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Poison In Our Waters: A Brief Overview of the Proposed Militarization of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands 毒される我らの海　グアム・北マリアナ諸島米国自治連邦区軍事化提案の概要

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Background of proposed military buildup on Guam [1]

The U.S. has long viewed the island of Guam, an unincorporated U.S. territory that already hosts two of the Department of Defense's most "valuable" bases in the world,[2] an indispensable part of its "Pacific Century." Prior to talk of the "Pacific Pivot," the Governments of Japan ("GOJ") and the United States agreed to reduce the number of Marines on Okinawa in response to intense local pressure. Defense Department planning for Guam is closely bound up with changing plans for basing in Okinawa. In 2006, the governments of Japan and the US formalized a "roadmap" to move 8,600 Marines from Okinawa to Guam. The plan was contingent, however, on closing the dangerous Futenma Base and expanding an existing base at Henoko, an approach fiercely resisted by Okinawan people and politicians.

In November 2009, The Department of Defense ("DOD") released an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") outlining the environmental effects that the realignment of Marines would have on Guam.[3] The effects included:

- A 45% population growth on the island over a four (4) year period;
- A 6.1 million gallon per day shortfall of water for the civilian community;
- The destruction of over 70 acres of coral reef to accommodate a nuclear aircraft carrier; and
- The construction of a firing range complex over an indigenous burial site.

Despite serious concerns raised by federal agencies, local leaders and the community, DOD issued its "Record of Decision" (ROD) in September 2010 without any significant changes in plans. At the time, DOD officials stated publicly that the timeline for the (ROD) was driven by the goal of spending down funds appropriated by the U.S.[4] and, more importantly, "Mamizu" funds contributed by the GOJ.[5] DOD, however, was unable to move forward with most of its construction projects because it was unable to force the local historic preservation officer to sign off on a document called the "Programmatic Agreement."

The status of the Guam military buildup today

After the issuance of the ROD, several other factors contributed to the delay of the proposed realignment. One factor was a lawsuit filed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Guam Preservation Trust and We Are Guåhan.[6] The goal of the lawsuit was to stop DOD from building a firing range complex on an indigenous burial site and village, Pågat Village. The non-profit organizations pointed out that, despite controlling approximately one-third of Guam, DOD had failed to consider a single alternative for building the firing range complex on existing DOD property. The lawsuit garnered wide local support, with many in the community viewing DOD's plans as an unnecessary land grab that targeted a sacred

site. This attitude was grounded in the history of land-taking on Guam, where the DOD had controlled approximately half of the island and had only slowly begun to return unused or "underutilized" property to its original landowners.

Pågat

Congress's demand that DOD identify and justify costs also slowed the proposed military build-up. In June 2011, the Government Accountability Office ("GAO") released a report on the cost and financial challenges surrounding the Guam realignment. The GAO estimated the cost of the buildup at $23.8B, more than double the $10.27B cost estimate agreed upon by the GOJ and the U.S. Furthermore, the DOD's failure to provide Congress with its own master plan detailing the funds necessary to complete the transfer of Marines from Okinawa to Guam drew the attention of several U.S. senators, including influential members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Committee Chairman Senator Carl Levin, Senator John McCain and Senator Jim Webb called DOD's plans "unrealistic, unworkable and unaffordable."[7] Senator Claire McCaskill, another member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, stated that its members "will not authorize such multi-billion-dollar projects without showing the rigorous analysis behind why we are doing what we are doing and a well-thought-out master plan of how we are going to get it done at a set cost and on a set schedule."[8] Congress subsequently required that certain conditions be met before it appropriated funding for projects related to the movement of Marines to Guam:[9]

- A preferred force lay-down from the Commandant of the Marine Corps;
- Master plans for Marine Corps facilities and infrastructure on Guam and Hawaii;
- An outline of funds and construction necessary to restore facilities and infrastructure at Futenma; and
- An outline of the impacts and costs that the proposed buildup would have on civilian utilities, facilities and infrastructure.

DOD plans suffered a legal setback when, in November 2011, it conceded to the demands of plaintiffs in the lawsuit to save Pågat Village and agreed to reevaluate sites for its proposed firing range complex. DOD agreed to evaluate all reasonable alternatives in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement ("SEIS"), estimating that the process would take years to complete.

More changes to the 2006 Roadmap were announced in February 2012 and formalized after a "2 + 2 meeting" held between the U.S. and Japan. In a Joint Statement issued on April 26, 2012, the GOJ and the U.S. officially "delinked" the movement of Marines to Guam from the controversial Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko on Okinawa.[10] Under the adjusted agreement, the number of Marines moving to Guam would be reduced from 8,600 to approximately 5,000. The Joint Statement indicated that 9,000 Marines would be moved from Okinawa, 5,000 Marines moving to Guam and the remaining 4,000 "rotating" between Australia and Hawaii. Based on the changes in force structure, the scope of the SEIS, initiated to assess the location of the proposed firing range complex, was expanded to analyze new housing and basing options.

