

RESISTING POLITICAL COLONIZATION AND AMERICAN MILITARIZATION IN THE MARIANAS ARCHIPELAGO

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Abstract

This article will explore the triangle of contemporary political colonization, increased American militarization, and the continued denial of Indigenous rights interlinked in the Marianas Archipelago. The 15-island chain is politically constructed as two separate insular areas of the United States: Guåhan (Guam), an unincorporated territory, and the remaining 14 islands are the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. Through its “Asia-Pacific pivot” foreign policy strategy, the US Department of Defense is expanding across the region, including the Marianas Archipelago. The environmental impact statement documents that describe the proposed military activities violate international and federal laws and neither invite nor require the consent of the Indigenous peoples. Chamoru (Chamorro) activists are utilizing social media sites to create solidarity across and beyond the archipelago. This article incorporates trending #hashtags used within the resistance campaigns.

Keywords

Marianas Archipelago, Indigenous resistance, political colonization, American militarization, Asia-Pacific pivot, social media sites

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Introduction

Located 5,800 miles from the continental United States and 7,900 miles from the Pentagon, the Marianas Archipelago is considered American “soil” but the inhabitants, who are American citizens, are denied full democracy (Office of Insular Affairs [OIA], 2015c). The US Department of Defense (DOD) uses the land of the Marianas Archipelago as military bases for all branches of the US armed forces, and the sea and air for weapons testing and as live-fire training ranges (LFTRs). The Indigenous everyday resistance to political colonization and American militarization through the promotion of Indigenous rights spans generations and includes social media platforms that foster solidarity across the archipelago and overseas.

The United States “Asia-Pacific pivot” foreign policy advances further militarization through the DOD and is achievable through the continued colonial status of the Marianas Archipelago. The fluid connection between political colonialism and American militarism is commonly referred to by Indigenous activists and scholars (Clement, 2011; Diaz, 2004) and provides a framework for the analysis of the everyday resistance. The multifaceted Indigenous struggle against both the US federal government and the DOD is grounded in the Indigenous framework of *Inafa' Maolek*, a Chamoru (Chamorro) concept meaning to “bring about balance” and to “make things good for each other” (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 847).

The resistance takes many forms and approaches; this article focuses on the connection between political colonization and American militarization, and incorporates social media resistance elements used by activists in the Marianas Archipelago. First, a brief historical overview of the colonial legacy of the Marianas Archipelago will provide a perspective on the colonial political status of the islands today. Second, an outline of the Asia-Pacific pivot foreign policy will highlight the

Marianas Archipelago's role and the DOD's sense of urgency about acquiring the archipelago for LFTRs. Lastly, the Indigenous rights frameworks of *Inafa' Maolek* as well as the *Infresi*, or the Chamoru Pledge, based on the defense and protection of the environment and culture, will be presented. Two specific digital examples of resistance will conclude this article to demonstrate the solidarity across the archipelago and how social media resistance can reach thousands overseas.

Contemporary colonization

#InsularArea

#UnincorporatedTerritory

#IslandPossession

#WeAreNotAmerican

The 15-island Marianas Archipelago arcs 180 miles north to south in the Western Pacific. It is politically constructed as two separate insular areas of the United States: *Guåhan* (Guam), the largest island, is an unincorporated territory and the remaining 14 islands are the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI).

The **#InsularArea** hashtag references the 1901 US Supreme Court “Insular Cases” decision that the residents of the territories the United States gained after the Spanish-American War were not “created equal” but were rather “alien races” who “may not be able to understand Anglo-Saxon principles” or laws (Warheit, 2010). Therefore, full constitutional rights do not extend to the peoples of the territories and “only selected parts of the United States Constitution will apply” (Warheit, 2010).

The **#UnincorporatedTerritory** and **#IslandPossession** hashtags represent the contentious relationship on the federal-territorial level between the Mariana Islands and the United States. Originally administered by the War Department's Bureau of Insular Affairs, the five insular areas of the United States are now under

the control of the OIA at the Department of the Interior (DOI) (Maga, 1985). The two hashtag phrases are a form of resistance, exposing the continuing colonial framing despite the federal government choosing to describe the relationship in more “polite” terms. The OIA (2015b) states that although “equivalent to territory, ‘possession’ is no longer current colloquial usage”. It prefers to distance itself from imperial rationality by using the term unincorporated “territory.” By using the term “possession,” the social media users are challenging the federal government to decolonize the occupation of the islands as structured through two insular areas of the United States.

The racist and outdated Insular Cases ruling is still used to justify the territorial status. On February 23, 2016, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas and Guåhan native Esther Kia'aina hosted a panel discussion in Washington, DC, entitled “Self-Determination in the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam” (OIA, 2016). The event was streamed live on the DOI website. It included tweets and comments from people watching live across time zones and territories and was shared across several digital platforms. It was the first panel of this kind to be held since 1993.

