sound pollution in the Mehyang Ri township and recorded among the citizenship the following health impaired statistics: 64.4% with partial deafness; 77.2% experiencing dizziness; 53.7% suffering insomnia; and 69.8% with nervous symptoms. In conditions which resemble the full onslaught of warfare, the psychological discomfort of great uneasiness and insecurity as well as fatigue, digestion problems and the respiratory problems of the townsfolk must also be considered. Not only detrimental to the quality of life, this constant explosive noise causes stress among all members of the community, with young children suffering from excessive stress disorders in which they are surprised at the slightest noise and with a high percentage of disturbed youth.

The excessive noise experienced in Mehyang Ri has not only had an effect on human beings, but also on the resident livestock. Dairy cows, rabbits, local fish and ostriches (originally imported as the least noise-sensitive animal species) have decreased in fertility and frequently miscarry. Decreased milk production has caused a drop in over 50% of rural earnings. Despite the gross discomfort of the residents living in this area, U.S. military authorities have made no efforts to decrease noise pollution or provide facilities to ameliorate the affects of the weapons practices. Though the citizens of Mehyang Ri have continued to struggle against this situation, in a situation of a divided nation and a fear of the communist threat, any efforts to improve the quality of the life faces great difficulty gaining nationwide and U.S. support.

Example 2: U.S. 2nd Corps Construction Illegal Wastes Burial Incident

In March of 1998 a newspaper report revealed the illegal burial of billions of tons of waste as landfill within the compounds of the 2nd Corps Base in Tongdu Chon in the Kyonggi Province. Not only is this an illegal activity, but it has been carried out by the U.S. military command in a systematic fashion over the past 20 years. From 1996 to 1997 bulldozers, fork lifts, and dump trucks were employed under the supervision of the Facilities Engineering Corps to effectively bury the waste which included asphalt, tar and concrete, but also asbestos.

As a result of the actions taken by the National Campaign for the Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea and the media in May 1998 stipulations regarding the environment and environmental protection, entitled "Environmental Guideline Standards" which clearly defined the illegalities of waste dumping, were issued to the Korean based U.S. military authorities.

Example 3: Madison Communications Corps Oil Spillage at Pekun Mountain, Uiwang City, Kyonggi Province

The oil spillage at Pekun Mountain was first detected by hikers on March 19th, 1998. The exact date of spillage is estimated to be between the end of February and the beginning of March. The spill was caused by a worn-out underground pipe line which contaminated parts of the Pekun Mountain, Wangnim River Valley and surrounding areas with the outflow of oil, causing widespread pollution and an offensive smell as the oil seeped into the earth at a width of 3-5m for over 800m. Despite the spread of absorbent cloth across the accident area, the oil spill seeped into the ground at between 20-80cms. Immediately following the discovery of the accident, the U.S. army was employed to construct dikes along 800m of the Wangnim River and put down more cloths but these efforts had little impact.

The army has continued to place absorbent cloth on the area for the past year and a half, but the strong odor and deep saturation of the oil remains. This spillage affected over 600 people living in 185 households in the Pekun Mountain area. The underground water supply, which was the only supply of water to the community, still smells and oil still floats on top. Local residents banded together with both the National Campaign for the Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea and other environmental groups to fight for improvements in the water supply which they achieved in October of 1998.

However 30 years are estimated are needed to return the Pekun Mountain water supply to its natural state. Other professional environmental consultants have estimated that 100 years will be necessary. Though it can be argued that the Korean government bears some responsibility for compensation requests (as the Korean government is responsible for all damages arising due to negligence of facilities associated with U.S. Military Bases situated in South Korea), the analysis of the polluted state of the mountain cannot be undertaken due to the great expense that must be incurred for scientific testing. (It costs approximately U.S.\$20,000 to analyze a single shovel full.) A further impediment in Korea is the absence of the precedence of such a lawsuit in Korean history.

The above three are examples of the destruction of the Korean environment and living conditions due to the various kinds of pollution incurred by U.S. military forces in Korea. In 1998 the outflow of oil was detected from a U.S. military base. Again in February 1998 the discovery of a large military crest spray painted on a national park boulder was a shock for the Korean people as very little graffiti can be found anywhere in Korea, least of all in nature reserves.

Finally a large part of Taebak Mountain has served as an explosives practice range over the past twenty years leaving mountain in a state without trees and no sign of animal life.

Future Directions

Though a number of citizens have fallen victim to the various polluting actions of the U.S. military forces, these problems are not being very well solved. Signed in 1967, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), does not stipulates environmental related requirements. Furthermore, the unbalanced legal position of the two parties is clearly shown in the following language:

“The Government of the United States is not obliged, when it returns facilities and areas to the Government of the Republic of Korea on the expiration of this Agreement of at an

earlier date, to restore the facilities and areas to the condition in which they were at the time they became available to the United States armed forces, or to compensate the Government of the Republic of Korea in lieu of such restorations.” (SOFA Article 4 'Facilities and Areas - Return of Facilities.)

To summarize the above, any U.S. actions polluting the environment are legitimized. No responsibility can be enforced upon U.S. However, it is possible that U.S. military authorities can be held responsible when they are unable to return the environment to the original non-polluted condition. In order to actualize this, the Korean government must make greater demands of U.S. military authorities, provide greater stipulations regarding the environment and finally, revise the SOFA.

True solutions to the problem can not be gained by the victims. The National Campaign for the Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea was founded in 1993 and has worked in union with domestic environment protection groups in the struggle against environmental degradation caused by the U.S. military. United, these groups are able to exert some pressure on the Korean government and U.S. military authorities.

The National Campaign for the Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops In Korea cannot pay attention to all of the activities of the U.S. forces, and though pollution offences are not included in the our collated list of over 100 000 crimes committed by U.S. military personnel stationed in Korea, we are attentive to the environmental degradation. Public reaction and organized response to acts polluting the environment has slowly risen since the late 1980s. However, not only will it take a long time to achieve a fight proportionate to the consistent damage and great extent of environmental pollution perpetrated by U.S. military forces in Korea. In order to solve this problem a number of involved organizations must unite, both at the domestic and overseas level to stop the destructive U.S. presence in Korea.

Okinawa

By Kaori Sunagawa, Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence and Okinawa Environmental Network

The Status of the Forces Agreement Concerning Military Bases Between the United States and Japan

On the issue of military contamination, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which states in detail the terms of the Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty, is the basic document.

Case 1: Article III of SOFA

In many cases, it is difficult to know the real situation of the environmental damage within the bases. With limited information and with no right to conduct on-site inspections, it is virtually impossible to identify the source of military contamination. The cooperation of all parties involved is essential in order to prevent any health risks to the surrounding population and to carry out future land management. A double barrier, both by the U.S. Forces and by the Japanese government, prevents citizens from gaining reliable information.

Article III of SOFA supports this barrier, stipulating “Within the facilities and areas, the United States may take all the measures necessary for their establishment, operation, safeguarding and control.” This gives the U.S. Forces strong authority in the management of bases under the agreement.



Case 2: Article IV of SOFA

The problem of Article IV of SOFA is described in the page 1, section d.) “Obligation for Restoration to the Original State and/or Compensation.”

Examples of Military Contamination

During the Second World War, Okinawa was a strategic front-line defense base for the Japanese Forces. It became the site of the only ground battle fought on Japanese soil, and was also one of the fiercest battle in the Pacific Campaign, in which about 220,000 civilians and soldiers died. After the surrender of Japan, Okinawa became a U.S. controlled territory until 1972. Incidents of major contamination in Okinawa between 1984 and 1999 include the following:

- Jan. 1984 Cleaning agents from Kadena Air Base leak into Okinawa citizens' drainage system.
- July 1987 Asbestos poisoning is discovered in the former Makiminato Base residential area.
- Aug. 1988 Cesium 137 is emitted from machinery components.
- Jan. 1989 Massive oil emission occurs in Camp Foster, Chatan Town.
- Jan. 1989 Futenma River becomes contaminated, causing damage to fishing ponds.
- Jan. 1989 Aircraft flue leaks are discovered at Camp Zukeran.

