

# Issue Report ||

10 September 2012

## Do You Know?

### **The Environmental Disaster by Jeju Naval Base Construction**

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※ 「ISSUE REPORT Ⅰ. Do You Know? Human Rights Violations on 'No Jeju Naval Base Campaign」 is also available at <http://www.peoplepower21.org/English>.

## Summary

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Jeju Island is located at the southern part of South Korea. Jeju, the Island of Peace appointed by the Government, is experiencing harsh conflicts because the Ministry of Defence and the South Korean navy are enforcing the naval base construction at Gangjeong village without a proper consultation with villagers. The naval base construction has been raised various concerns on its negative impacts on environment and ecosystem.

Gangjeong offshore locates right next to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Zone. The construction of a naval base will destroy the seashore, which is inhabited by a number of endangered marine species, bringing long-lasting negative impact to the environment and ecology. Unfortunately, environmental impact assessment was not properly conducted by the Government and changes of the Absolute Preservation Zone by the Governor was made without a proper consultation with local people while it will directly impact on people's right to environment and right to peace.

## 1. Suggested Sea Route creates Environmental Disaster

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The South Korean Navy originally suggested the sea route turning angle of Jeju naval base as 77 degree to not intrude various conservation zones and to avoid low sea level area. However, this route has another serious problems. Unfortunately, if the sea route turning angle is designed as 77 degree, it will cause a lot of safety concerns because a ship has to make a tight circle. Also, a ship can be easily wrecked on a rock around the Seogwon Island. In addition, not only 150,000 ton cruise liners that has been publicized by the Government but also an usual ship which is more than 10,000 ton sails under more than wind speed 30 knots, its safety cannot be guaranteed.<sup>1</sup>

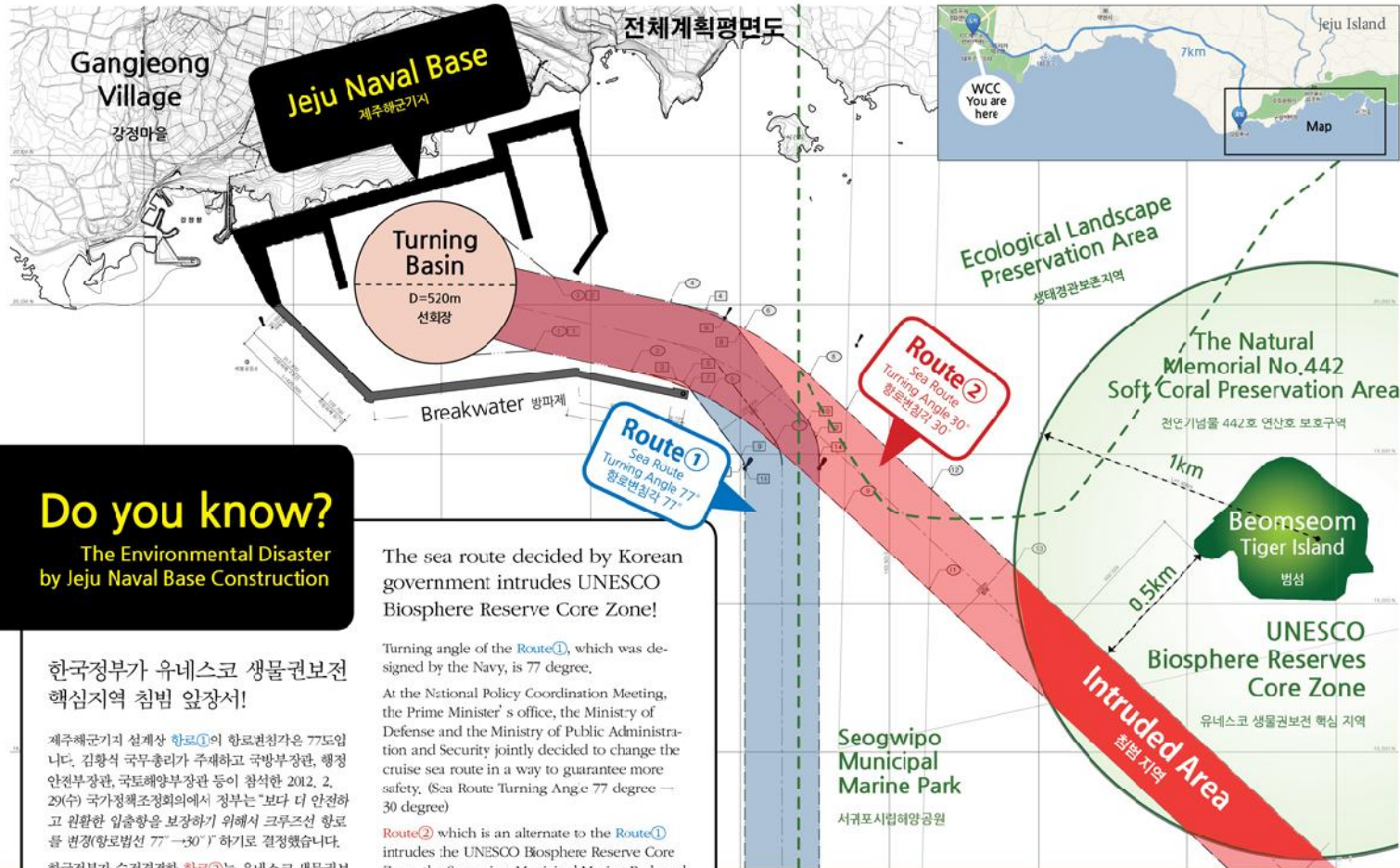
As a result, the Government changed its plan. On 29 February 2012, at the National Policy Coordination Meeting, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Public Administration and Security jointly decided to change the sea route turning angle back to 30 degree. As mentioned earlier, the 30 degree sea route turning angle inevitably intrudes the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Core Zone, soft coral colonies(the natural memorial No. 442 designated by the South Korean government), the Seogwipo Municipal Marine Park, and the Ecological Landscape Preservation Area. This will result in tremendous environmental destruction.

