Making Connections

Building an East Asia-U.S. Women's Network against U.S. Militarism

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Published in *The Women and War Reader*, edited by Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin, 308-322. New York: New York University Press. 1998.

This chapter was written in 1997, following what was to be the Network's founding meeting in Okinawa (Japan). Since then women from Puerto Rico and Hawai'i have participated in the Network which holds its sixth international meeting on these issues in 2007.

In May 1997, some forty women activists and researchers from mainland Japan, Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, and the U.S. gathered ion Okinawa to talk and strategize about the effects of U.S. military bases in each of these countries, especially on women and children, and on the environment. This four-day meeting was a new step in the ongoing process of building international links among women around such issues. It owed much to prior connection and networks. In July 1988. For example, a women's conference in Okinawa also brought together women from the same countries, with a focus on the "the sale of women's sexual labor outside U.S. military bases in the region" (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, 1992: vii). In 1989, the National Disarmament Program of the American Friends Service Committee organized a speaking tour in the United States entitled "Voices of Hope and Anger: Women Speak Out for Sovereignty and Self-Determination," with speakers from many countries that house U.S. military bases. Some of the participants at the recent meeting were involved in the 1993 United Nations Tribunal on Human Rights in Vienna, or the NGO Forum of the Fourth U.N. Conference on Women in Hairou, China, in 1995. Some had worked together locally or regionally, but this whole group had never come together before. The inspiration for this meeting came from our hearing women from Korea, Okinawa, and the Philippines talking to North American audiences about the terrible effects of U.S. military bases in their countries, and our wanting to create a forum where they could also talk to each other as

well as to women from the United States. Carolyn Francis, Suzuyo Takazato, and other members of Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence were also involved in the core planning group. In this chapter we outline the main issues and perspectives that participants brought to the meeting in Okinawa, and we also discuss the importance and the challenge of building anti-militarist alliances of women across boundaries of culture, class, race, age, and nation.

U.S. BASES OVERSEAS: PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS

Participants shared the view that, at root, the purpose of U.S. military bases in Asia is to maintain the political, economic, and cultural dominance of the United States in the world and to support U.S. corporate investments in Asia. The host governments are also complicit in this process, though many local people see the presence of U.S. bases as an outrageous encroachment on their sovereignty and self-determination. The present of U.S. companies, U.S. popular culture and TV, fast-food outlets like Wendy's and McDonald's, have all eroded traditional local cultures. Young people in South Korea and Okinawa, for example, are wearing old U.S. military uniforms and paraphernalia; some young people are keen to go onto the bases to learn English and to hang out with young U.S. military personnel.

These understandings emerged during our four days of discussion as we reviewed the justifications that our government have given us for maintaining high levels of U.S. military spending and the complex network of U.S. bases, troops, ships, submarines, and aircraft around the world. During the Cold War, one justification for U.S. military policy and intervention was to stop the spread of communism, and specifically to "contain" the Soviet Union. In the Asia-Pacific region, dozens of U.S. bases in Okinawa, mainland Japan, and the Philippines were used as forward bases during the Korean and Vietnam wars. U.S. troops lived there, training and resting while they waited to be sent into combat. The bases were refueling and repair depots for warships and planes. Military personnel were also 'refueled" by local women and girls, through officially sanctioned "Rest and Recreation" in the many bars, clubs, and massage parlors just outside the bases.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dramatic changes in the political economy of the former Soviet Union, the Pentagon has sought to relegitimize the military in the eyes of U.S. taxpayers and politicians by mobilizing public opinion in support of the Persian Gulf War, and by emphasizing a new international "policing" role for the military. In the latest review, a 1997 Pentagon report reiterated the view that the world is still a dangerous place. Its continued objective is to be able to fight and win two regional wars at the same time. For planning purposes these are assumed to be in the Middle East and Korea. This scenario justified the need for ongoing war games and maneuvers at U.S. bases around the world, on ships at sea, and across large tracts of land belonging to local people. It assumes that 100,000 U.S. troops will continue to be based in East Asia, and that the military budget will remain steady at around \$250 billions per year (*Japan Times*, May 14, 1997: 6).