- May 1989 It is reported that a hydrogen bomb was dropped into the sea, along with an attack aircraft and its pilot in 1965 near Okinawa and remains in the seabed.
- Sep.1989 USMC Camp Hansen urban guerrilla training is conducted in facilities in Onna Village, producing red soil erosion, which contaminates the Quasi National Coast Park and destroys the edible sea grass *mozuku*. Red soil erosion occurs in northern Okinawa as a result of military drills and construction.
- Mar. 1996 About 120 tons of toxic substances including mercury, PCB, and 9 others substances are discovered on former Onna Communications Site.
- Feb. 1997 It is revealed that during the period from December 1995 to January 1996, 1520 bullets containing depleted uranium were used in firing drills on the small island of Tori.
- Nov. 1997 Calcium chloride fire breaks out inside Camp Kinser in the Makiminato Base storage area
- Nov. 1997 Cleansing agent used to wash Kadena Air Base military aircraft causes skin rash.
- Aug. 1998 Evidence indicates between the 1960's and 1970's, oil including PCB was dumped into a pond inside Kadena Air Force Base. Studies of the Department of Defense conducted in October and November 1998 detect PCB in soil from the sampled site.
- Aug. 1998 Evidence indicates that waste water containing oil is routinely dumped into Okinawan public sewerage system from Camp Kinser in the Makiminato Base storage area.
- Aug. 1998 Some Okinawan people in Kadena Air Force Base area who were exposed to water containing cleaning agents suffer skin rash and other physical problems.
- June 1999 Toxic substances such as hexa valence chromium and lead exceeding the acceptable maximum environment pollution standard are discovered in the Kadena Air Base Ammunition Storage Area, scheduled for return to landowners.

Impacts of Military Contamination on Okinawan Communities

Negative Inheritances at the Onna Communications Site

In Okinawa, the possibility of military contamination on returned land sites has been documented by NGOs since 1996. But local governments have not prepared policies to resolve this issue.

The PCB contamination problem at Onna Communications Site in 1996 was the first case to reveal the defective Japanese environmental policies toward military contamination on returned lands.

On November 30, 1995, the U.S. Forces' Onna Communications Site was officially returned to the owners. Storage tanks of the water treatment facility were left on the vacated land. Some owners requested the use of soil in the tanks for farming, so the Naha Defense Facilities Administration Bureau (DFAB) asked a commercial testing company for soil tests based on the law preventing soil contamination of farmland. Eleven kinds of toxic substances, including cadmium, mercury, PCB

and cyanogen were found. The concentration of cadmium, mercury, and PCB in the deposit samples exceeded the Japanese standard.

Article IV of SOFA stipulates: “The United States is not obliged, when it returns facilities and areas to Japan on the expiration of this Agreement or at an earlier date, to restore the facilities and areas to the condition in which they were at the time they became available to the United States Armed Forces, or to compensate Japan in lieu of such restoration.” The Japanese government currently has no legal means to deal with military contamination of returned lands. Thus, DFAB asked the U.S. Forces to store about 700 drum cans containing contaminated soil, but the U.S. Forces refused to store the toxic substances on the basis of the SOFA. Accepting the local people's request to remove the toxic substances, DFAB began construction of a temporary facility to store the drum cans on state-owned land near a national highway in the same area of Onna Village. But local people opposed the dangerous storage of the drum cans. Some residents were against moving the contaminated soil within the same area, even if it were stored in a base of the Japanese Self Defense Forces, in Onna Village. Finally, DFAB built a temporary facility to store the drum cans in a forest of the Japanese Self Defense Forces base in Onna Village, near the area where the contaminated soil had been found. It has taken two years to complete removal of the contaminated soil after it was found. After the military contamination at Onna Communications Site was revealed, the Okinawa prefectural government inspected the deposit and wastewater in the tank, sea water and the deposit of a seabed near the site, fresh water and farmland in that area. DFAB conducted an inspection again to measure the deposit, wastewater and the soil around the tank. These inspections were not mandatory under Japanese law, but were conducted after military contamination was found in tanks of the water treatment facility at the Onna Communications Site.

Japanese people experienced “KOUGAI”, industrial pollution during Japan's high economic growth, such as the Minamata Disease etc. The Japanese government was forced to address “KOUGAI” problems due to public pressure; thus, Japanese environmental policies in this area are slowly advancing. But unfortunately, measures against soil contamination in Japan are limited only to farmlands. Measures to address industrial and military soil contamination are needed. The establishment of laws, administrative systems and financial steps to deal with military contamination, including on-site inspection and base cleanup are long overdue. The Law for Special Measures to Restore the Land Used by the Military Forces Stationed in Okinawa is scheduled for revision by the end of the current fiscal year. In August this year, the Okinawa prefectural government requested on-site inspection before the return of base land to owners and the U.S. Forces to restore these lands to their original condition and compensate landowners for loss caused by such damage.

But it is expected that political factors concerning the relocation Futenma Marine Corps Air Station will contribute to the establishment of a system to deal with military contamination.

The Citizens' Movement in Okinawa

In Okinawa, the peace movement, composed of citizens' and women's groups, individuals, labor unions and a segment of local governments, which has carried out its activities on a long-term basis, has just begun to take up the issue of militarism and environmental problems. For 54 years, the U.S. military base presence has caused many forms of environmental problems, crimes and accidents which have produced countless Okinawan victims. Most Okinawan people have been eager to achieve the immediate realignment, downsizing and removal of the U.S. military

bases. Though there had been many movements against many issues concerning U.S. military bases, the movement against U.S. military bases in Okinawa has been bigger and stronger since the unfortunate incident of the rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl.

Okinawan people have strongly demanded the tightening of discipline for U.S. troops stationed in Okinawa, and an expedited consolidation of U.S. bases in Okinawa since the incident of the abduction and rape of a 12-year old Okinawan schoolgirl by 3 U.S. military personnel in 1995.

As a result, both the U.S. and Japanese governments have acted with more vigor than ever before to attempt to solve the U.S. military base related issues in Okinawa. In December 1996, the Final Report of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) announced that all of six facilities, including Futenma Air Station, and portions of five others would be returned.

However, the return of most of the facilities will occur only when the function is relocated to another facility within Okinawa, despite the fact that Okinawan people called for “realignment, downsizing and the removal of military bases” in a referendum on U.S. military bases in September 1996. Both the U.S. and Japanese governments have responded that they will try to realize realignment and downsizing of U.S. military bases through carrying out the SACO agreement. But the reality is that the agreement isn't for the Okinawan people, but for the modernization of U.S. military facilities. It has also become clear that one of the agreements of SACO is a plan that the U.S. Forces made 33 years ago, to realize their goal of building new bases. One of the proposed relocation sites is the coastal area of Nago City in northern Okinawa, a location in which are found not only an abundance of beautiful coral reef, fish and other sea creatures, but also a habitat and migration route for the dugong.

Though both the U.S. and Japanese governments are attempting to modernize the U.S. military facilities by relocating bases within Okinawa, the citizens' movement continues to oppose these attempts and create peace.

Strategies for Base Cleanup

1. Proposal to the Government of the Host Country and the U.S. Government

a.) Need for the Right of On-site Inspection

In many cases, it is difficult to know the real situation of the environmental damage within the bases. A double barrier, both by the U.S. forces and by the Japanese government, prevents citizens from getting reliable information. Local governments in Japan should have the right to investigate U.S. military bases, just as they have the right to investigate industrial sites. In the case of the U.S. Forces Onna Communications Site in Okinawa, the contamination was found only because of on-site inspection.

b.) Obligation of the U.S. Forces to Disclose Related Information

An agreement to require the U.S. to disclose accurate related information in order to identify the source of environmental damage is necessary. Such information should include both details of operation that might cause the contamination and past operational records. In the case of Onna Communications Site, the lack of information on past operations of the units that used the base makes it impossible to find out the cause of the PCB and heavy metals contamination and to identify the area to be covered in collecting and testing samples.

c.) Environmental Standard with Legal Binding Force

Article III-3 of the U.S.- Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) states: "Operations in the facilities and areas in use by the United States armed forces shall be carried on with due regard for the public safety." This ambiguous statement is the only provision obliging the U.S. Forces to provide environmental protection. In 1992, the U.S. Department of Defense published the *Basic Guideline Statement for Environment Abroad*, which doesn't state any clear legal positions such as, "DoD follows the most stringent of the host nation regulations." It provides no more than a guideline determined by DoD itself naturally without penalty provision. It is necessary to revise the SOFA and set up a legally binding system on environmental protection.

d.) Obligation for Restoration to the Original State and/or Compensation

When environmental damage of the U.S. military bases is found, the U.S. Forces should be required to remove the contamination, restore the land to its original condition and compensate for loss caused by the damage. The responsibility of cleaning up and restoring the damage for the local municipality needs to be addressed by the U.S. Forces/Government in its treaties with Japan. This obligatory regulation would have significance, especially in regard to the peaceful reuse of the returned land. Nevertheless, Article IV-1 of SOFA reads: "The United States is not obliged, when it returns facilities and areas to Japan on the expiration of this Agreement or at an earlier date, to restore the facilities and areas to the condition in which they were at the time they became available the United States armed forces, or to compensate Japan in lieu of such restoration." The U.S. doesn't have to bear any responsibility when returning the land regardless of the damage it may have left behind. This amazingly one-side provision, although signed by the Government of Japan, works to the disadvantage of the affected local population. This article should be amended as quickly as possible. We strongly demand that the U.S. and Japanese governments create provisions to clean up and restore damage as a matter of moral and economic obligation.