Maria Lurie, Attorney-Advisor, Office of the Solicitor, DOI, provided the contemporary federal perspective on self-determination on the panel. According to the US federal government, any land “under the sovereignty” of the United States comes in only two classifications: “either a state or not a state.” This means that, unlike the 50 states, the sovereignty of insular areas belongs to the US Congress. Solicitor Lurie reiterated that the colonial framework of the Supreme Court’s decision from 1901 is still “good law” since it has never been overturned, and that “the Supreme Court has recognized that the Congress is calling the shots . . . and we shouldn’t lose sight of that” (Sagapolutele, 2016). As Indigenous Chamoru scholar Keith L. Camacho (2011) explains further, the United States uses this “congressional plenary authority

or unilateral treaty rights for the purpose of waging war in the islands” (p. xi), including Guåhan and the CNMI.

Guåhan’s colonial relationship with the United States originated when Spain ceded Guåhan to the United States after the Spanish-American War. Prior to coming under the jurisdiction of the US Navy in 1898, Guåhan had been a supply stop for European galleons exploiting the Americas and Asia since the late 1500s, a Jesuit mission, and then a formal colony of Spain. While Guåhan remained under naval command in the early 1900s, the remaining islands in Micronesia endured the rule of various colonial powers, including Germany, the League of Nations, Japan, and the United States.

Today, the residents of Guåhan still do not vote for the US president. They are not represented by a US senator and they elect a non-voting delegate to the US Congress (Maga, 1984). The #WeAreNotAmerican hashtag speaks to the hypocrisy of situating the Marianas Archipelago as “American enough” for military base expansion and encouraging the residents to join the US armed forces (see Figure 1), while simultaneously preventing these same patriotic residents from earning full citizenship and democratic representation because they are not “American enough.” Nor do they have a say in the military planning of their islands. While the official slogan of the territory is “Guam, Where America’s Day Begins®” and it is referred to simply as “America” in Asia by the federal government and DOD, activists maintain that just because the American flag flies high and the license plates state “Guam, USA,” this does not make them “American.”

Guåhan is the “longest colonized possession in the world” (Borja-Kicho'cho' & Aguon Hernandez, 2012, p. 232) and is listed as one of the six remaining Pacific non-self-governing territories by the United Nations (UN) Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries



FIGURE 1 An image from the 71st Liberation Day Parade, held every July 21st to commemorate when American forces recaptured Guåhan from the Japanese Imperial Army, provides a visual example of continued militarization. The people of the Marianas serve in the US military at rates three times higher than any other state or territory, with at least one in eight currently serving or having served in the armed forces (Tuttle, 2014). As a result, Mariana Islands communities have high “loss of life” ratios and suffer “killed-in-action” rates up to five times the national average (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 857; Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010). In some villages, an entire generation has not returned from overseas deployments. Photo: Sylvia C. Frain, 2015.

and Peoples (UN General Assembly, 2015, p. 5). This lack of political status is a violation of the UN Charter of 1945. Chapter XI: Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, Article 73, states that the United States, as a member of the UN and the administering authority of Guåhan, a non-self-governing

territory, has a responsibility to ensure “self-determination” and must assist Guåhan “to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory

and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement” (UN, 1945, sec. b). In addition, the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 1960: Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples states, “All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (UN, 1960, no. 2). Through further militarization without their consent, truly representative democracy and Indigenous rights are continually denied and the United States violates “international law in the protection of non-self-governing territories” (Aguon, 2011; Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 840).

#CNMI #NMI

The islands to the north are politically arranged as another US insular area, the CNMI. This separation began in 1898 after the Spanish-American War, when Guåhan was put under the jurisdiction of the US Navy and the remaining 14 islands were sold to Germany (Rogers, 1995). After World War II, Guåhan remained under naval command while the UN organized the remaining islands in Micronesia, including the Northern Mariana Islands, into the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). This once again created colonial legal boundaries that prevented Chamorus from visiting relatives and family (Farrell, 1991). Today, the hashtags #NMI and #CNMI are digital markers of the continued political, economic, and social and cultural separation within the archipelago.

The CNMI did exercise self-determination to a limited extent in 1975 by entering into a covenant agreement with the US federal government. Many see it as only “limited” self-determination because the residents did not choose a political status but were given only a “yes” or “no” option on the ballot to either remain part of the TTPI, which the local politicians had been resisting for years, or gain closer political ties to the United States, including citizenship and the

right to travel, work, and study in the United States and Guåhan (Dé Ishtar, 1994).

The covenant positions CNMI within the American political family and is a “more highly developed relationship” than that of an unincorporated territory, such as Guåhan (OIA, 2015b). Within the agreement, it instructs the United States to “recognize” and “respect” that the CNMI people “need, depend upon and cherish their very limited land,” of 184 square miles (OIA, 2015a). However, the extent of this recognition is unclear, and many are concerned that the US military may still use eminent domain and claim “national security” to push the militarization plans while disregarding the covenant agreement.