In the mid-1990s a steady trickle of new reports of "war-mongering" attitudes and "uncompromising" or "belligerent" postures on the part of North Korea, China, and even Taiwan have appeared in the U.S. media, serving to keep alive the notion that there are serious military threats to U.S. interests in Asia. Other reasons for the continued justification of overseas bases are rooted in U.S. colonial history, where military interventions led to the appropriation of land and property and the opening up of new markets for U.S. goods. Racist contempt for "uncivilized savages" reinforced attitudes of U.S. superiority. Currently, the United States is number one in the world in terms of military bases, military technology, he training of foreign forces, and military aid to foreign countries. Many people in the United States believe that American is simply Number One and entitled to intervene in other countries' affairs if this is in "American interests."

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF U.S. MILITARY BASES, BUDGETS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES

Participants at the Okinawa meeting worked in small groups on four related themes: women and children, the environment, legal agreements between the U.S. and host countries, and base conversion, with economic development that will benefit local people, especially women. We had much more information concerning women and

children compared to the other issues, as this has been the focus of much women's organizing to date.

Women and Children

Participants shared the view that violence against women is an integral part of U.S. military attitudes, training, and culture. It is not random, but systemic, and cannot simply be attributed to "a few bad apples" as the military authorities often try to do. We noted the many reports of rape, assault, and sexual harassment within the U.S. military that have come to light over the past few years. We also noted that U.S. military families experience higher rates of domestic violence compared to nonmilitary families. But the main emphasis of our discussion concerned crimes of violence committed by U.S. military personnel against civilians in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, especially violence against women, and the institutionalization of military prostitution.

Crimes of Violence

Women from all countries represented, including the United States, reported crimes of violence committed by U.S. military personnel against local women. Okinawan women emphasized violent attacks of women and girls by U.S. military personnel, especially the marines who are in Okinawa in large numbers. In May 1995, for example, a 24-year old Okinawan woman was beaten to death by a G.I. with a hammer in the doorway of her house. On their return from Beijing Conference in September 1995, Okinawan women immediately organized around the rape of a twelve-year old girl, which had occurred while they were away. This revitalized opposition to the U.S. military presence in Okinawa and drew worldwide attention to violence against women on the part of U.S. military personnel. The National Coalition for the Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea, which comprises human rights activists, religious groups, feminists, and labor activists, was galvanized into action by a particularly brutal rape and murder of a bar woman, Yoon Kum E, in 1992. Korean participants commented that pimps and G.I.s try to intimidate the women against speaking out; women are also afraid of public humiliation. Drawing public attention to such crimes is embarrassing to the U.S. military. They are usually denied and covered up.

Militarized Prostitution

The governments of the three host countries have all made explicit arrangements with the U.S. military concerning R and R (or I and I—intoxication and intercourses—as it is sometimes called), including arrangements for regular health checkups for women who service the men, assuming that they are the cause of sexually transmitted diseases. At the height of U.S. activity in the Philippines, as many as 60,000 women and children were estimated to have worked in bars, nightclubs, and massage parlors servicing U.S. troops. Participants noted many similarities concerning militarized prostitution in Asia, especially during the Vietnam War. U.S. military personnel returning from battle were angry, fearful, and frustrated, and took it out on Okinawan and Filipino women. In Okinawa there are many stories of women being beaten, choked, and killed. Many survived, are now in their fifties and sixties, but their scars remain. Currently it is Filipinas who work in the clubs around U.S. bases in Okinawa, because the strength of the Japanese economy has given Okinawan women other opportunities and reduced the buying power of G.I.'s dollars. Military prostitution serves the interests of patriarchal politics. It divides so-called "good" from "bad" women; moreover separate bars for white G.I.s and African Americans also divide bar women into two categories. This work is highly stigmatized, and marrying a foreigner is thought by many bar women to the only way out. Militarized prostitution has had very serious effects on women's health, including HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, drug and alcohol dependency, malnutrition, respiratory diseases, and psychological problems related to the trauma and violence of this work.