DOD estimates that a draft SEIS for the proposed firing range complex and basing options will be released in March 2014.

Cost of the Pivot: 9,000 Marines realigned for $18.3B

The original estimated cost of building a new Marine Corps base on Guam for 8,600 marines and their dependents was $10.27B.[11] The GOJ would pay $6.09B of this, with the U.S. agreeing to pay $3.18B. The 2006 estimates also included a $1B "super highway" that was artificially included to bring the percentage of costs borne by the GOJ down.[12] The 2011 GAO report criticized this estimate and stated that the cost of the proposed military build-up on Guam would actually be $23.8B.

DOD announced a reduction in the number of Marines moving to Guam from 8,600 to approximately 5,000 in the April 2012 Joint Statement. Based on the reduced number of Marines and dependents that would be moved to Guam under this new plan, DOD estimated that the cost of the realignment would be $8.6B.[13] Of this amount, the GOJ would be responsible for paying $3.1B. According to a report published by GAO in June 2013, the U.S. would pay $2.5B to move additional Marines to Hawaii.

The GAO concluded that even these estimates were "not reliable."[14] A presentation given at a closed door "roundtable" by Bryan H. Wood, Director of Plans, Policies and Operations of the Pacific Division of the U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters, supported the GAO's conclusion. Wood estimated that the total cost of DOD's "preferred laydown" for the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam and Hawaii would be $18.3B.[15] This would put the cost of moving 9,000 Marines from Okinawa at approximately $2M per Marine. Wood estimated that, of this amount, the U.S. would be responsible for $12B with the GOJ contributing $6.3B.

DOD's Vision for the Marianas: Poison in our Waters

The Marine's move to Guam is just one component of DOD's vision for the Mariana Islands. In addition to the "rebalancing" of Marine Corps forces to Guam,[16] DOD has announced two other proposals that impact Guam and the wider region: (1) the Mariana Islands Range Complex ("MIRC") / Mariana Islands Training and Testing ("MITT") and (2) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("CNMI") Joint Military Training Proposal.

The MIRC was the subject of an EIS that was finalized when DOD issued its Record of Decision in July 2010. DOD released its EIS for the MIRC in May 2010, literally months after it had published the 10,000 page EIS for the Marine realignment. The MIRC authorized the use of land, sea, and air for various military training exercises. The total geographical area of the MIRC is approximately 500,000 square nautical miles[17] making it, according to one DOD official, the largest training range within DOD. To provide some context, the geographical area covered by the MIRC is three (3) times larger than the state of California.

DOD recently published an EIS for the MITT, which seeks to nearly *double* the area of the MIRC. Under the MITT, DOD would be authorized to conduct training and military exercises from the Mariana Islands as far west as Palau. The total area to be covered under this training complex would be 984,000 square nautical miles.[18] To provide context, this range will be larger than the states of Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Montana and New Mexico combined.

The second proposal announced by DOD this year is to establish unit and combined level training in the CNMI. As part of obtaining commonwealth status, the CNMI leased two-

thirds of the island of Tinian and the entire island of Farallon de Medinilla to DOD for military training. The CNMI Joint Military Training Proposal would expand DOD operations in the CNMI by introducing unit level training on DOD leased lands on Tinian.[19] Under this proposal, DOD would also turn the entire island of Pagan into a combined level training range with supporting facilities. This plan would permanently displace the indigenous people of Pagan, who have been waiting for decades to be cleared by their local government to return home.[20]

While those following these studies closely have treated each proposal independently, presentations made at a closed-door "roundtable" meeting hosted by military lobbyists on Guam gave a glimpse of DOD's long-term objectives in the region. The Guam United States Asia Security Alliances or GUASA (the Chamorro word for sharpening a spear or fishing by use of poison) formed in 2012 to lobby Congress for military contracts on Guam and in the CNMI. In September 2013, GUASA invited several defense experts to Guam to discuss the continued militarization of the region and, specifically, expanding the role of Guam and the Marianas.