Similarly to Guåhan, the imbalance of power between the island residents and the federal government continues to place the insular areas in a situation where there is no legal framework to prevent the US federal government and the DOD from utilizing their islands as bombing ranges, ammunition storage, and fuel facilities. Chamoru scholars discuss how the United States exploits the political status of these insular areas for military purposes. The entrenched “legacy of US colonialism and empire building relies on the mechanism of establishing overseas military bases” (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 843), which are located on American colonial “sovereign” soil, such as Guåhan and the CNMI. Political colonialism and American militarization is the “primary apparatus of the American empire in the Pacific” (K. L. Camacho, 2011, p. xii), and a more accurate portrayal of the “discontinuous American Empire” or “imperial archipelago” (C. S. Perez, 2015b, p. 619) must include the international network of American military bases in the Pacific. The following section will address the United States Asia-Pacific pivot foreign policy as well as the current militarization of the Marianas Archipelago, and will provide a historical overview of the legacy of the military and resistance on Guåhan.

Continual militarization

America's Pacific Century and the Asia-Pacific pivot

The US military advisors at the Pentagon and neoconservative leaders in Washington, DC, are “realigning” America’s foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region through the “Asia-Pacific pivot” or “pivot to the Pacific” (“pivot”) strategy (Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2015). The necessity of the pivot is framed in terms of national and regional security, and Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter (2013) assures that “values of democracy, freedom, human rights, civilian control of the military, and respect for the sovereignty of the nations that American has long stood for” will accompany the strong US presence.

The amplified American engagement across the region translates into military expansion through forward bases, increased forces, and advanced weapons to ensure stability, maritime security, and freedom of navigation. The area of responsibility of the US Pacific Command (PACOM), headquartered on O’ahu, Hawai’i, encompasses over half the earth’s surface. It includes more than 3.5 billion people, 36 nation-states, 20 territories, and 10 territories and possessions of the United States (Keating, 2008). Coordination between PACOM and the Marianas Archipelago is imperative for the pivot strategy since “all of the Pentagon road maps lead to Guam” (Gerson, 2004).

The DOD considers Guåhan the “tip of America’s spear in Asia” and an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” (Natividad & Kirk, 2010; see Figure 2). Because of its strategic location,



FIGURE 2 Andersen Air Force Base is located at the northern end of Guåhan and was constructed during World War II to deploy the B-29 Superfortress against Imperial Japan. It is to become a forward base that will house an additional 5,000 Marines and their dependents relocating from Okinawa. The LFTR is to be built on the cliffs above the Ritidian National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Sylvia C. Frain, 2015.

Guåhan has the “highest ratio of US military spending and military hardware and land takings from indigenous populations of any place on earth” (Lutz, 2010, p. 1). Today, the further militarization of the land, sea, and air is happening at the expense of those living in the region and locally the pivot is referred to as the “military buildup” or “buildup” (L. T. Camacho, 2013b).

#Guåhan #NotOneMoreAcre #Tåno

Currently, the DOD occupies nearly one-third of the island through restricted bases for all branches of the US armed forces (see

Figure 3). The #NotOneMoreAcre hashtag addresses the military legacy of land takings from the local population. Shortly after World War II, the DOD annexed 58% of the island (L. T. Camacho, 2013b, p. 186). Tåno' (land) was obtained through eminent domain, even though the Chamorus of Guåhan were not yet US citizens. This legacy of the military land takings without proper compensation or payment continues, and the current generations are very aware of the amount of land their family sacrificed. The hypocrisy of the colonial militarized relationship lies in the fact that the United States uses these locations, which are “denied basic rights of freedom and self-determination,”



FIGURE 3 A sign and plastic fencing at the Andersen Air Force Base restricting access through the threat of dog teams to prevent locals from farming, hunting, and fishing. Exploitation of Guåhan’s colonial status has allowed military occupation of lands and further planned massive military expansion. Every division of the armed forces, including the US Army, Navy, Air Force, National Guard, and Coast Guard, has a restricted installation on the 212-square-mile island. Photo: Sylvia C. Frain, 2015

to maintain a military force deployed worldwide in the name of “freedom” and democracy (Davis, 2011, p. 221).

Environmental impact statements

In 2006, the US military announced the Roadmap for Realignment Implementation Agreement between the United States and Japan, the biggest single project proposed by the DOD and the largest relocation in the 21st century (L. T. Camacho, 2013a). Following this declaration, the US military released a “series of apparently independent proposals that worked to hide the cumulative impacts from the public and local governments” (Chamorro.com, 2016). The six environmental impact statement (EIS) documents that describe proposed military activities (see Tables 1 and 2) neither invite nor require the consent of the people or the local governments of the Mariana Islands. The highly

technical and often contradictory documents describe the impacts of the proposed construction, trainings, and testing that often violate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 850).

Two of the largest documents, *Guam and Mariana Islands Military Relocation; Relocating Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam* (see Table 1, No. 3), which was authorized in August 2015, and the proposed *Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training* (CJMT; see Table 2, No. 1), highlight similar experiences forced upon the people of the Mariana Islands. The residents are establishing solidarity between Guåhan and the CNMI to assist in the long-term struggle against the DOD.