In the Philippines, WEDPRO, BUKLOD, GABRIELA, and the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (Asia-Pacific) are tackling this very difficult issue in several ways through public education and advocacy, and political activism: providing support to women and Amerasian children through counseling, day care, legal and medical services, and referrals to other agencies; and training women in business skills, especially to set up microenterprises, get access to loans, and help establish women's co-ops. The Philippines constitution enshrines the ideals of a peaceful, just, and humane society; a self-reliant national economy; social justice in all phases of national development; respect for the

rights of people and organizations at all levels of decision-making; and the protection of people's rights to a balanced and healthful ecology. It is now nearly seven years since the U.S. military withdrew from the Philippines, but there have been no government programs to address the needs of women and children. Women who worked in the bars were faced with how to survive. Some went to South Korea or Guam to service G.I.s, others moved to Filipino bars and clubs, and still others tried to make a go of small businesses. Many are still working in the bars around Olongapo City and Angeles servicing G.I.s on shore leave as well as tourists, mainly from Australia and Europe. In March 1996 some 2,500 to 3,000 G.I.s took shore leave in the Philippines, creating such a high demand that the mayors of Angeles and Olongapo quickly got together to work on the problem of getting more women.

In Korea, military prostitution has deep roots in Japanese imperialism, and continues under the U.S. military. Prostituted women in G. I. towns (*kijichon*) outside the bases work in deplorable conditions and earn roughly \$170 per month. They are allowed one rest day per month; if they take an additional rest day they are fined half a month's wages. Among the older women who draw in customers to bars and clubs are "comfort women" who survived the Japanese military. Two Korean NGOs, Du Rae Bang and Sae Woom Tuh, work with bar women and women who date U.S. military personnel. They focus on counseling, education, and providing shelter and alternative employment. A bakery at Du Rae Bang has been running for nine years and has led the way for some bar women to learn new skills and become self-reliant. Similarly, Sae Woom Tuh women have started a herb-growing project. Both these organizations seek to empower bar women to make demands of the Korean and U.S. governments concerning their situation, and to educate the wider society on this issue.

Korean participants also reported that in the past few years G.I. towns have undergone changes, becoming international prostitution zones for foreign men, with foreign women workers coming to Korea from the Philippines, China, Taiwan, and Russia, some of them illegally. They noted links between militarized prostitution and sex tourism; many problems are similar to those in the Philippines and there is much to learn from that experience. Korean participants emphasized the exploitation and violence of *kijichon* women and also included powerful stories of their strength. There are examples

of women clubbing together to buy each other out of the bar, for example. In the case of Yoon Kum E, another bar woman who knew the murderer waited outside the base for him and forced military police to arrest him. He still had blood on his white pants.

Amerasian Children

Amerasian children are a particularly stigmatized group in all three Asian countries represented. They suffer great discrimination due to their physical appearance and the stigma of their mothers' work. Those with African America fathers face worse treatment than those with white fathers. Most Amerasians grow up poor, with no regular income in their families. They are discriminated against in employment due to stigma, a lack of training and education, and the absence of credit and other supports for poor families. The average age of Amerasians in the Philippines is twelve years. Two-thirds are raised by single mothers; others by relatives and nonrelatives; 6 percent live on their own or in institutions. Ninety percent are born to single mothers. A lawsuit filed in the United States in 1993 on behalf of Amerasian children in the Philippines was not considered in any serious way. Six basic needs identified by Amerasians in the Philippines are education, employment, housing, livelihood, skills, and U.S. citizenship, the latter so they are able to find their fathers.