(The original of the above proposal was presented as the country report of Japan by Takao Kasamoto (Peace Resource Cooperative) and Hiromichi Umebayashi (Peace Resource Cooperative and Pacific Campaign for Disarmament and Security) in "U.S. Military Bases and the Environment: A Time for Responsibility".)

2. Proposal to International Organizations and Governments of Related Countries

a.) The Establishment of a United Nation Overseeing Committee on Military Waste

We call for the establishment of a United Nations Overseeing Committee on Military Waste that will support assessment of environmental damage caused by Toxic Waste and Mines. The overseeing Committee could offer training programs to create expertise in this highly specialized

area; share information on studies conducted world wide, participate in the organization of national and international conferences, among other conscience building activities. This committee can serve as a consulting body for Governments, NGO's, and agencies that request this assistance.

(The proposal above is reproduced from the position paper (appeal) of the NGO Network of Panama presented at the Earth summit in 1997.)

b.) To Add Articles concerning Military Contamination to Some Chapters dealing with the Management of Hazardous Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes under Agenda 21

Including these articles to the present International Provision will encourage finding solutions to the military contamination problem. To add articles which cover military contamination to some Chapters dealing with the Management of hazardous chemicals and hazardous wastes under Agenda 21 is one of the ideas. And this will bring attention and promote action in this area.

Panama

By Gisele McCray Brito, Panamanian Peace and Justice Service

Questions Regarding the Cleanup of Military Instalations in Panama

For many years, we have heard the government carry on conversations with the United States regarding the return of goods and lands utilized by the northern military: Either a full return, established by negotiations of the “CMA,” a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces located on the Panama-Columbia border, or the uncompensated clean up of the installations or that they would allow U.S. military access to Panamanian airports.

This agreement should not even exist according to law, given that there is already a bilateral convention that establishes the return of the goods in operating condition. Moreover, the Torrijos-Carter Treaty established the removal of all risks to human life, health, and the environment. Nevertheless, the United States has turned a deaf ear to this obligation and, on the contrary, falls back on the term “feasible,” which, conveniently, responds to their interests. In this way, they can recognize their responsibility to clean up the bases, but only in terms of what is “feasible,” which represents an arbitrary and unilateral interpretation of the treaty.

How can we Panamanians determine what is practical when no preliminary studies were carried out, prior to the turn over of the bases, and when the only reports regarding feasibility criteria have been carried out by American contractors (who are responsible for the clean up). Some bases were reviewed by the Panamanian government to determine if they met the treaty requirements, but we must point out that our governing officials are incapable of determining the level of contamination that exists on U.S. military bases in Panama, due to the fundamental lack of transparency on the part of the United States when regarding the possible sources of the contamination. This inability will carry a high cost.

On the other hand, it is important to note that it is not enough to recognize an obligation without effectively complying with it. The United States must effectively comply with its obligation to clean up risks that exist in their military bases before the complete turn over stipulated by the Treaty—December 31, 1999.

This clearly presents us with a problem; given that there are only two months to go, it is impossible that they will have cleaned up the bases before they are returned to Panamanian control. Why has this come to pass? We could point out several different responsible parties, but according to Panamanian Embassy officials in Washington, it is because they want the transfer of the goods to be easy, without kicking up much dust, and will later oblige the United States to decontaminate the bases. I am quite afraid that this strategy will not work.

Colonel Mark Hamilton told us that if Panama wants the U.S. to clean up the contamination caused by U.S. military operations on the soon-to-be reverted bases, it is necessary to draw up an agreement before the full withdrawal. This seems somewhat absurd to us, given that we already have an existing agreement in the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. He continued to say that, moreover, he did not see any way that the U.S. Congress (the body that approves the budget, a year in advance) would designate funds for the clean up of bases where there is no (U.S.) activity, unless they

reached an agreement (SOFA) and approved a “special fund” that would serve to clean those military bases that met regulations established by Congress.

It would be good to know what the Panamanian President thinks about this; to know, for example, if the experts that assist her with issues related to the return of the goods, understand the requirements that our country must comply with in order to obtain these funds, and to have all possible risks posed to health, life, and the environment removed. To know what the real cost will be to clean up the U.S. military bases in Panama, especially since we know that the U.S. spends approximately one billion per year to clean up bases located in the United States while only spending \$180 million to clean up bases located in other countries.

Moreover, we would like to know how important the issue is for them, given that, according to some members of Congress, the issue of military base clean up overseas is a worrisome issue and one they wish to collaborate on, although they maintain that in order to achieve positive results, the affected country should engage in lobbying to bring pressure to bear in the U.S. House and Senate. If Congress gets the impression that the affected country isn't concerned about the health of its citizens the U.S. politicians will not worry about the citizens of the host country.

Actual Status of the Military Facilities Established on the Panama Canal Area

The removal of all the hazards to human life, health and environment were not an issue in the transitional period, but the treaties are clear and the U.S. is obligated to comply with the rules established by them.

In 1995, the contamination became an issue in the relations between Panama and the U.S. an the Unexploded Ordnance issue also became more and more talked about in specialized magazines and press. The U.S. did not do a systematic characterization that could allow gather real data on the potential contamination.

In a report presented to the ARI (Autoridad de la Región Interoceánica) determined that 6% of all the land uses by the Southern Command in Panama represented on 6% of the land, which might be looked at as a small number if one consider that the rest of areas that are free of contamination. But, the point is that 0% of land and facilities should be contaminated. These areas use are restricted and differed until there the proper measures are taken for clean up. These areas are: the Piña Firing Range, Fort Sherman, Emperador Range y Balboa West Range, and also some sections of Fort Clayton, and more recently the Rodman Naval Station, were there are reports of high levels of lead in the soil.

There is also an economical effect on the interoceanic region, because of the impossibility on the total use of the lands, if you consider that of the 34 thousands of hectares that were uses as defense sites and military coordination areas, 21,929 were use for military training, of which 14,590 hectares (67%) were used as bombing areas and firing ranges. 7,300 hectares of these impacted areas are directly affected with UXO and other contaminants related to military activity. On this matter the U.S. government has said that it is only possible to clean, on an unilateral interpretation of the treaty, 3,250 hectares (22%) at the 31st. of December of 1999.

Contamination by UXO in Firing Ranges and Bombing Areas

Emperador Range

It is located in the Pacific Sector of the Canal, it is a Firing Range, not active, with 8,873 hectares, with an impacted area of 802 hectares. It has been assigned a reforestation use, also an industrial park has been considered, as well as an exportation zone and maritime support to the Canal. These uses have been differed, and it will become a real waste of productive real estate.

Balboa West

It is located in the Pacific Sector of the Canal, it was used as a bombing area, with 3,700 hectares, with an impacted area of 1,418 hectares. Because of its proximity to the Canal and the Barro Colorado Monument, it has been assigned a tropical pharmaceutical scientific research.

Piña and Sherman

Fort Sherman has a total of 6,800 hectares, with 50 hectares impacted. And Piña Firing Range has 2,556 hectares; its impacted area is of 1,030 hectares. In both cases the use of the land has been differed, and both installations have reverted to Panamanian control.

Rodman Naval Station

Some points on this Station have been used as firing ranges for light weapons, but studies made by ARI, at the beginning of the year, have showed that there are high levels of lead de in the ground. The U.S. were asked to clean up these areas before reversion but refused to do SO.

Affected Communities

In the nearby communities Firing Ranges and Bombing Areas there are 60,000 inhabitants, from Panama and Colon. The development activities of this region implies the population growth rate estimated to be 100,000 people at the beginning of the century, but the proximity to the ranges and bombing areas is a risk to their life, security and health, due to the UXO and other contaminants. Even though there is a risk, there have been frequent incursions of the people in those areas, producing injuries and death.