FIGURE 4 The original landowners of Litekyan, meaning “mixing (or stirring) place” in Chamoru, were removed under eminent domain by the US military in 1963. Thirty years later, 1,000 acres of the land was deemed excess, and instead of being returned to the landowners, it was illegally designated a National Wildlife Refuge and control was transferred to the DOI and then onto the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Santos Perez, 2015a). Photo: Sylvia C. Frain, 2015.

TABLE 1 Signed EISs

<p>1. Title: Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC)</p> <p>Opens 500,000 square miles of ocean around the Mariana Islands for live-fire exercises and weapons testing</p>	<p>Lead agency: US Department of the Navy</p> <p>Website: http://mircairspaceea.com</p>	<p>Status: The Final Environmental Assessment (EA)/Overseas EA: A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Finding of No Significant Harm (FONSH). Signed on June 15, 2013.</p>	<p>Violations: In March 2015 the US District Court, District of Hawai'i, found that the US Navy and the National Marine Fisheries Service violated the law when they failed to meet multiple requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.</p> <p>The lawsuit, however, only covers the areas around Hawai'i and California and not the Marianas, where whales and dolphins wash up on shore after periods of high-intensity sonar exercises and underwater detonations training.</p>
<p>2. Title: Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT)</p> <p>Doubles MIRC area to encompass nearly a million square nautical miles for weapons testing and military training</p>	<p>Lead agency: US Department of the Navy, Department of Defense (DOD)</p> <p>Website: http://mitt-eis.com</p>	<p>Status: Record of Decision (ROD) signed July 23, 2015, by Mr. Steven R. Iselin, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment).</p>	<p>Violations: MITT authorizes the destruction of over 6 square miles of endangered coral reefs plus 20 square miles of coral reef around No'os (Farallon de Medinilla [FDMI]), the island north of Saipan, through the use of highly explosive bombs. It increases the ongoing bombing from 2,150 bombs per year to over 6,000 bombs per year, or roughly 300%. The new range allows live fire above, on, and below the sea, including high-impact underwater weapons and deadly sonar that kills fish, sea turtles, whales, dolphins, and porpoises. Potential lawsuit pending for violation of the Endangered Species Act.</p>
<p>3. Title: Guam and Mariana Islands Military Relocation; Relocating Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam</p> <p>Guåhan will become a "forward base" and a "strategic hub." Construction of a Marine base, live-fire training ranges (LFTRs), additional 5,000 Marines, and their dependents.</p>	<p>Agency: US Department of the Navy, DOD</p> <p>Website: http://www.guambuildupeis.us</p>	<p>Status: ROD for the 2013 Supplemental EIS, signed August 29, 2015, by Mr. Steve Iselin, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations, and Environment).</p>	<p>Violations: Current plans include locating the LFTR adjacent to Litekyan (Ritidian National Wildlife Refuge), an ancient Chamorro fishing village. The National Wildlife Refuge will become a Surface Danger Zone that bombs and ammunition will fly "over." This will restrict public and educational access to the historical site's painted caves and will endanger the numerous species that currently make Guåhan's only wildlife refuge home.</p>

TABLE 2 Pending EISs

<p>1. Title: <i>The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training (CJMT)</i></p> <p>Establishment of LFTRs on the islands of Tinian and Pagan</p>	<p>Lead agency: US Department of the Navy. Cooperating agencies: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USCE), US Air Force (USAF).</p> <p>Website: http://www.cnmijointmilitarytrainingeis.com</p>	<p>Status: Comment period April 3–October 2, 2015. Waiting for Supplemental EIS to be released late 2016.</p> <p>Violations: Dentons, US LLP, Environmental Science Associates, found the document “fails to meet even the most basic requirements of the NEPA and the limited evidence presented in the document suggests that it would violate both federal and CNMI law.” Proposed LFTRs are in violation of the Technical Agreement that defines the current terms of the Tinian land lease to the US military.</p>
<p>2. Title: <i>Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) Permanent Stationing in Guam</i></p> <p>US Army Air and Missile Defense Task Force</p>	<p>Lead agency: US Army Website: http://thaadguamea.com</p>	<p>Status: Public comment period June 9–July 9, 2015. Environmental Assessment (EA) with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Waiting for Final EA to be released.</p> <p>Violations: FONSI for THAAD Battery, a PAC-3 Patriot Missile Battery, and a Stinger Missile “SLAMRAAM” Battery.</p>
<p>3. Title: <i>Divert Activities and Exercises, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands</i></p> <p>Seeks to take land around Saipan International Airport and Tinian’s commercial airport for training and support of live-fire exercises</p>	<p>Lead agency: USAF Cooperating agencies: US Navy, US Marine Corps, FAA (Pacific Air Forces Divert Field) Website: http://pacafdivertmarianaseis.com</p>	<p>Status: EA proposal pending.</p> <p>Violations: The USAF is not considering using the former World War II airfields on Tinian that are currently under lease to the military, citing the cost of renovation as too high, essentially asking the CNMI to subsidize the project.</p>

#SaveLitekyan #SaveRitidian

In November 2009, the DOD released *Guam and Mariana Islands Military Relocation; Relocating Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam*, a nine-volume, 11,000-page document, and the longest report in US history (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 846). Following the document release, the community expressed their outrage at the “public hearings” administered and controlled by the DOD. The hearings ran for hours over the time limit, and the DOD received over 10,000 written comments, the most in DOD history at that time (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 846). In February 2010, the US Environmental Protection Agency conducted a mandatory review of the document, giving it the lowest possible rating: “Unsatisfactory: Inadequate information (EU3)” (Alexander, 2015, p. 5).