Amphibious assault training exercises were a major topic of discussion. One presenter pointed out that, in light of the threat of conflict surrounding the South China Sea and the Senkaku (Diaoyutai) Islands, the Marine Corps was now the "force of choice" because of its amphibious capabilities. The plans for the Mariana Islands, and in particular the plans to take control over Pagan, would center on the ability to conduct joint military amphibious assault training exercises with countries allied with the U.S. such as Japan. A GUASA member confirmed this position when he publicly stated that DOD control over Pagan was the "key linchpin" for the proposed military buildup.[21] To assist in these training exercises, one defense expert explained that DOD is planning to deploy Joint High Speed Vehicles to Guam as well as Australia, Hawaii and Japan. The threat of conflicts over island areas has also been used to push for the deployment of Osprey to Okinawa as well as Guam. This line of thought is at odds with statements made by former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, who pointed out that "advances in anti-ship systems keep pushing the potential launch point from shore."[22] "On a more basic level," Gates asked, "in the 21st century, what kind of amphibious capabilities do we really need to deal with the most likely scenarios and then how much?"

Logic notwithstanding, the overarching goal of the GUASA conference appears to be the preparation of a "white paper" justifying an increase in military presence on Guam and the region. Ultimately, this "white paper" will be used to lobby Congress to release funds for military construction projects on Guam and / or to ease the conditions currently kept in place by the U.S. Senate. GUASA is hopeful that the return on investment for this "white paper" will be greater than the hundreds of thousands of dollars they have paid to Washington D.C. lobbyists.

Conclusion

On a visit to Makua Valley in Hawai'i, Kyle Kajihiro told me the legend of a villainous shape shifter who would change shape from man to shark in order to lure his prey. "Shape-shifting U.S. militarism maneuvers to keep its opponents and victims guessing, to occupy our attention in one direction while executing a different tactic in another part of the world."[23] Shape-shifting also serves another, more pragmatic purpose: finding a way to justify the huge sums of money given to the DOD each year for construction and weapons development. The Guam realignment is an example of how the number of Marines and dependents moving from Okinawa can be cut down by three-fourths, while the overall price tag increases. DOD will be bird, frog, shark –

whatever it takes to secure defense appropriations.

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Notes

[1] A more detailed analysis of the EIS process on Guam can be found in Daniel Broudy, Peter Simpson, and Makoto Arakaki, eds. "Under Occupation: Resistance and Struggle in a Militarized Asia-Pacific"

[2] According to the Pentagon's 2013 "Base Structure Report, Andersen Air Force Base has a "replacement value" of $5.49 billion; Naval Base Guam has a replacement value of $4.99 billion.

[3] All documents related to the Guam buildup EIS can be found here. (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[4] "Bice Blitz Ahead of ROD Release" found here (last visited Oct. 27, 2013).

[5] According to the GAO, the U.S. is holding $833.9 million of GOJ funds.

[6] Guam Preservation Trust v. Gregory, CV10-00677LEK-RLP (Dist. Haw. 2010).

[7] "Senators Levin, McCain, Webb call for re-examination of military basing plans in East Asia" (last visited Oct. 27, 2013).

[8] "Senate panel blocks funding for major military projects in Pacific" found out (last visited Oct. 27, 2013).

[9] Section 2832 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Pub. L. No. 112-239 (2013).

[10] Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee (April 26, 2012) found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[11] United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation (May 1, 2006), found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[12] According to a cable published by Wikileaks, the U.S. requested that any agreements for the Guam realignment "delete reference to the approximately one billion dollar military road

on Guam. This road was included during the April 2006 negotiations on cost-sharing as a way to increase the overall cost estimate (i.e., the denominator) and thereby reduce the share of total costs borne by Japan." Found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[13] Joint Statement (April 26, 2012).

[14] More Reliable Cost Estimates and Further Planning Needed to Inform the Marine Corps Realignment Initiatives in the Pacific (June 11, 2013), found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[15] A copy of Wood's presentation can be found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[16] DOD officials no longer speak about an "Asia pivot", instead alluding to the rebalancing of forces in the Pacific. Perhaps this is an attempt to redirect attention from the initial purpose of "reducing the burden on the Okinawan people" to more recent talk of forces being "geographically distributed, operationally resilient and politically sustainable."

[17] MIRC Environmental Impact Statement, p. ES-2 (stating that the MIRC would encompass 501,873 square nautical miles). The MIRC EIS can be found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[18] MITT EIS, Vol. 1, p. 1-2. The MITT and supporting documents can be found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[19] Documents related to the CNMI Joint Military Training EIS can be found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[20] For more information about Pagan and the efforts to stop the proposed firing range complex visit this website (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[21] Former D.C. Lobbyist Juan Carlos Benitez calls Pagan "Key Linchpin" to Entire Buildup found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).

[22] Speech delivered on May 3, 2010 can be found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2010).

[23] "Shape Shifter: The Many Faces of U.S. Militarism" found here (last visited Oct. 28, 2013).