The problem is that through this route where world nature heritage sites are concentrated, US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, nuclear-powered submarine, Aegis ships and Korean Navy's Amphibious Ship Transport (semi-aircraft carrier), Aegis ships and submarines will freely sail. In conclusion, the South Korean navy is enforcing naval base construction in a location where port construction is not possible due to geographical and environmental reasons.

For more details, please see the attached map in the next page.

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1 The South Korean government has been publishing a concept of "Beautiful Jeju Civilian-Military complex port" by introducing idea that two 150,000 ton cruise liners will be able to dock once the port is built.



## Do you know?

The Environmental Disaster  
by Jeju Naval Base Construction

한국정부가 유네스코 생물권보전  
핵심지역 침범 앞장서!

제주해군기지 설계상 **항로①**의 향로변침각은 77도입니다. 김형식 국무총리가 주재하고 국방부장관, 행정안전부장관, 국토해양부장관 등이 참석한 2012. 2. 29(수) 국가정책조정회의에서 정부는 "보다 더 안전하고 원활한 입출항을 보장하기 위해서 크루즈선 항로를 변경(향로변침 77°→30°)하기로 결정했습니다."

한국정부가 수정결정한 **항로②**는 유네스코 생물권보전 핵심지역, 서귀포 시립해양공원, 생태경관보존지역을 침범합니다. 이는 심각한 환경파괴를 야기할 것입니다.

The sea route decided by Korean government intrudes UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Core Zone!

Turning angle of the **Route①**, which was designed by the Navy, is 77 degree.

At the National Policy Coordination Meeting, the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Public Administration and Security jointly decided to change the cruise sea route in a way to guarantee more safety. (Sea Route Turning Angle 77 degree → 30 degree)

**Route②** which is an alternate to the **Route①** intrudes the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Core Zone, the Seogwipo Municipal Marine Park and the Ecological Landscape Preservation Area. This will result in tremendous environmental destruction.

No Jeju Naval Base! Save Jeju Island!