Despite the local resistance, which used the hashtags #SaveLitekyan and #SaveRitidian, to the proposal, the Record of Decision was signed on August 29, 2015, without any signatories from the Mariana Islands, nor were any community members present. The document permits the relocation of 5,000 Marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guåhan, the construction of a new Marine base, and the creation of the LFTR. Litekyan or Ritidian National Wildlife Refuge (see Figure 4) is one of the most ancient archaeological sites in Oceania, and it will become a Surface Danger Zone. This will restrict public access to the sacred site to allow for bombs, bullets, and ammunitions to fly over it into the reef, corals, and sea below (C. S. Perez, 2015a).

#NorthernMarianalslands #SavePågan #SaveTinian

According to the DOD, Guåhan alone cannot “fulfill the forty-two joint training deficiencies” and additional training must take place in the CNMI (U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, 2015; Zotomayor, 2015). On Good Friday, April 3,

2015, the DOD released the *CJMT* EIS (see Table 2). This proposal gives the DOD control over 25% of the CNMI landmass, prevents freedom of navigation by air and sea between islands, and would create LFTRs on Pågan and Tinian Islands. The military wants to use the entire island of Pågan for the “highest level of live fire range . . . including tank maneuvers, amphibious landings, land mines, grenade launchers, rockets, mortars, missiles, shells, and air-dropped bombs up to 1000 pounds” (Chamorro.com, 2016). This will create one of the United States’ largest live-fire training and bombing ranges in the world (C. S. Perez, 2015a).

The combination of political colonization and American militarization is obstructing Indigenous rights. Similar to the events on Guåhan, “hundreds of locals came to public hearings to oppose the bombing ranges and expressed outrage that the military can unilaterally take and destroy their lands without their consent” (Chamorro.com, 2016). The #SavePågan and #SaveTinian hashtags are used in addition to the local organizing. Residents of the CNMI set a record number of 28,000 public comments, and the community as well as local politicians continue to voice strong opposition to the plans. Many feel since the CNMI has more political rights as a commonwealth than Guåhan, the ability to resist the DOD plans is greater. However, because the CNMI is considered American “soil,” the DOD can potentially exercise eminent domain in the name of national security to use the land, sea, and air for military purposes (Villahermosa, 2016a). The final portion of this article will address the Indigenous resistance of the peoples of the Marianas Archipelago and explore how they are incorporating an oceanic collective framework based on the interdependence between themselves and nature to organize. They are also utilizing social media sites to foster solidarity and spread awareness.

Indigenous resistance

#KnowYourRoots #Chamoru #Chamorro

As the DOD plans for the Asia-Pacific pivot, activists are using the foundation of pre-colonial Chamoru culture and belief systems. Contemporary Marianas Indigenous peoples are Chamoru, also written as “CHamoru” and “Chamorro.” The #KnowYourRoots hashtag refers to the importance of honoring the Indigenous ancestors, known as Taotao Håya (ancient people), on Guåhan (Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, 1993), and I Man'mofo'na or Tautau Mo'na (those that came before us) in the CNMI (G. S. Cabrera, personal communication, February 16, 2016). The ancient Chamoru language was orally shared, and the spellings of words, phrases, and names were historically written by Jesuit missionaries, Spanish conquistadores, European traders, and the American naval administration.

The #Chamoru and #Chamorro hashtags are related to the ongoing identity-based form of resistance utilized by Indigenous scholars (and their supporters) regarding the spelling of “Chamoru.” Various activists see using the spelling “Chamorro” as compliance with the status quo by those who lack a critical view of colonial histories. “Chamoru,” instead, is a “visible, practical . . . and conscious assertion of the indigenous population” to intentionally retake ownership of their cultural identity (Taitano, 2014, n.p.). It continues to be a form of self-determination and resistance to a label imposed on the Indigenous peoples by prior colonizers. The deliberation continues into the digital realm through hashtags and within Indigenous scholars’ writings. “The Chamoru language represents a culturally grounded discourse that draws attention to the identity and solidarity of indigenous people of Guåhan” (Na'puti, 2014, p. 307). Therefore, “Chamoru”

is included as a symbol of solidarity within this article.

#InafaMaolek

The Indigenous Chamoru framework of Inafa' Maolek means to “make things good for each other” and to “restore the balance” with nature and the community (Dipåtamenton I Kaohao Guianhan Chamorro, 2003, p. 23). This reciprocal principle is based on the commitment to family and the environment. Respetu (respect) must be applied to social relationships as well as the land, sea, and air so all can benefit from i guinahan I tåno' ya tasi (the gifts of the land and the sea) (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015, p. 848). The importance of the connection between Chamoru culture and respect for the environment is further demonstrated through Indigenous protective frameworks, created in response to the loss of lands, language, and cultural practices.