Similarly, in Korea Amerasians are though of as "half persons" who can only half-belong to Korean or U.S. society. Most older Amerasian people have menial jobs; some are stateless persons who have never been officially registered and, as a result, could not attend Korean Schools. There is no government support for Amerasian children from either the Korean or U.S. governments The1982 Amerasian Immigration Act, passed mainly with Vietnamese Amerasian children in mind, is of little help to many Amerasians in Korea, Japan, or the Philippines due to its stringent conditions. It applies only to people born between 1951 and 1982; applicants need documentation that their father is a U.S. citizen, as well as a financial sponsor in the United States. In each country, limited support to Amerasian children is provided by local NGOs and the U.S.-based Pearl Buck Foundation. In Korea, Du Rae Bang and Sae Woom Tuh have educational programs for Amerasian children and seek to educate Korean society about their situation. The women of Sae Woom Tuh demanded that every Amerasian be given

U.S. citizenship and educational opportunities, with visas for their mothers. The Korean government should also provide education, job training, basic livelihood, and medical care.

Environmental Hazards

Militaries case more pollution than any other institution. Participants from all countries represented talked about the environmental contamination of base land, ground water, and the ocean as a result of military activities, and the possible effects of toxic pollution on communities near the bases. The land has been used for weapons storage (including chemical and nuclear weapons in some cases), and the repair of ships and planes and military equipment. Major air force bases store large quantities of fuel, oil, solvents, and other chemicals. Some areas, like Iejima Island in Okinawa and small islands off the coast of Korea, have been used for live ammunition drills. In Korea and Okinawa, U.S. marines have fired depleted uranium shells. Participants from all countries represented knew stories of particular incidents of accidents or sickness affecting people living near U.S. military bases. In the Philippines, water from wells near Clark Air Force Base has left a golden yellow stain on plastic water buckets, suggesting contamination. There seems to be a high incidence of breast cancer and cervical cancer in women living near the former bases, and hearing problems and other health conditions in children. In 1996 an interim report on babies born to women living near Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa showed that these babies have significantly lower birth weights than those in other parts of Okinawa, which local people attribute to the severe noise generated by the base.

In general, little information about the environmental effects of military operations is available to local people, thought there are active environmental groups in all our countries, some of whom are working on the need for the cleanup of contamination caused by U.S. military operations. If the experience of bases in the United States is any guide, military records of contaminants, if available, may not be complete. The Korean government, for example, denies reports of environmental contamination caused by U.S. military activities because it fears this will fuel anti-bases sentiment in the country. In any case, under the Status of Forces Agreement, the Korean government

cannot release information about environmental contamination without agreement of the U.S military. The Philippines government is also unwilling to pursue this matter for fear that it will deter prospective investors in baseland redevelopment. The Japanese government, similarly, does not release information about contamination of U.S. bases in Japan. There is a great deal of research to be done on this issue in all our countries. This may start with anecdotal information, noting patterns gathered by local people who have worked on the bases or who live nearby, followed by more formal research. It is notoriously difficult to pinpoint environmental causes because of the difficulty of controlling for all variables. It is also a slow process. The U.S. government has finally accepted responsibility for some cancers in military personnel who were exposed to radiation during atomic tests in the Pacific in the 1950s, and in residents of St. George, Utah, who live "downwind" of the Nevada Test Site. In the United States, contamination attributable to military programs also includes the contamination of land and water around military bases, nuclear power plants, nuclear weapons plants, uranium mines, and radioactive waste dumps. In base conversion in the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, it has been determined that human beings cannot live on the former bases for at least twenty years, and that fish caught locally should not be eaten.

Current negotiations between the U.S. military and Japan over bases in Okinawa could also have a serious environmental impact. Okinawans are demanding the return of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station, which takes up acres of land in Ginowan City. In return, the U.S. military is insisting that a new floating heliport should be built off the coast, with clear implications for the ocean environment. Other proposals for military use of areas in the north of Okinawa would destroy fertile agricultural land and likely affect the island's main water supply reservoirs.