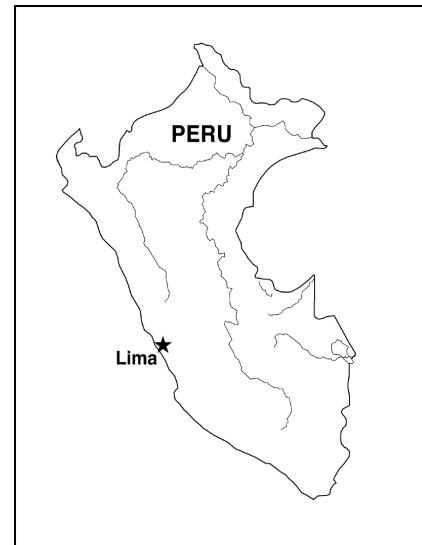
Petitions

1. That the U.S. comply with the laws and rules established by the Panama Canal Treaties.
2. That the laws, regulations and standards established for the clean up of U.S. domestic bases be applied as well in the case of Panama.
3. That the U.S. be responsible for the cleaning up of the bases beyond the 31st. of December.

Peru

By Ricardo Soberón Garrido, *Acción Andina*

Facing the 21st Century, there are four events that substantially modify the U.S. military structures in Latin America: first, the Cold War's end and its consequences in the region in terms of finding new security threats. Second, the new role played by Latin America in terms of U.S. economic and political interests. Third, the situation that still persists in terms of the security situation and agreements since the Interamerican Treaty of Joint Assistance was created in 1947 as the hemispheric collective security meeting. Finally, the new regional threats defined by Washington—drug trafficking, organized crime, and illegal immigration.



The Southern Cone countries' current political situation and human rights violations resemble in many respects the prevailing situation during the 1970s. In the 80's, fighting the guerrilla movements in Central America and through low intensity conflicts (LIC's) characterized U.S. interest in the region. In the 90's, the general application of the "narco guerrilla" theory in the anti drug fight in the Andes seems to be the new scenario where United States will deploy military units in Latin America. Recent changes illustrate this direction: as a result of a potential failure of the Colombian peace process, the U.S. is presenting yet another military solution.

The Cold War (1948-1989) outlined the national security doctrine among several generations of Army military officials educated in the School of the Americas located in Fort Benning, Georgia, while in the political arena, the Monroe Doctrine was the base of foreign affairs (America for Americans). Traditional military interventions such as in the Dominican Republic or Guatemala in the 1950s seemed to reach an end on December 1989 with the Panama military invasion (Operation Fair Cause) which led to the imprisonment of general Manuel Noriega. A decade later, the U.S. is retiring from the Canal Zone and a new architecture is extending in the region based in the anti-narcotics strategy implemented from 1989 to date.

Current military distribution is changing as the Southern Command leaves Panama where it used to have 40,000 ha., 5,000 military buildings and 20,000 soldiers. An average of 2,000 flights per year were made from this base of the "war on drugs". Currently, the new SOUTHCOM center will be in Key West (Florida); the Joint Interagency Task Force (350 personnel) and the command center are located in Puerto Rico. This situation leaves the U.S. too far away from potential military operations theatres in the Andes that it enjoyed during its presence in Panama. However, the Neutrality Treaty and the DeConcini amendment allows the U.S. to intervene unilaterally to defend the Channel Area from any external threat.

The installation of long range radars in Virginia, Texas, and Puerto Rico, each of them with a range from 100 to 10,000 feet, greatly improves U.S. monitoring of the region. It has connections with the Intelligence Center in El Paso, the DEA's major intelligence site, where the spy plane which crashed in Colombia originated. Also Fort Bliss in Houston, Texas maintains a training center on Electronic Intelligence and Aerial Photography. Puerto Rico's Roosevelt Base stands as a center for the

Special Operations Command and the U.S. Navy Forces South. Fort Buchanan is the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Army. In Viequez Island the biggest naval exercises in the Caribbean are held, although with high social unrest. In Mexico stand the operations attempting to control the front door for drugs within the west of the U.S. All of this points in the direction of the increased militarization of the region.

In Cuba, the U.S. maintains Guantanamo Base as the last stronghold left over from the old Cold War East-West confrontation. In Central America several contacts have been maintained with host militaries. This is the case of Soto Cano Base in Honduras where it has its base JTF Bravo and part of the 228th Aviation Battalion. However, after its withdrawal from Panama, the first problem in terms of security and interdiction for the U.S. has started with Panama's decision not to sign off on the establishment of the Multilateral Antinarcotics Center, and will continue with Venezuela's decision to restrict U.S. planes. Both of them represent a blow to the U.S. strategy to create a defense shield for its southern boundaries.

In other countries in Latin America the situation is imprecise. Brazil doesn't define its new role as hegemonic regional power. The truth is that it doesn't want to accept external interference for the same reason that it will not accept interventions on Amazonian affairs. President Cardoso has been increasingly proactive in the last months, in meetings with presidents from Peru, Venezuela and Colombia. The military compound has its base in Tabatinga y Cruzeiro do Sul, located in the Colombian boundary. It has four aerial bases and 8,000 men. Brasil is ready for launching its Sistema de Vigilancia Amazonica (SIVAM) priced at U.S.\$ 1.4 billion designed by Raytheon Corporation. Within the limits of what is known, it has been shared with the rest of the countries which are members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. This could represent, in the medium term, the establishment of a new countries regional correlation (axis Brasil-Venezuela).

In the case of U.S.-Andean counter-narcotics efforts on the Andean region, over the last decade strong links have been formed with the Andean militaries. Traditionally, several agreements on military cooperation have been signed with Andean countries, as well as training course in each country and in the U.S. Currently, only Bolivia's and Colombian armies participate directly in the war on drugs. In 1998, SOUTHCOM conducted seven operations in Colombian territory. Since March 1999, the U.S. has provided intelligence information to the Colombian army officials. There are now 200 to 250 U.S military personnel currently operating in Colombia.

Traditional radar stations continue to operate in several Andean countries, particularly with the motive of executing the air bridge denial strategy. For example in Colombia, anti-narcotics radar systems are distributed in San Andres island, La Guajira, Vichada, San Jose' del Guaviare, Leticia y Tres Esquinas in Caquet'a department. Other anti-narcotic installations are located in Mariquita, San José del Guaviare and Puerto Asis.

Today, after many political summits have confirmed the principle of democracy, the greatest danger for regional stability seems to be Colombian situation. There are many bonuses for those who don't want to participate in the peace process and indirectly promote the escalation of war. Simultaneously, the more militarist sectors in Washington still believe in strengthening the Colombian Armed Forces for fighting against the guerrillas despite the difficulties this scenario presents.

Preliminary Conclusions and Assessment

The changes in the Latin American military theatre, from a U.S. perspective, are being directed towards the surveillance of Colombia. Intense efforts are being made to foster conditions for increased political and military intervention, including: supporting the failure of the peace process; boundary interference; changes in the regional geopolitics after the peace accords between Peru and Ecuador; and, the new militarism of Fujimori's Government.

Such conditions also include the establishment of equipment and the training of police, military and paramilitary units; promotion of military courts; incorporation of military elements on civil affairs; foreign military personnel, chemical fumigation and possibly biological control in vast areas in Colombia and Peru; secret activities.

There is an urgent need to “de-narcotize” general and sectorial U.S. policies towards Latin America. The issue of drugs has weakened relationships, cooperation and understandings. Formal multilateralism is not enough if leverage will still be maintained.

Philippines

By The People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup

Background

For almost a hundred years, the United States enjoyed an almost unobstructed military presence all over the Philippine islands. After the end of the Philippine-American War in 1902, the U.S. immediately consolidated control over the political and economic life of its new colony, with its most significant hold being the establishment of a military stronghold. Eventually, they set up twenty-two ports and airstrips throughout the archipelago, the largest being Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Facility in the northern island of Luzon.

In 1947, the legal framework for maintaining American military presence in the Philippines, the U.S.-RP Military Bases Agreement, was signed. The original agreement created a 99-year rent-free contract, that was later amended to end in 1991.

Clark Airforce Base was established as a military base in 1945 with an original area covering 7,600 acres. This later expanded to 158,277 acres¹ in the premier provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac. Enclosed within a 22-mile perimeter, it was the homebase of the 13th Air Force, the Third Tactical Fighter Wing, and 55 units of the Pacific Air Force Command, which supported UN forces in Korea and logistical support in Vietnam.