#PrutehiYanDifendi #Inifresi

A guiding principle of the resistance to colonization and militarization in the Marianas Archipelago is based on prutehi yan difendi (to protect and defend). As a Chamoru lawyer and activist explains, “We remain committed to protecting and defending the beliefs, the culture, the language, the air and the water of our cherished land” (L. T. Camacho, 2013b, p. 189). This statement is from the Inifresi, the Chamoru Pledge, authored by the late Dr. Saena Bernadita Camacho-Dungca. She is remembered for her dedication “to the preservation of the Chamoru culture and language . . . [She] worked timelessly to pass down her knowledge to future generations” (Romanes, 2016). The people see their role as protectors and defenders of their environment and culture for future generations. The Inifresi illustrates how the resistance is driven by the deep connection to the environment and culture and is based on the

TABLE 3 The Inifresi or the Chamoru Pledge

Ginen I mās takhilo gi hinasso-ku,	From the inner-most recesses of my mind,
I mās takhalom gi kursaon-hu,	From deep within my heart,
Yan I mas figo' na	And with all my might,
Nina'siñā-hu,	This I offer:
Hu ufresen maisa yu':	I will protect and defend
Para bai hu prethi	The beliefs,
Yan hu difende I hinengge,	The culture,
I kottura,	The language,
I lengguāhi,	The air,
I aire,	The water and the land
I hanom yan i tano Chamoru	of the Chamorro

responsibility to safeguard what is Chamoru (see Table 3).

The Chamoru Pledge was developed as an alternative to the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States, which is seen by some as imperialistic propaganda imposed on the people of the Mariana Islands (Bevacqua, 2014). The Inifresi uses the robust language of sacrifice, such as “with all my might,” similar to US military slogans. However, it paradoxically calls for protection and defense *against* American militarization and destruction. It directly confronts what the military claims to be protecting and defending—not the Chamoru people nor Chamoru lands—but purely American colonial-military interests.

The Inifresi is also an Indigenous structure for Chamoru residents to hold Chamoru politicians and lobbyists in Washington, DC, accountable. Residents encourage officials to live the Inifresi. As one Chamoru resident wrote, “Unfortunately, they forget that their first loyalty should be to the people who sent them to DC in the first place. If they do not want to practice and live the Inifresi, then maybe they should not be representing i man Chamorro yan i tano i man Chamorro” (J. P. Perez, 2015).

Social media sites

Creative forms of resistance by artists, poets, scholars, student activists, and many others “are contributing to a transoceanic consciousness rooted in social and political justice” (K. L. Camacho, 2011, p. xxvii). The newest generation of protectors and defenders, as inspired by the Inifresi, are combining their reconnection with culture with community building through online outlets. They are creating solidarity through the web-based arena, including blogs, websites, online zines, and plays (Na'puti, 2014, n. 9). Many are using social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram and the visual platforms of YouTube and Change.org to organize and mobilize. The hashtags presented as titles within this article were created and are used by protectors and defenders across the region.

#OurIslandsAreSacred

#SupportOurIslands

#WeStandWithPåganandTinian

The History and Culture of Guåhan class of 2015 at the Catholic all-girl high school, the Academy of Our Lady of Guam, launched a “video campaign in solidarity with the rest of the Marianas Islands” (see Figure 5). The students created the three-minute video *Guåhan in Solidarity with Tinian and Pågan*, which states,