Published by National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island on Sep. 2012  
for further information ▶ [savejeju.org](http://savejeju.org) ▶ [www.peoplepower21.org/English](http://www.peoplepower21.org/English)  
제주해군기지건설 저지를 위한 전국다행회



## 2. Environmental Impact Assessment / Change of Absolute Preservation Zone

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On 20 April 2009, 437 villagers including Mr. Dong-kyun Kang, a mayor of Gangjeong Village, jointly filed lawsuits against the Minister of National Defence on two issues: 1) Lawsuit on the confirmation of the cancellation of the approval disposal on the execution plan for the defence/military facilities 2) Lawsuit on the confirmation of the cancellation of the change of absolute preservation zone.

On 5 July 2012, a panel of all Supreme Court judges dismissed the cases filed by the villagers but some doubts still remain in the decision.

### 1) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

According to the Jeju Naval Base Fact-Finding Committee, which consists of five opposition political parties, the EIA on Jeju naval base was not substantive enough. The EIA did not consider overall impact of the naval base construction to the marine ecosystem and to the destruction of Gureumbi bedrock which is a very rare coastal bedrock wetland in Korea. Also, the soft coral beds at Gangjeong coast which is a crucial reason to designate Gangjeong as national nature property was not put into consideration in the EIA.

The Supreme Court also agreed that the content of the EIA was poor and not substantive enough. However, the Court ruled that poor content of the report was not grave enough to cancel the naval base construction. Regardless the quality of the content, the Supreme Court focused more on the fact that the EIA was conducted. There has been no assessment made on the content of the EIA by the Supreme Court.

### 2) Change of the Absolute Preservation Zone

The Supreme Court ruled that Gangjeong villagers are not qualified as plaintiffs because the absolute preservation zone is only to protect underground water, ecosystem, and landscape only, but not to protect villagers' right to environment and right to housing.

The Supreme Court ruled that it is an acceptable decision that the Governor of Jeju Special-Governing Province changed an absolute preservation zone without having a consultation with local people. It is based on its narrow interpretation of the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province Ordinance on the Preservation Zone(Ordinance).

The Article 3 of the Ordinance mentions that the Governor is not required to collect local

people's opinion on a change of the absolute preservation zone only when it is a minor change. The Article 3(1) of the Ordinance includes 'reduce of the absolute preservation zone' as a minor case that does not require consultation with local people, but does not clearly mention a scope of reduction and leave it to the Court's interpretation. The Governor cancelled 12.7%(around 65,000m<sup>2</sup>) out of the whole Gangjeong village's absolute preservation zone(around 826,000m<sup>2</sup>), which is hard to be considered as a minor change.

### 3. Recommendations

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- **To the South Korean Ministry of Defense**

Immediately stop Jeju naval base construction!

Protect and promote local people's right to peace and right to environment from being sacrificed under the name of economic development and national security!

Conduct Environmental Impact Assessment on Jeju naval base again, together with independent expert groups, in accordance with international standards!

- **To the International Union for Conservation of Nature**

Protect and promote local people's right to peace and right to environment from being sacrificed under the name of economic development and national security!

Call to South Korean government to immediately stop Jeju naval base construction which will inevitably bring environmental disaster!

Adopt the motion during the WCC, urging the South Korean government to conduct scientific Environmental Impact Assessment again on Jeju naval base!



## **Asia-Pacific Peace Declaration for No Naval Base in Jeju Island International Action Week**

**Bring peace and cooperation to East Asia!**

**Don't militarize Jeju Island and the pacific!**

**Make Jeju an Island of World Peace!**

While witnessing the construction of a gigantic naval base in beautiful Gangjeong village in Jeju Island, located in the Western Pacific Ocean, we cannot help but raise questions again: why war and destructions are repeated under the name of peace and prosperity?

**The 20th century was the century of war and militarization!**

Two World Wars broke out followed by the Cold War. Even during the Cold War era, big and small wars continued. The legacies of conflicts stay until today and turn various parts of world into powder kegs.