Endowed with deep natural harbors and hidden coasts, Subic Naval Facility was established in 1904. Its original size was approximately equal to the San Francisco Bay Area covering 16,452 acres and an additional 27,432 acres of land and water reservations. The base was a “one-stop shop” support facility for the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Pacific, providing 24-hour logistical command, control, communications, training and medical assistance to the Fleet which operated in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. It was the combat support point during the Vietnam War. Until its closing, Subic was the largest military installation the U.S. operated overseas.

With the Philippines being strategically located at the “crossroads” of the South China Sea, Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Indonesian straits, the U.S. depended heavily on Clark and Subic for military interventions in the Asia region. Its Philippine bases became staging areas for U.S. troop involvement during the Korean War and Boxer Rebellion in the '50s, the Vietnam War in the '60s and '70s, and interventions in the Persian Gulf in the '80s and '90s. U.S. officials in 1972 commented on the freedom with which they could use their Philippine facilities: “Nowhere in the U.S. are we able to use our military bases with less restrictions than we do in the Philippines.”

This state of affairs was not to last, however. In a landmark decision in 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected an extension of the RP- U.S. bases treaty, thereby ending an almost century-long presence of the U.S. military on Philippine soil. The Senate decision was the culmination of decades of struggle of the nationalist and anti-bases movement that made possible the Senate rejection of the Treaty to extend American presence. At around the same time, the eruption of the Mt. Pinatubo volcano located near Clark Air Base expedited the departure of the U.S. troops from Clark.

¹ Simbulan, Ronald G., *The Bases of Our Insecurity: A Study of the U.S. Military Bases in the Philippines*, 1985.

Clark and Subic Today

After the departure of the U.S. military from their bases, the Philippine government set its sights on redeveloping the areas into “special economic zones.” Base conversion development authorities were set up at both Clark and Subic and the areas metamorphosed into tax exempt free ports to attract foreign investors and businesses.

Today, the former neighborhood of the high officials at Clark Air Base is now an elite country club boasting of a Five star Holiday Inn, a world class golf course, and water park for children. Subic is being marketed as “Asia's New Leisure Frontier”, an eco-tourism haven where sport fishing is readily available, or where a hike through the forest with an indigenous Filipino can endow any tourist with survival skills that U.S. troops depended on in the jungles of Vietnam.

In both areas, duty-free shops sell all-American products, from Guess jeans to chicken thighs. And buildings that formerly formed part of the Ship Repair Facility to the Naval Station Depot are now export processing plants for electronic companies like Toshiba or Sanyo, or for garment industries catering to the likes of Levi-Strauss.

The development of the bases has been facilitated mainly due to the general perception that these areas are among the last hope of the nation for new capital and enterprise to boost the ailing economy. Specific areas of both bases are also being currently prepared for U.S. military access under the newly signed Visiting Forces Agreement with the U.S..

These have transpired despite the lack of a full investigation of toxic contamination at either Clark or Subic. What is already known from existing documents, surveys and screening activities confirm severe environmental damage, but only in some specific sites. The full threat facing communities inside and outside the bases remains to be uncovered.

The Beginnings of the Toxic Campaign

Filipinos first gained awareness of toxic contamination at military bases in the U.S. during the campaign to close the bases. Although the issue became one of the arguments against the continued stay of the U.S., it was never considered during the negotiations. As a consequence, the Philippine government neither filed a formal claim for U.S. cleanup nor requested copies of drawdown reports. Thus, the U.S. quietly walked away from its responsibility.

However, in 1992 a declassified Bases Closure Report of the General Accounting Office on U.S. obligations was obtained by U.S. NGOs. This document identified contaminated sites in the former U.S. bases and estimated that “the cost of bringing all contaminated sites into compliance with U.S. environmental standards could approach Superfund proportions.”² The same document asserted that “the current basing agreement does not impose any well-defined environmental responsibilities upon the United States, either while it operates the bases or for cleanup upon withdrawal.”

In 1994, two delegations of U.S. NGO experts were sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee on what was called the “Positive Legacy Tour” to support Filipino NGOs, prior to the

² *Military Base Closures: U.S. Financial Obligations in the Philippines.* GAO Report to Congressional Requesters, February 1992.

visit of President Clinton. Through the initiatives of the Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition, the People's Task Force for Bases Clean Up was formed to bring together concerned citizens from the Clark, Subic, and Manila areas to address this pressing concern. Since then, it has led most of the advocacy for U.S. responsibility, awareness building, research, lobbying, organizing, facilitating medical support to the victims and networking efforts in coordination with the U.S. Working Group for Philippine Bases Clean Up. The Task Force's U.S. counterpart is a network of American non-governmental organizations and individuals who provide scientific and educational support to the Philippine effort. Together, they have brought the issue to the forefront of Philippine concerns, making it a national concern for all sectors of Philippine life to address.

Evidence of Contamination

Clark Air Force Base: "A window to a larger problem"

In Clark, there are a total of 27 known contaminated sites based on 2 documents:

- a) a review of the U.S. Air Force Environmental Review of the Drawdown Activities at Clark Air Base (1991) by an American delegation of scientists and technical experts; and
- b) a soil and groundwater baseline study conducted by U.S. consulting firm Weston International in 1997 at the request of the Philippine government.

According to the Weston report:

- Twenty-one of the twenty-four locations sampled had at least one pollutant that exceeded drinking water standards, including heavy metals like mercury and lead, pesticides such as dieldrin, and several different kinds of solvents, including benzene and toluene.
- Thirteen of the fourteen sites investigated for soil contamination confirmed the presence of contaminants that exceeded U.S. EPA Region 3 risk-based concentration (RBC) criteria. Contaminants identified included polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides aldrin, dieldrin, and heptachlor, and petroleum hydrocarbons, including the cancer causing JP-4 Fuel.
- Many of these sites sit very close to or on top of communities. Mercury was found in a shallow well of an evacuation center called CABCOM, where people had been living since 1994. The municipal landfill, which sits near the municipal town of Mabalacat, was found to be severely contaminated with dieldrin and aldrin, raising concern of whether or not the pesticide had reached the city's local water supply.

Many of the chemicals identified at Clark are known as Persistent Organic Pollutants or POPs. At intergovernmental negotiations on POPs in November 1998, Greenpeace International highlighted Clark Air Base as an "environmental hotspot".

POPs have been linked to a wide array of health problems, such as falling sperm counts, rising rates of testicular and breast cancer, behavior disorders and immune system changes.

The study itself admitted its own limitation in scope and size, and recommended that the soil and groundwater of 75% of the sites be further investigated. About one site, the Weston report remarked, "While detected contaminants were few, there is concern that the large area of the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office could not be adequately characterized ... There is 'high

potential' for contaminants such as solvents, fuel products, PCBs, pesticides, heavy metals, and radioactive materials to migrate down into the groundwater.”

Subic Naval Base

At the former naval facility, there are 19 known contaminated sites identified in two documents:

- (1) the *U.S. Navy's Potential Restoration Sites on Board the U.S. Facility, Subic Bay* (1992);and
- (2) the *Environmental Baseline Study at Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SPFZ)* by Woodward-Clyde International (U.S.A), February 1997.

Completed in 1997, the Woodward-Clyde study was commissioned through a \$650,000-loan of the World Bank by the Philippine government. The study concluded that there was “no widespread contamination” and that “the level of contamination detected in most of the sites investigated does not pose a significant risk to human health and the environment.”³

A technical review of the study by American based environmental consulting firm Clearwater Revival Company, argued that the study “does not accurately characterize contamination” and that the results “indicate that existing environmental conditions within the Freeport Zone present an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health and the environment.”⁴

The technical review pointed out that:

- The Environmental Baseline Study (EBS) did not investigate areas which were previously determined as contaminated, such as certain housing areas and more outlying areas;
- Regardless of its conclusions, the report recommended remediation costing \$7-1 0 million and further investigation costing \$1.4 million, including \$3-5 million for the remediation of a landfill, left uncapped and unlined by the Americans, and which is still being utilized by the local government;
- There is potential for health impacts to subsistence fisherfolk from the accumulation of toxins in fish and other marine life residing in Subic Bay waters. Heavy metals, including mercury, were found in sediments in Subic Bay;
- The study's scope did not include known environmental hazards such as UXO, asbestos, lead paint and radioactivity. Already several people in surrounding communities have lost their eyesight, limbs, and eyes because of UXO; and
- Over 1,000 former base workers have been diagnosed with asbestosis, a form of lung cancer contracted from exposure to asbestos.