Limited Legal Protection

Provisions governing the use of land for overseas bases, and details of required conduct for U.S. military personnel are found in the Japanese Status of Forces Agreement, the Korean Status of Forces Agreement, and the Philippines Access and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). These provisions vary considerably from one host country to another. We noted that this was probably a historic moment, where women looked at

these agreements from a gender perspective for the first time. Comparing the different Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), one of the working groups at the Okinawa meeting found that the German SOFA is some three hundred pages long (in English translation) including provisions for the protection of Amerasian children and environmental cleanup that hold the U.S. military accountable to standards set down in German environmental law. The SOFAs for Japan and Korea are some fifty pages long (English translation), with no provisions for environmental cleanup. This may be because Japan and Korea have not developed sufficiently detailed environmental-law standards, because these governments did not push for such provisions, or because the United States ignored their concerns. Japanese participants commented that Japanese law is inadequate for the protection of either women or the environment. In Korea, the U.S. military can use land for bases forever, for no payment, Land belonging to private landowners was simply confiscated, so there are no Korea anti-war landowners as there are in Okinawa. Clearly, the various host governments are in relatively different power positions in relation to the United States, though none of them come to negotiations as equal partners. The Philippines ACSA is written on one page.

One are of concern for participants is what happens to U.S. servicemen who commit crimes against local people. The National Campaign for the Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea cites a Korean Congress report that estimates 39,542 crimes committed against Korean civilians by U.S. military personnel between 1967 and 1987. These include murders, brutal rapes and sexual abuse, arson, theft, smuggling, fraud, traffic offenses, and an outflow of PX merchandise and a black market in U.S. goods. The Japanese and Korean SOFAs protect such military personnel from Korean or Japanese law. In many cases, if they are disciplined, it is by U.S. military authorities. Often they are simply moved to another posting, perhaps back to the United States. Thus, military personnel who have injured or, in some cases, killed local people through negligent driving, for example, are usually not brought to trial in local courts. This situation incenses local people who see it as a daily manifestation of U.S. insensitivity and high-handedness. In both Japan and Korea there are current pressures for changes in the SOFAs to give more protection to local people. The case of the twelve-year old girl who was raped in Okinawa was unusual in that the U.S. authorities handed over the three

military personnel responsible (two Marines and a sailor) to Japanese civilian authorities in view of the enormous popular outcry this incident generate in Okinawa and internationally. The young men stood trial in a Japanese court, were found guilty, and are serving seven-year sentence in the Japanese prison system.

BASE CONVERSION

The Philippines experience of base conversion provided important data for women from Korea and Japan, perhaps especially those from Okinawa, where a strong anti-bases campaign is pushing the issue of the future use of land currently occupied by U.S. bass. Participants from the Philippines emphasized that the overall economic, social, and cultural impact of the bases has been to strengthen neo-colonial relations. In the Philippines, Korea, and Okinawa, U.S. goods from PX stores, military surplus, or U.S. military families are in high demand by local people. Korean participants reported that this is a serious problem in Korea. There s an outflow of PX goods from U.S. bases and a black market in U.S. goods. Under the SOFAs, U.S. military personnel in Korea do not pay customs duty for imports and can sell U.S. goods to local people at a big profit. This reinforces the view that the best goods and services come from the United States. Dutyfree stores in the former base lands in the Philippines sell U.S. goods, continuing the "PX" culture." Canned goods from Del Monte and Hormel, for example, are available there, undercutting local grocery stores and tying people into the export economy. More food could be grown locally, but in the interests of earning hard currency, much of the best land in the Philippines is not used for local food production but to grow cash crops or for industrial development.