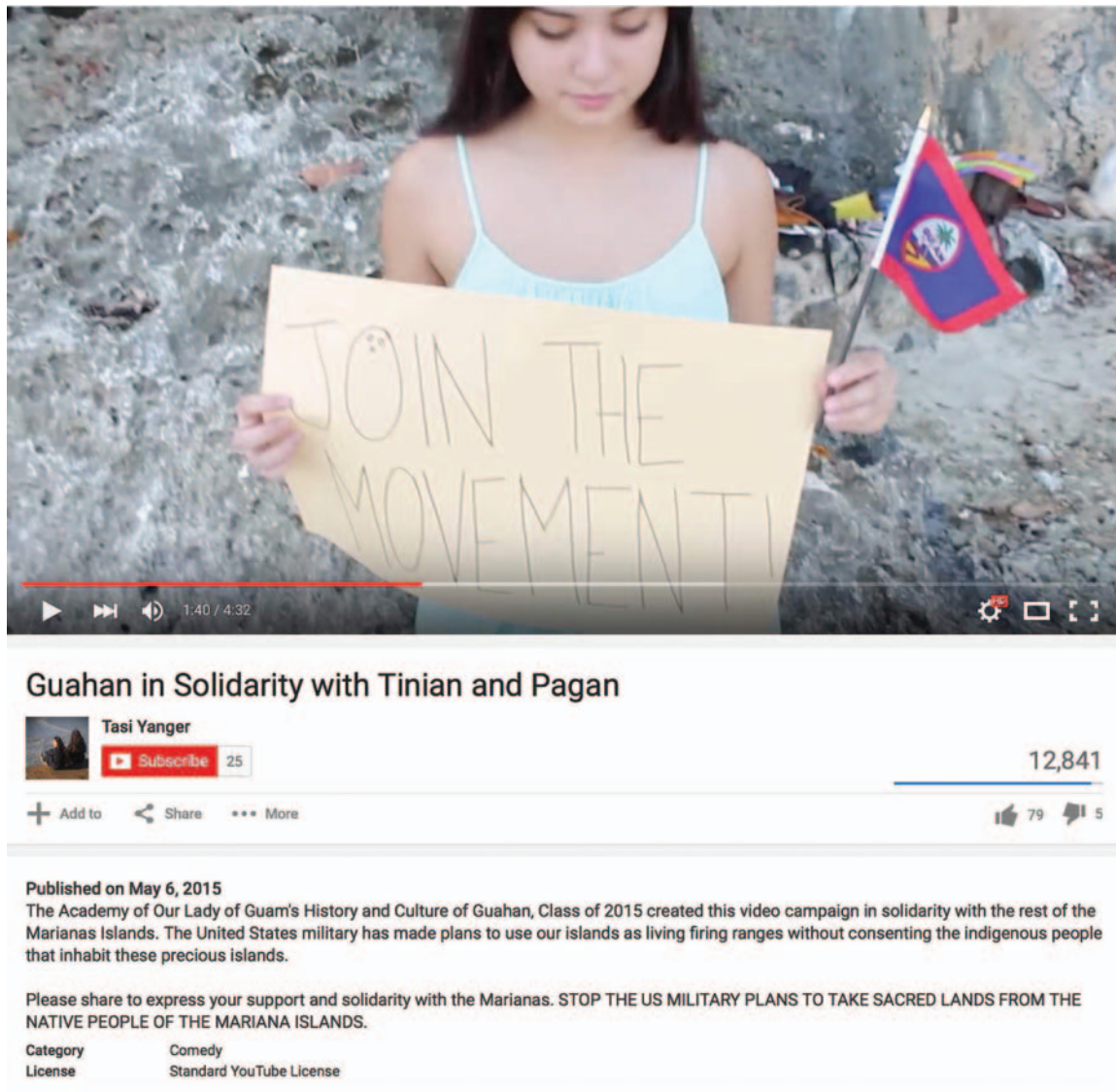


FIGURE 5 A screenshot of a video created by high school seniors on Guåhan expressing their support for the CNMI in opposing the “buildup” without the consent of the Indigenous peoples. The video can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/bL5yDV0IZtQ>.

“The United States military has made plans to use our islands as living fire ranges without consenting the indigenous people that inhabit these precious islands.” The short video contains archival footage of military training, similar to those proposed for Tinian and Pagan, President Obama giving the speech in Australia announcing the Asia-Pacific pivot in 2011, and American flags and soldiers marching. They contrast the colonial-military imagery with themselves creating signs on the beach that say “Prutehi yan Difendi” and “Protect and Defend Pagan and Tinian.” The hashtags #SupportOurIslands

and #WeStandWithPaganandTinian are also featured, and the video ends with the hashtag #OurIslandsAreSacred and encourages the viewer to “Join the Movement” to protect Pagan and Tinian. The video currently has over 13,300 views and is featured on an online petition that has gained support globally (see Figure 6).

A nurse and mother of three from the island of Tinian created the letter “DO NOT use the inhabited US islands of Tinian and Pagan as a HIGH IMPACT bombing range” on the online petitioning platform Change.org (see Figure 6),