The lack of reliability of the report was later confirmed by the Philippine government Task Force on Hazardous/Toxic Waste, which stated that the Woodward Clyde report “needs to be ‘reassessed.’”⁵

³ *Environmental Baseline Study at Subic Bay Freeport Zone: Final Report*, Woodward-Clyde International, 1997.

⁴ *Technical Review of the Woodward-Clyde Report*, Clearwater Revival Company, 1998.

⁵ “RP Government Finally Acknowledges Toxic Waste.” *Today*, July 30, 1999.

Health Problems at Clark and Subic

Clark

In 1994, health problems were beginning to be monitored in certain communities around Clark, particularly in CABCOM, a government evacuation center for people displaced by the explosion of Mt. Pinatubo. Members of the U.S. Working Group for Bases Clean discovered that CABCOM sat on a former motor pool of the air base.

People in CABCOM described the water as having a funny smell or an oily sheen. They also complained of skin irritation after bathing or washing, stomachs bloating to the size of a basketball, and unusual numbers of miscarriages and spontaneous abortions. In a small neighborhood, it was discovered that of 9 children who were born with central nervous system problems, only one, Abraham Taruc, has survived. 5 years old today, Abraham still cannot walk, talk, or eat solid foods.

In response to growing health concerns, the People's Task Force for Bases Clean Up and the Canadian-based International Institute for the Concern for Public Health (IICPH), conducted a health survey in 1994 of 761 households in 13 communities inside and around Clark (see map). This "Health for All Survey" was designed, analyzed and implemented under the guidance of Dr. Rosalie Bertell, director of the IICPH and an internationally known consultant on the effects of toxic and nuclear waste.

The results of the survey revealed that:

- Certain communities around Clark Air Force Base report conspicuously high and disparate levels of kidney, urinary, nervous, and female system health problems. Examples of problems presented were tremors, cramps, spasms, frequent dizziness, kidney condition, frequent painful urination, flank pain, irregular menstruation, and premenstrual syndrome;
- The weight and height of older children were abnormally low, despite adequate nutritional status;
- Respiratory problems in children were at high rates anywhere from 24-31% in each of the 13 communities surveyed.

The highest prevalence of these problems occurred in communities closest to or on the base and highly contaminated sites.

Dr. Bertell was able to identify the following relationships:

- Poor water quality was associated with all kidney and urinary tract problems;
- Corrosive drinking water was significantly related to respiratory problems;
- Water with an unusual taste or smell was related to problems with the nervous system; and
- Dust was associated with kidney problems.⁶

⁶ Rosalie Bertell. *Health for All Survey*, 1998.

Bertell maintained that environmental factors are linked to the disparate levels of health problems. After all, normal dust is usually correlated with respiratory problems, not kidney problems. She stated, "It is clear that this is not normal dust."⁷

Her final advisory was that the five communities that displayed the highest incidence of health problems be given cleanup priority and permanent living conditions be found for CABCOM residents. She stressed that, "To do nothing is to invite disaster."

Unfortunately her words fell on deaf ears. Philippine Health Undersecretary Susan Pineda-Mercado repudiated Bertell's report as without basis and stated that "until there is an epidemic, our hands are tied."⁸ In a recent Senate hearing, the Sec. of Health himself said that without the benefit of an epidemiological study that will establish that the sicknesses are linked to the toxins, they are treating victims as individual patients. Reluctantly, they did agree to set up a support mechanism for the victims in a regional hospital.

After the Bertell study, the People's Task Force persisted with its own health monitoring and was able to establish cluster cases that were presented in Senate hearings. At the Madapdap Resettlement Area which now houses permanently most of the evacuees from the CABCOM evacuation center, the biggest problem the people face is death. A community leader said that before CABCOM, people died of old age. Today, over 88 deaths have been recorded by community leaders and 63 number of sicknesses, mostly cancer, leukemia, and skin problems. And this is just a partial list. He stressed that this is an even bigger problem than the volcano eruption for his community of about 6,000 families. Most of the residents suspect that toxic waste may have affected their drinking water, the soil and the air.

Subic

Around Subic Naval Facility, a high number of leukemia cases have been reported in the news. According to Dr. Bertell, when repeatedly asked by the media about Subic in comparison to Clark, she would answer that without the benefit of a health survey no one would know what is happening.

In addition to this, over a thousand workers have been diagnosed with asbestosis, a type of lung cancer that was contracted when the base was still in operation. Many of them have already died. They have filed a class suit in federal court against the manufacturers of asbestos.

The Impact on Development

The toxic contamination of the bases has been likened to a bomb just about to explode. Its potential for significant damage to the national economy as a major threat to food security can neither be underestimated nor ignored.

These observations are based upon the surface hydrology of the areas, particularly that of Clark whose river systems drain into the Pampanga Plain where most of the agricultural towns of the province lie.⁹ Agricultural and fishery harvests in this and adjoining areas within Philippine Region

⁷ Bertell at Press Conference. Aristocrat Restaurant, Manila, November 23, 1998.

⁸ Toxic Lives, Episode 1 of LOREN. ABS-CBN Channel 2, January 9, 1999.

⁹ Peter Lunning, referring to Surface Hydrology Map of Region 3 at Senate Hearing, October 7, 1999.

3 was 9.5% of the national total for 1998. The top crop, rice, accounted for about fifteen percent (15%) of the country's total rice production for the same year. The area will be home to 7.7 million Filipinos in the year 2000.¹⁰ Should contamination spread to expose a majority of these residents, the industry and service sectors will suffer substantial losses due to reduced work hours and manpower. Such losses will translate into further decrease in the area's contribution to an ailing national economy.

Many farmers at Clark are tilling the land above landfills, in areas that have not been investigated and downgradient to areas already found contaminated. At Clark, redevelopment happened before the Weston Environmental Baseline Survey. The same thing happened at Subic.

The Response of the Philippine Government

The Philippine government's delayed response to the issue stems primarily from the lack of political will to "rock the boat of diplomacy" with the U.S. or to forego negotiations for more loans and military aid. In addition, the lack of knowledge of the U.S. military's poor environmental track record and constant fear of NGOs and media sabotaging the economic potentials of the freeport zones also serve to keep them from negotiating strongly for cleanup.

After almost 5 years of relentless campaigning, the People's Task Force, with the help of some legislators and their staff, the media and the Commission on Human Rights that highlighted the case of sick people in Cabcom, was finally able to convince the government that there is indeed a serious contamination problem. Significantly, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced that: "Toxic contamination is now a given" and that "the Philippine Government never waived the right to a cleanup"¹¹ in response to the Deputy Sec. of Defense Sherri Goodman's claim that they did.¹² On the other hand, the President reiterated his intention to take it up with President Clinton, first at the latest APEC meeting, and then during a planned U.S. visit in the year 2000. In effect, almost all government agencies now recognize the problem except for the conversion authorities in both Clark in Subic who continue to downplay the contamination problem while also trying to access funds for the cleanup of contaminated sites.

As a result, there is now much support for the immediate formal creation of and allocation of funds for the operation of an inter-agency Philippine Task Force on Toxic/Hazardous Waste. The lead agencies of this body will be the Department of Foreign Affairs with the Departments of Health and the Environment, while the two base conversion authorities will be its primary members. An interim Task Force is currently assessing the cost of a full study intended for presentation to the U.S. government for financial assistance.

¹⁰ 1998 Philippine Statistical Yearbook. NSCB

¹¹ Letter of Foreign Affairs Secretary Domingo Siazon to Sen. Loren Legarda, August 11, 1999.

¹² Letter of U.S. DoD Deputy Undersecretary for Environmental Security Sherri Goodman to Sen. Loren Legarda, June 24, 1999.

U.S. Government Position

Amidst representations from the private sector of the U.S. and Philippines, as well as from the Philippine government, the U.S. has been consistent in their claim to no legal responsibility as based on a 1988 Amendment to the 1947 treaty.

In a recent letter to RP Senator Loren Legarda-Leviste from Defense Deputy Undersecretary Sherri W. Goodman of the U.S., the Philippine government “expressly agreed to waive any right to demand cleanup in return for the agreement of the United States not to seek compensation for the value of the substantial improvements we left behind.” She referred to an amendment made in 1998, to wit:

“The United States is not obligated to turn over the bases to the Philippines at the expiration of this Agreement or the earlier relinquishment of any bases in the condition in which they were at the time of their occupation, nor is the Philippines obliged to make any compensation to the United States for the improvements in the bases or for the non-removable buildings or structures left thereon, the right of use which shall revert to the Philippines upon the termination of this Agreement or the earlier relinquishment by the United States of the bases where the buildings or structures have been built.”