Subic Bay Navy base and Clark Air Base were very large (Subic Bay took up some 70,000 acres), and their closure presented a major opportunity for new development, especially in a country like the Philippines where 70 percent of the people live below the poverty line. Several plans that would benefit local people were put forward, including recommendations by WEDPRO. But the government preferred to attract foreign investment from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the United States, and Europe, using local people as cheap labor. Both bases now have duty-free shops, new hotels, private casinos, and golf courses. Their very large airfields are international airports,

bringing tourists and businessmen directly to the development areas. Some military buildings have been freshly painted and converted into hotels. Others provide housing for the Philippines air force, or industrial space for factories making electronic products and hospital supplies. Federal Express now uses Subic Bay as its Asia hub. This kind of development was justified on the argument that is would create jobs. So far most jobs are part-time or temporary, and low paid, sometimes below the minimum wage of 143 pesos per day. As mayor of Olongapo City, Richard Gordon initiated a project called "People Power" (appropriating the slogan of the 1980s pro-democracy movement), where people volunteer to work on the base for a year, clearing trash or planting and weeding flower beds. There is not guarantee that they will get paid employment after doing this free work, though this is implied. As mentioned above, there has been no government help for the many women who used to work in bars and clubs near the bases, or for their Amerasian children.

Women from Okinawa talked of their concerns about future redevelopment of the bases, especially with the Philippines experience in mind. Given the political situation in Korea, this discussion is not yet on the horizon there. In the United States, the process of base conversion has generally involved more consultation with citizen groups than has happened in the Philippines, and the authorities have taken responsibility for toxic cleanup, though it is debatable whether sufficient funds have been devoted to this. But base conversion in the United States is another form of privatization, as formerly public land passes to private investors. Participants suggested compiling a women's budget, comparing current military spending with socially useful expenditures, and a women's SOFA.

BUILDING INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES AMONG WOMEN

During the meeting, both in formal sessions and in informal conversations, we talked about the importance of acknowledging the complex inequalities among participants, and the relationships of dominance and oppression that exists among our countries. This includes the dominant position of the United States, economically, politically, and culturally in many Asian countries, and specifically the colonization of the Philippines. At the same time, there are many people in the United States who are also hurt by U.S.

military policies, and much current military recruitment can be seen in terms of a "poverty draft." Then here is the imperial history of Japan, which sought to control eastern Asia from the central Pacific to India. Japan colonized Okinawa in 1865, Korea in 1910, and the Philippines from 1942 to 1945. Koreans were profoundly affected by thirty-five years of Japanese colonization. Korean names, language, newspapers, and political parties were all banned by the Japanese. There was discrimination in education and employment, and raw materials and agricultural produce were extracted for use in Japan. Many thousands of Koreans were forcibly drafted to work in the Japanese war effort—men in factories and mines, women to sexually service the Japanese Imperial Army. Filipinas, too, were forced to be "comfort women."

Now Korea's staggering postwar economic growth means that Korean companies are in the Philippines alongside companies from Japan, Taiwan, and the United States, making money out of a much poorer country. For Okinawans there is a clear distinction between Okinawa and mainland Japan and a long-standing resentment of Japan's colonization of Okinawa. Okinawa was used as a shield in World War II, protecting mainland Japan from direct U.S. invasion. Okinawan participants commented that some of the Okinawans who lost their lives in the battle of Okinawa were killed by Japanese. Korean participants visiting Japan for the first time were surprised to learn of the similarities between the annexation of Korean and Okinawa. They had initially lumped Okinawans together with other Japanese because they had not known this history.

Such differences are reflected in participants' knowledge and perspectives. They are also reflected in something as mundane as needing a visa to attend the meeting. Those of s with European or U.S. passports did not need a visa to enter Japan. The Korean women had to fill in lengthy forms and attend an interview at the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Those with Philippine passports had to queue for hours at the Japanese embassy in Manila which is only open from 2 until 4P.M., four days a week. They had to show a return ticket and an invitation letter from a Japanese organization. They had to explain their circumstances and answer any questions put to them by embassy staff; if successful, they had to return three working days later to collect the visa in person. Another difference is the buying power of our various currencies. Dollars go along way in the Philippines; but in Japan many everyday things are very expensive for Americans. For

Filipinas, who had to change pesos into hard currency, Japanese prices are astronomical. A third difference concerns the risks we take in speaking out on these issues. For example, it is officially illegal for Koreans to publicly oppose U.S. military policy in South Korea. They risk being labeled communist or unpatriotic, a serious charge in a context where many social activists have served jail sentences for opposing the government. Other participants are not constrained in the same way.