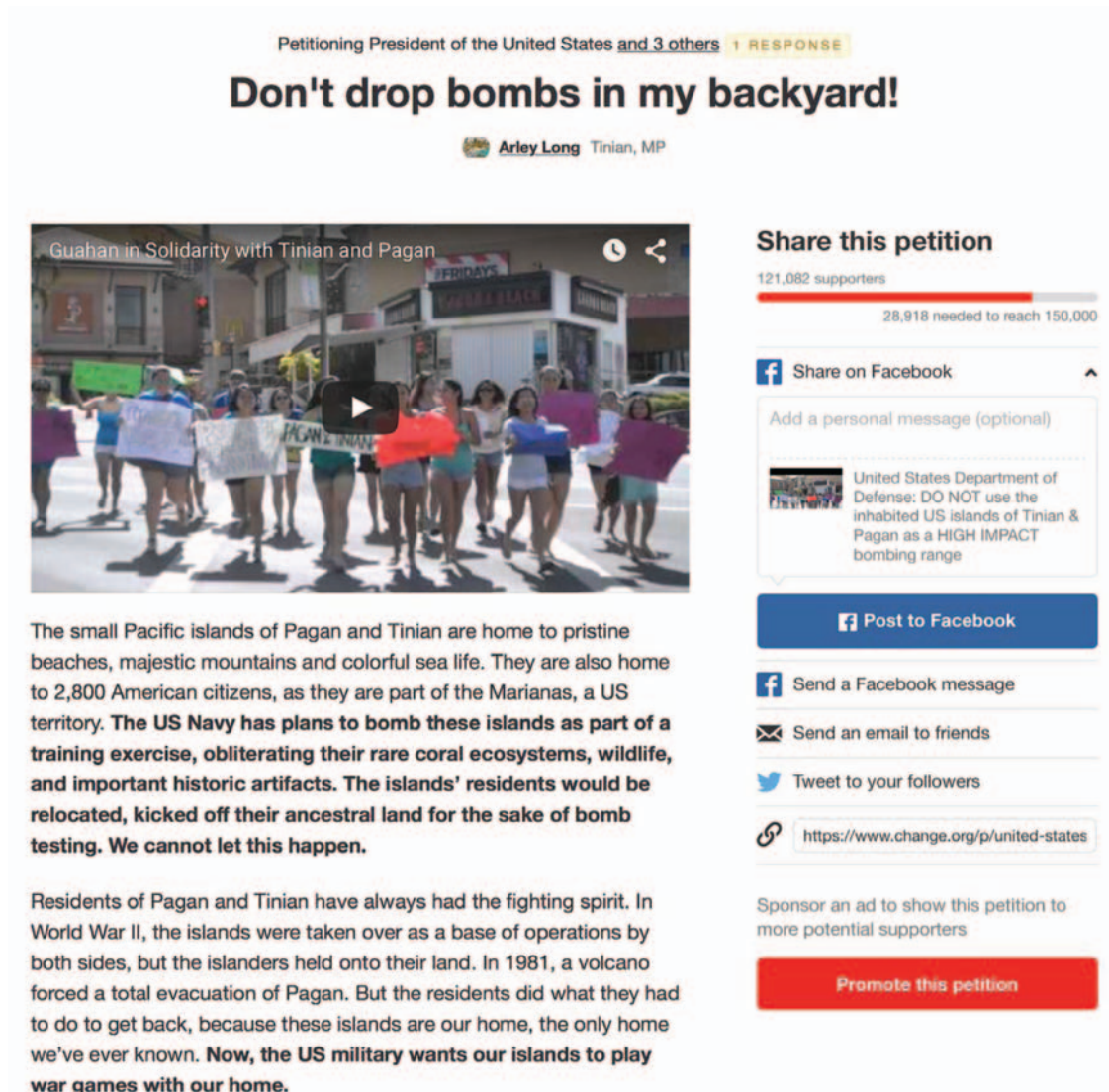


FIGURE 6 A screenshot of a petition created on Change.org that has been shared across social media platforms, reaching a global audience. Mike Honda, US representative for California and Chair Emeritus of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus expressed his support on the digital petition.

petitioning the President of the United States, the DOD, the US House of Representatives, and the US Senate. Within weeks, the petition gathered over 121,000 signatures and inspired local politicians to send a letter directly to the White House. Although the online petition has since closed, the site contains comments from signatories, media updates, and links to share on social media sites. Now the people of the CNMI find themselves in a waiting period for the next EIS document to be released, sometime in late 2016 (Villahermosa, 2016b). It is the hope of the protectors and defenders that

the public's resistance, supported by the local politicians, will force the DOD to reconsider the proposed LFTRs. Many feel that the people of the Marianas Archipelago have sacrificed enough in the name of the United States and with many unresolved issues such as *tåno'* and self-determination, it is time for the United States and the DOD to uphold their international responsibilities to ensure decolonization and demilitarization efforts are respected.

Conclusion

Although the Marianas Archipelago is considered American soil and the residents are American citizens, the Indigenous everyday resistance for true representative democracy and control of their land, seas, and air endures. The United States' Asia-Pacific pivot foreign policy is just the latest contemporary challenge for the people of the Mariana Archipelago, as they have been resisting colonial and military powers since the arrival of the Spanish in the late 1500s.

The newest generation of protectors and defenders continues the struggle against political colonization and American militarization through the Chamoru ancestral frameworks of Inafa' Maolek and the Inifresi. Decolonization and demilitarization struggles have fostered a renewed solidarity across the Marianas Archipelago based on the inherited responsibility to defend and protect the environment and culture for future generations. The social media examples and hashtags discussed here are only two out of hundreds of forms of resistance currently happening both at the community level and across social media sites. I encourage everyone to explore the contemporary colonial situation and how that supports the continued militarization not only in the Marianas Archipelago but also across Oceania.

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For up-to-date information regarding the demilitarization and decolonization movements in Oceania, and the current activities of

numerous groups, please visit or contact the Facebook page "Oceania Resistance."

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Glossary

Chamoru	Chamorro
Guåhan	Guam
i guinahan I tãno' ya	the gifts of the land
tasi	and the sea
Inafa' Maolek	to make good for everyone
Inifresi	Chamoru Pledge
prutehi yan difendi	to protect and defend
respetu	respect
tãno'	land

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