

Stop the Jeju Naval Base Construction:
An Urgent Call for Global Support to Restore Justice in South Korea
and Preserve Peace in East Asia

Despite sustained protests by local citizens and increasing international criticism, the South Korean Government and its Navy have recently begun blasting parts of a treasured world-heritage site on Jeju Island in South Korea in order to proceed with the construction of a naval, a military project that also threatens peace in the wider East Asian region. The naval base construction has set off popular turmoil in response to its destructive blasting of the Gureombi coastline, located at a site of exceptional historical and geological significance in Jeju, which is recognized globally for its exquisite natural beauty and unique biodiversity. Each time an explosive blast detonates at Gureombi, the South Korean Government and Navy betray their fundamental responsibility of environmental stewardship with ruthlessness and dishonesty, which have infuriated Korean citizens, drawing further condemnation from concerned observers all over the world.

The South Korean Administration under President Lee Myung-Bak has acted unlawfully and illegitimately by proceeding with this naval base construction despite Gureombi's inclusion in the "Absolute Preservation Zone," an area strictly protected from development by South Korean legal regulations. The Lee Administration has attempted to justify the construction by ostensibly removing Gureombi from the Absolute Preservation Zone, but this exclusion occurred without due process and against the wishes of a majority of Jeju residents and other Korean citizens. The Lee Administration has also tried to garner support by claiming it would develop the area into an attractive military-civilian tourist port, but a technical assessment of the plans for the naval base exposed serious flaws in the design that gives the lie to the government's claims. Nevertheless, the Lee Administration continues to deny the existence of such design problems in a deliberate attempt to deceive the public and to

downplay the enormous damage it is inflicting on both the natural environment and the regional conditions for peace.

Many specialists on the relationship between South Korea and the U.S. are arguing that the U.S. has pressured South Korea to build the naval base to harbor Aegis destroyers. They say that when the Jeju naval base is constructed, the base will be used as a key part of U.S. defense strategies against China, which may be supported by the Japanese government. The U.S. overseas forces will use the Jeju naval base if the U.S. wants to make military operations in East Asia.

Where there are weapons, there are killing and war. If the military port is built on the peaceful island of Jeju and if bombs and missiles are installed, the military balance of East Asia will be inevitably disrupted, exacerbating existing tensions which threaten to flare up. Jeju Island would therefore become a dangerous powder keg, and if a war were ever to break out, the entire East Asian region would become embroiled in the crisis.

The shores and coastline at Gureombi comprise a celebrated ecological preservation zone and scenic tourist destination, where people from throughout East Asia and the world can together appreciate the extraordinary beauty of the natural environment. Although UNESCO designated Jeju Island in 2002 as a Biosphere Reserve, the island has a fragile ecology where flora and fauna still face the danger of extinction. The South Korean government also declared Jeju as a Natural Heritage Protection Zone, a measure authorized by the Cultural Heritage Administration. In October 2004, Jeju Island was designated as an Absolute Preservation Zone by the South Korean Government, which prohibited any development or other changes that would alter the landscape. Furthermore, the Gureombi seashore is critically important to the islanders because that area includes several Yongcheonsu springs. These springs provide a precious source of water essential to the livelihood of Jeju residents, who face an insufficient water supply due to the island's volcanic terrain.

Recognizing the urgent need to preserve the island's natural

environment, Jeju residents and people throughout Korea have been united in resisting the naval base, demanding that its construction be stopped immediately. These protesters have faced harsh suppression by the Lee Administration, which has mobilized special military forces to unleash outrageously violent assaults and attacks on the resisters. The South Korean government is therefore implicated in these brutal acts that represent grossly excessive police force and human-rights violations. In further abuses of power, members of the Lee Myung-Bak Administration have threatened criminal charges and administrative penalties against local Jeju officials who tried to defend the interests of island residents, while the South Korean government also pressured the Technical Assessment Committee to alter its projections so that falsified data would put the naval-base construction plans in a more favorable light.

The Korean people granted President Lee Myung-Bak only a 5-year period of governance, not the transcendental privilege to do anything he wishes, particularly when those actions will leave a legacy of irreversible environmental damage and military instability. The naval-base construction will not only irrevocably destroy the beautiful ecology of Jeju but also dangerously undermine the peace of East Asia.

Recognizing the many critical interests at stake -- the invaluable asset of Jeju Island's natural ecology and biodiversity; the importance of upholding the rule of law and the rights of Jeju residents and other Koreans; and the necessity to protect peace in East Asia and the world -- concerned citizens from all over the world urgently demand the following:

1. The Lee Myung-Bak Administration must immediately cease the illegitimate and illegal construction of the naval base in Jeju Island.

2. We call for South Korean Congressional and Special Prosecutor investigations to probe the serious accusations of fraud and human-rights violations that have been widely alleged against members of the Lee Myung-Bak Administration in connection with the naval-base

construction.

3. The Governor of Jeju Province, Woo Geunmin, must take all necessary administrative actions to impede the naval-base construction, such as the cancellation of permits that were unlawfully secured to proceed with the project.

4. The U.S. government and Army must acknowledge their involvement with the Jeju naval base construction and must immediately withdraw their military imperialism to endanger the peace of East Asia and the world.

5. The Japanese government must not collaborate in constructing the Jeju naval base, which threatens peace in its own country, and must abandon its imperialist orientation.

6. Conscientious citizens of Canada, Japan, Germany, the U.S. and other nations must actively mobilize their peace movements to demand the stoppage of the Jeju naval base construction, which threatens the peace of the world.

March, 2012

Concerned citizens committed to peace and the preservation of nature, including the undersigned individuals and organizations from South Korea, Japan, the U. S., Canada, Germany and elsewhere.

Signing period: from today to April 2nd

The email address of the Korean activists to collect international signatures : mingyo87@hanmail.net

number	name	nationality	occupation	email-address
1				
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