These histories and inequalities may make it difficult for women to sit down together, to really hear what each is saying, or to trust that women with relative privilege will be their allies. We tried to acknowledge these difference and inequalities and to frame issues and questions so as to be able to make connections. An example is the connection between U.S. domestic and foreign policy. These are often treated separately, but the military budget is a helpful way to link them. Not only does military spending harm women overseas, it also harms poor women and children in the United States. In addition, we needed to know something of one another's personal and national history, the economic and political conditions that obtain in our respective countries, and the constraints we experience as activists. Throughout the meeting the group emphasized the importance of listening carefully to our various perspectives and opinions. This is no small task under any circumstances. Here it required careful translation into four languages (English, Japanese, Korean, and Tagalog), and we needed translators who not only knew the technicalities of language but also something of the conceptual vocabulary and context assumed by different speakers. Many of the participants spoke Japanese and a number spoke English, with the result that these (imperial) languages were often dominant. This process is slow and sometimes cumbersome, requiring patience and concentration as well as skilled translators.

The purposes of this network are to learn from one another; to deepen our understandings of our own situations and how these common issues place out in other places; to strategize together; and to work out practical ways we can help one another. The meeting generated a range of strategies including education and information sharing, research, media campaigns in each country, support for community-based organizations and coalition building, lobbying and networking at local, national, regional, and international levels, and direct action. The local and regional organizations represented

will work on these issues according to their own needs and circumstances. The following suggestions and plans for future projects emerged from our discussion:

- We should all distribute the final statement (see below) as widely as possible to government officials, NGOs, and members of the public.
- The four working groups should continue to work together and share information through the mail, e-mail, Websites, and personal visits.
- An new young people's group in Okinawa called DOVE (Deactivating Our Violent Establishments) will hold a day conference in June 1997 for young people to discuss these issues.
- Women from the Philippines would like to go to Korea to find out more about Filipinas working in G.I. towns.
- Women in the United States undertook to try to initiate research into what
 happens to Korean women and Filipinas who marry G.I.s, where they live, and
 what their lives are like. So far there is only anecdotal evident that many end up in
 bars, clubs, and massage parlors in the United States.
- We should continue to analyze and compare the different Status of Forces
 Agreements and other legal agreements between host governments and the United States.
- We should compile information concerning environmental hazards, find out what evidence to look for, and how to go about this.
- We should meet again, hopefully in 1998 in Washington, D.C. to liaise with relevant U.S. organizations, and to lobby members of Congress and their aides.

SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout the meeting the question of what constitutes true security kept coming up. In Japan, for example, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty officially defies security. But this treaty in no way protected the twelve-year-old Okinawan girl who was raped, or others who have been harmed and abused by U.S. military personnel. Women's lack of security is directly linked to this Security Treaty. Participants agreed that the U.S. military presence does not protect local people but endangers them, and that we need to redefine

security for our communities. We do not need 100,000 U.S. troops in Asia. Implicit throughout our discussion is the realization that true security requires respect for land, air, water, and the oceans, and a very different economy with an emphasis on ecological and economic sustainability, not the pursuit of profit. The increasing globalization of the economy will create a world market where many countries cannot control their own resources or provide for their people. We recognized that environmental concerns and economic development are often currently in conflict. Thinking I terms of sustainability removes such conflicts.

Our vision is for a sustainable, life-affirming future focusing on small-scale projects, local autonomy, and self-determination, with an emphasis on community landuse systems rather than private property. It includes the creation of true local democracies, the empowerment of local people, and the inclusion of women and children in decision-making. It will involve base conversion as well as nonmilitary approaches to resolving conflicts. It means promoting the value of socially responsible work, and the elimination of weapons-making industries. We agreed that we need a deeper understanding of demilitarization that goes beyond bases, land, and weapons, to include cultures, consciousness, and national identities. Given that masculinity in many countries, including the United States, is defined in military terms, it will also involve a redefinition of masculinity, strength, power, and adventure. It will involve more harmonious ways of living among people, and between people and the nonhuman world that sustains us. It will need appropriate learning and education, cultural activities, and values moving away from consumerism to sustainable living, where people can discover what it means to be more truly human.