She further stated, “In the absence of legal authority, our laws do not permit us to spend funds for the purposes you have requested.”

Philippine Desk Officer Bill Moore of the U.S. State Department echoed her sentiments in a recent meeting with PTFBC delegates last April. He stated that “their hands are tied because they are not legally bound to take responsibility for the mess, even if morally, they are.”¹³

The stonewalling attitude of the U.S. government has made it nearly impossible to access certain information. Many of the documents necessary to determine the severity of the problem have yet to be released by the U.S. government. For example, the Weston report was unable to determine how certain chemicals got into the deep aquifer because the construction of the wells inside Clark Air Base was not available.

The U.S. response to requests for information is uniform as reflected in U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's answer to RP Sec. Domingo Siazon request for information about surveys of unexploded ordnance (UXO), “It is our belief that the information contained in the documentation previously made available to you will allow your economic and environmental planners to make informed decision about future land use at Clark and Subic.”¹⁴

Response from Various Sectors

The Philippine Congress

The two houses of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives, have recognized the existence of the problem of toxic contamination from the 9th to the current Congresses. During that

¹³ Meeting of PTFBC Delegates and Bill Moore, Washington D.C. April 2, 1999.

¹⁴ Letter of U.S. State Secretary Madeleine Albright to RP Foreign Affairs Secretary Domingo Siazon, April 8, 1998.

period, at least thirty (30) House and Senate resolutions have been filed by approximately 15 legislators to urge inquiry by various congressional committees on the environmental, health and other aspects of the issue.

Senate committee hearings were conducted during the 9th Congress and a committee report was filed recommending the adoption of P.S. Resolution No. 1068 urging the inclusion of preliminary negotiations for technical and financial requirements for bases cleanup and restoration in the agenda of issues during President Clinton's visit to the Philippines. On the other hand, the House of Representatives, recognizing the importance of formal action at the highest level, passed last July 26th House Resolution No. 75 entitled "Resolution Urging President Joseph Ejercito Estrada to Call Upon the Government of the United States of America to Fulfill its Responsibility of Cleaning Up Wastes Left Behind by the American Troops in Clark and Subic" on third reading.

It is also worthwhile to mention that the issue of toxic contamination in Clark and Subic was part of the debate on whether or not to pass the Visiting Forces Agreement. Unfortunately, no environmental provisions were included in this agreement that the Philippine Senate passed last May.

Philippine and U.S. Bishops

One of the most important sectors that has currently supported the call for bases cleanup is the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. It is a powerful bloc in the local political scene, vocal and vigilant on issues of human rights and justice.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has urged government to address the issue. Recently, the CBCP released a report stating that Marbel Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez had endorsed the problem to the U.S. Catholic Conference during a recent visit by American Catholic bishops to the Philippines. According to the same report, the group of U.S. Bishops backed the CBCP's call for the U.S. government to acknowledge the presence of toxic waste in the former bases and to begin cleanup, adding that they will bring up the contamination issue to other bishops.¹⁵ The CBCP issued a paper stating the official position of the body.¹⁶

International Media

The exposure of the Philippine case in the international media has magnified recently. On Christmas Day of 1998, the case was highlighted by a New York Times editorial entitled "Cleaning Up After the Pentagon."¹⁷ The Boston Globe will feature a special report on the issue after the October visit of their staff to the Philippines.

Lawyers

The issue has entered the legal phase with marked interest among an increasing number of international legal professionals and local law students who are studying and putting forward the legal options open to the Philippine government and the individual victims of contamination. The

¹⁵ "U.S. Bishops Back Call on Clean Up of Bases." *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 28, 1999.

¹⁶ "A Statement on the Toxic Contamination of Former U.S. Military Bases in the Philippines, NASSA-Caritas Philippines, August 25, 1999.

¹⁷ "Cleaning Up After the Pentagon," *The New York Times*, December 25, 1998.

complexity of the novel subject matter poses an exciting challenge to legal professionals who appreciate the ramifications and the great potentials of the issue.

Conclusion

The Philippine case, though still far from being resolved eight years after the closure of the bases, has now come to a critical juncture. We have gathered the much needed evidence which, according to experts, would warrant a comprehensive investigation and cleanup in the U.S..

With the admission of the Philippine government that a serious problem does exist, we are now on the verge of ending Phase I of the campaign for U.S. responsibility. From here on, the immediate task will consist of ensuring that this government will muster enough political will to seek what is due from its long-term ally. The Bases Cleanup movement in the Philippines will also continue to explore every possible avenue to gather the widest and broadest support in the U.S. and internationally in order to achieve this goal.

United Kingdom

U.S. Army Depot Activity - Caerwent By Brian Counsell

Overview

Caerwent, the location of the Army base, has approximately 1,300 residents over the age of 18 years and is an historic Roman town, previously known as Venta Sihrum. The base is sited just north of the village in what was a very attractive rural setting. There are some 1,000 buildings spread over the site.

Caerwent is located in Monmouthshire, which is a rural county of some 300 square miles situated in SE Wales. The total population is 82,-85,000. The economy is mainly agriculture and tourism with most people commuting out of Monmouthshire to work in larger towns and urban areas. There are 4 towns in Monmouthshire with populations of 10-12,000 each, the rest of the population live in villages or small rural settlements.

Who I am

I am 56 years of age and have lived in Caerwent all my life, apart from several extended contracts commissioning industrial gas plants in the UK, Africa, and South America.

During the period regarding the uncertainty of the future of the base I was the local elected representative for Monmouthshire City Council (local authority for the area). I was the prime mover in starting the campaign against redevelopment of the site and also the first point of contact for Arc Ecology. My interest was in:

- a) protecting the quality of life of the local community against unwanted and ill considered redevelopment, and,
- b) enabling the local community to have a greater input in future plans for the area. I was concerned that having been “dumped on” 60 years ago with a munitions factory, we were about to go through this again with 4,500 houses.

History of the Base

Built in 1938-40 as a propellant factory for the Royal Navy (cordite), with 7,000 employees at the height of production. It is a 1,600 acre site with a perimeter fence around 1,100 acres.

The site was used for manufacturing until the late 1960's. At this time de Gaulle was pushing U.S. forces out of France and the base was handed to the Royal Air Force as landlords. The U.S. army used the base until 1993 for ammunition storage (80,000 tons of munitions) and people were employed to upgrade the munitions in storage.

The site was closed as part of the peace dividend in 1993 at the end of the cold war and then became redundant. Around this time the local authority (Monmouthshire Borough Council), along with the Ministry of Defense (Defense Land Estate Agency) employed consultants to look at options for

future alternative use, other than military. The consultants report highlighted various hot spots of contamination that were still present on the site and suggested these could be cleaned up at a cost of £6m.

In 1995 Monmouthshire Borough council officers approached the local Community Council suggesting their favored option for the future of the site was a new town development of 4,500 houses to be built over 25 years. At this stage it looked like a fait accompli in that there did not appear to be any alternative use or specification for future cleanup. There was no organized response to future options.

During the course of 1995 Arc Ecology obtained a copy of the consultants report, made themselves known to the local community via their representative in the UK, and became involved in the community response. The community held a series of public meetings, which included representatives of the local authority Planning Department and the Ministry of Defense. An Arc Ecology representative attended these meetings and advised the local community. The outcome of the meetings was the formation of the Dinham Study Group, made up of around 40 members (Dinham being the original name for the area of land on which the site had been built).

The Dinham Study Group decided to look at 4 different aspects of the base:

- a) Contamination
- b) Planning aspects and future use of the site
- c) Flora and fauna
- d) Media contacts/public relations

The Local Campaign

A campaign was started via a newsletter to the local community; setting up a website and producing a 15 minute TV program. We intended to create as much publicity as possible about the extent of the contamination of the site and its possible redevelopment which would disturb the contamination. Advice had been given that if left alone the contamination would do no harm. It was established via Arc Ecology and the FoIA that many of the buildings the Ministry of Defense claimed as being decontaminated were still contaminated with asbestos and that an in-depth cleanup would likely cost £30m.

The consensus locally was that there was significant opposition to the proposed housing development, with the majority of people wanting the site left alone, “lock the gate and throw away the key.” The site had been fenced off for 50 years and closed to the public; it would be expensive to cleanup and any cleanup would mean redevelopment of the site.

Generally in the UK the polluter pays for any cleanup, but this does not apply to the UK Ministry of Defense. This meant that the cleanup would only occur via development. The Dinham Study Group generated a lot of hostile publicity towards future development as the new town was not wanted and it was felt that the proposed cleanup of £6m would not only be inadequate, but could possibly do more harm than good.

During the summer of 1997, it was announced that the base was no longer to be disposed of, but that the British army had identified its unique potential for training purposes. Since then the base

has been frequently used for army exercises. There is good liaison and rapport between the army and Caerwent Community Council, with prior notification given of major exercises and noise levels.

The Future

The British army has informed the Caerwent Community Council that they are committed to using the base long term (in excess of 10 years). The army is demolishing some buildings on the site and the local Environment Agency has been involved in this. The army is “making safe” various parts of the site, but has no commitment to a complete cleanup to restore the site to its original agricultural standard. This will mean that at some time, if and when the army pulls out, the problem of decontamination (or lack of it) and the prospect of redevelopment against the local community’s wishes (i.e., cleanup paid for by redevelopment) will arise again.

We will never know whether the decision for the British army to use the site was made because the Defense Land Estate Agency realized that it would have a fight on its hands, causing a lot of bad publicity, if they went ahead with using the site for redevelopment. We believe it was fact that the Dinham Study Group made no exaggerated claims, only factual pronouncements, backed up by the professional experience of Arc Ecology in contamination caused by munitions manufacture that assisted in the Ministry of Defense coming to the decision to retain the site for use by the British army. We believe the Ministry of Defense realized that the campaign was being fought on a professional level, also that they would not be able to dispose of the site and leave it to a developer to cleanup as the site would become unmarketable (the site was worth £25-40m and would cost that amount of money to cleanup).

Vieques

By the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques

The history of the abuses committed by the U.S. Navy on the people of Vieques added a new page to the record of military arrogance and showed that 'might makes right' when it concerns the subaltern populations. On June 9, 1999; President Clinton had ordered Defense Secretary William Cohen to “establish a panel to review the need for operations at Vieques and to explore alternative sites or methods that would meet the Department's needs.” A panel was constituted with three military and one former U.S. Congressman. Once more disrespect is shown to the people of Vieques, as it did not fully comply with its mandate of exploring alternative sites and recommending instead that the bombing of the eastern part of the island should be resumed. By reducing the number of days the bombing takes place the U.S. Navy tries to show a hypocritical consideration for the civilians whose basic human rights has been debased for sixty (60) years. Ironically the U.S. Navy acknowledges that the bombing of Vieques is so disruptive, dangerous and menacing for the nearly 10,000 inhabitants of Vieques that it proposes to reduce to *only* 130 days per year. But the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico had stated many times No More Bombings on Vieques!

Nobody in Puerto Rico accepted the recommendations of the panel. On October 19, 1999; the Senate Committee on Armed Services met and Puerto Rican delegation stated once again No More Bombs! Now is up to Cohen and Clinton to make a final decision concerning the issue. The people of Vieques and those who support their struggle had made their final decision a while ago: No more Death, no more *accidents*, no more Bombs, no more cancer, no more Navy in Vieques! Civil Disobedience has been going on uncontested for 6 months and Viequenses are taking back their land.

You can read the recent news, including the recommendations of the Military Panel, the responses from the pro-Vieques groups and reports from Vieques in the Vieques Libre List Archive: http://www.listbot.com/cgi-bin/subscriber?Act=view_archive&list_id=viequeslibre

Rush Panel's Report Would Let Navy Stay By Flavio Cumpiano, Special to the Star

The San Juan Star, Saturday, October 23, 1999

The Rush Panel's report on Vieques was a thinly- veiled attempt to allow the U.S. Navy to remain in Vieques indefinitely while appearing to reconcile the interests of the Navy with those of the people of Vieques.

It is evident from the very text of the report, and it was made plainly clear during last Tuesday's hearings by the Senate Armed Services Committee, that the Rush Panel's “recommendation” that the Navy leave Vieques in five years was drafted and crafted in such a manner as to leave the final decision in the hands of the Navy in the first instance and in the hands of a future Congress and Commander-in-Chief at an undetermined date. That is far from the immediate and permanent solution to the Vieques situation which President Clinton has publicly stated to be his goal.

The operative statement in the Rush Panel's recommendation is that "The Department of the Navy should immediately conduct a priority assessment of the training requirements at Vieques with the objective of ceasing all training activities at Vieques within five years." That is far from a recommendation to the Commander-in-Chief that he issue an executive directive now ordering the Navy out of Vieques now or at a certain date.

What if the Navy conducts the study proposed by the Rush Panel and, once again, concludes that there is no acceptable alternative site to Vieques? The Navy will remain in Vieques indefinitely. Panel Chairman Francis Rush, prodded by Sen. Carl Levin and Bob Smith, was evasive at first but had to admit this during last Tuesday's Senate hearings. Rush said that if the Navy finds no alternative site to Vieques within the next five years, or if the alternative site it does find "affects military readiness and national security", then the Navy may remain in Vieques.

And what if the Navy finds an alternative site to Vieques that it considers to be acceptable, will that finally put closure to the Vieques situation? Hardly, admitted Retired General Richard Neal, a member of the Rush Panel. Neal explained during the hearings that even if the Navy were to find an alternative site to Vieques, all the Navy would be able to do, under the Rush Panel's recommendation, is to submit "its proposal" to the Senate Armed Services Committee, to Congress as a whole and to the Department of Defense.

Under any scenario, the Rush Panel's recommendation would allow the Navy to remain in Vieques indefinitely. It should be clear, then, that the qualifier in the Rush Panel's recommendation that the Navy's study be conducted "with the objective of ceasing all training activities at Vieques within five years" does not amount to much, given what the Rush Panel itself admitted during the hearings and in light of its recommendation that the Navy resume bombing Vieques.

History has proven that if Clinton were to accept the Rush Panel's recommendation that the Navy be allowed to remain in Vieques and continue to bomb for an indefinite period, the Navy and the Department of Defense will have no incentive to look for an alternative site and the consequence will be that the Navy remains in Vieques indefinitely. We are confident that Clinton will not allow such a travesty to take place.

Almost 20 years ago, another federal panel studied the issue of Vieques. Between 1979 and 1981 a congressional Panel of the House Armed Services Committee conducted extensive hearings and reviewed the status of Navy training activities on Vieques. Among other findings, the Congressional Panel, chaired by Congressman Ronald Dellums, concluded that: (1) the Navy and the Department of Defense should proceed to find, without delay, an alternative site to Vieques. The Dellums Panel recommended that, in the interim, the Navy should study and develop methods of alleviating the concerns of the people of Vieques since, otherwise, the Navy would further undermine its credibility and encourage exploitation of the controversy; and (2) insensitivity has been the hallmark of the Navy's approach towards Vieques.

The findings of the Dellums Panel 20 years ago have turned out to be tragically prophetic. The past two decades have proven to be not only a continuation of the deplorable situation described by the Dellums Panel, but indeed a deterioration of that situation. Consider Vice Admiral William Fallon's reply, "I deal with facts, not with sentiments", when recently confronted with the concerns of the people of Vieques. That telling remark not only reflected the Navy's insensitivity, but also its willful blindness towards the reality that the high cancer rate in Vieques, the ecological and environmental

damage caused by the Navy, the callous disregard for the welfare and well-being of Viequenses, the illegal use of napalm and depleted uranium on Vieques, among others, are indisputable facts that Fallon and the Navy should be forced to “deal with.” How? By getting out of Vieques now.

What guarantee do the people of Vieques have that the Navy will comply with the Rush Panel's recommendation to study and find alternative sites, especially when the Rush Panel itself failed to fully comply with the order of the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense to do the same? During the hearings, Rush Panel members admitted that they based their conclusion that there is currently no alternative to Vieques on the Navy's own quick and inadequate study of 18 alternative sites.

The Rush Panel's failure to comply with the President's mandate wouldn't be so troublesome if its recommendations were favorable to the people of Vieques. But the people of Vieques should be the last to pay for this failure. The president and Congress should heed the insightful words of Rep. Bob Carr, a member of the Dellums Panel, when he wrote in the panel's 1981 final report on Vieques that “. . . it is diplomatically and militarily dangerous for congressional committee members to state that naval training of this type and sufficiency is dependent on one geographical location. Our Navy should not be either so dependent or unimaginative.”

And the people of Vieques should not continue to be penalized by the Navy's dependence or lack of imagination, or by the smoke and mirrors of panels or committees.