FINAL STATEMENT

WOMEN AND CHILDREN, MILITARISM, AD HUMAN RIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WORKING CONFERENCE NAHA CITY, OKINAWA MAY 1-4, 1997

We are a group of women activists, policy-makers, and scholars from Okinawa, mainland Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and the U.S. who share a deep concern for the impact of the U.S. military presence on women and children in all our communities.

For four days we have exchanged information and strategized together about the situation of victims of violence committed by U.S. military personnel against civilians, especially women and children. We have shared information about the plight of Amerasian children who are abandoned by their G.I. fathers, and the effects of U.S. military bases on the social environment, in particular on women who are absorbed into the dehumanizing and exploitive system of prostitution around U.S. bases. We have considered the current status of the various official agreements governing U.S. bases and military personnel; also the effects of high rates of military spending on women and children in the U.S. We see militarism as a system of structural violence which turns its members into war machines and creates victims among women and children in our local communities. Underlying our discussion this week is the clear conviction that the U.S. military presence is a threat to our security, not a protection. We recognize that the governments of Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines are also complicit in this.

This is the first time that women have sat down together to discuss these issues, which are usually marginalized in discussion concerning U.S. military operations. As a result of our work this week, we see the many striking similarities in out various situations more clearly than ever before. As women activists, policy-makers, advocates, and scholars, we have strengthened our commitment to work together toward a world with rue security based on justice, respect for each other across national boundaries, and economic planning based on local people's needs, especially the needs of women and children. We will continue to support women and children affected by U.S. militarism in

all our countries, and to create alternative economic systems based on local people's needs. We will establish new guidelines to prevent military violence against women that are quite separate from existing official agreements.

In addition we demand the following:

- that the Status of Forces Agreements between the United Sates and the
 governments of Japan and South Korea be significantly revised to protect the
 human rights of women and children, and to include firm environmental
 guidelines for the clean-up of toxic contamination to restore our land and water
 and to protect the health of our communities;
- that the U.S. government cease circumventing constitutional provisions and national laws in imposing their continued military access of presence;
- that our governments pursue sincere efforts to support the democratization and reunification of Korea
- that our governments take full responsibility for violence against women perpetrated by U.S. military personnel;
- that all military "R and R," which has meant widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of local women and children, be banned;
- that all military personnel receive training aimed at preventing the sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse of women and children who live and work around bases;
- that out governments provide substantial funding for the health care, education, training, and se-reliance of women who service GIs, and their children, including Amerasian children;
- that the U.S. government and the governments of Japan, South Korea, and the
 Philippines take full financial responsibility for Amerasian children, and that the
 U.S. government introduce immigration law that provides for all Amerasians in
 these three countries;
- that all U.S. bases, weapons, and military personnel be removed from Japan and South Korea:
- that our governments take full financial responsibility for environmental clean-up of U.S. military bases in a way that meets local people's needs;

- that out governments and public agencies recognize the central importance of women's issues in all base conversion projects and include women in al levels of base-conversion decision-making;
- the money currently spent on the U.S. military by taxpayers in the U.S., Japan, and Korea be devoted to socially useful programs that benefit women and children;
- that the lands currently in U.S. military use be developed to benefit local people rather than investors and transnational corporations as has happened at the former Subic Bay Naval base and Clark Air Base in the Philippines;
- that local, national, and international media investigate and report the issues and concerns referred to here, and educate people on the effects of the U.S. military presence in our countries.

We have committed ourselves to establishing an international network to hold our governments accountable on these issues, and to build a broad base of support to create a secure and sustainable word for future generations.

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