The Asia-Pacific region, where the Korean peninsula is located, was one of the most intensive battlefields in the world. During the 2nd World War (the Pacific War), the whole Jeju Island was used as an outpost to stage war in China. And during the era of turmoil caused by the Cold War, the Island experienced 3 April Massacre in 1948 that resulted in more than 30,000 civilians' death by their own Government.

After the end of the Cold War and at the beginning of the 21st century, the whole humankind sincerely hoped for a new era, an era of peace and cooperation. People wanted to bring justice not only by getting away from an exaggerated fear from outside, but also resolving conflicts and violence inside the community. Also, people expected all governments to cooperate with each other to solve problems the world faces rather than pointing guns at each other. In this way, we all dreamt of harmoniously developing a democratic system where people's happiness, safety and sustainable lives are top priorities. Around this time, the idea of making Jeju Island an Island of Peace was also raised. Jeju Island which belongs to the divided Korean peninsula is a world natural heritage site.

Unfortunately, the new millennium started with another war. Justice has not been delivered and democracy has been set back. In the last 10 years, war, destruction and greed have swept the whole world, unregulated and uncontrolled. As a result, the world economic crisis has emerged. This disaster was caused by neo-liberalism and militarism being not put under democratic controls. 99% of people had to pay for the price in pain and agony.

**Militarism is rising again in East Asia despite lessons from the past.**

Arms race and military confrontation have accelerated in parallel with East Asia's potential and economic vitality despite global economic crises. In the last few years in East Asia, militarism and conflicts regarding sovereignty and territory have been dramatically rising. In the Korean peninsula where the 59th year of the Armistice Agreement continues without ending the Korean War, military tension has been rising sharply. Military alliance and military drills which are legacies of the Cold War have intensified with more aggressive gestures under the name of maritime security.

While militarization of East Asia is further intensified under the excuse of military threats from outside, national and regional cooperation to solve problems such as damaged environment, polarized economy, and broken social security and community is developing only too slowly.

Why does the history of conflict repeat even if most people do not wish for it? Why do solutions that have proven to be failing and making everyone unhappy continue to be used? Why do things such as evicting people, destroying their environment and threatening their safety under the name of economic growth and national security continue? Is it really impossible to make the world into a place where everyone can peacefully cooperate and co-exist without being stolen or stealing and without being occupied or occupying?

**The Pacific must be the sea of peace and lives, not the sea of war and destruction.**

The Pacific Ocean means peaceful ocean. It was named by a European who sailed the ocean in search of Asia. However, when we look back on the history, since the Ocean was named as the Pacific, lives of the people who lived in the ocean have never been peaceful.

Now, we must change this. The sea of East Asia, the Western Pacific Ocean, is a common livelihood of all people who are living here and the biggest platform of trade and exchange worldwide. It should never be a place of conflict, struggle, and dispute. What we have to bring to the sea of East Asia is not militarism but a cooperation that makes everyone happy.

**People have gathered here to realize the dream – though now endangered by the construction of a naval base – to make an Island in East Asia the Island of World Peace.**

There are Jeju people including villagers of Gangjeong who have continued a non-violent and peaceful resistant for the last 6 years against the construction of a naval base which will militarize the sea of East Asia.

Gangjeong village is a buffer zone of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and one of the oldest and the most beautiful villages in Jeju Island. Clean water from two big streams falls into the front sea of Gangjeong village all year round. These two streams are rarely found in Jeju Island because the Island is made of a volcanic rock called basalt. Thanks to this, Gangjeong village has been the centre of agriculture and residence in Jeju Island since the Bronze Age. Gangjeong village and its front sea is also a livelihood of many endangered species including soft coral, narrow-mouthed toad and the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. At this place, to save their own community and environment, villagers have peacefully protested against navy base construction, which has been enforced without their consent.

Living peacefully without being caught up in war and conflict is individual and collective right that everyone is naturally entitled to. Gangjeong villagers' human right to peace and human right to environment must be protected and promoted. Their freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association must be guaranteed at all times.

Jeju people have a full right to stand against a repeat of the last century's tragedy. Also, they present a strong call to open a new era of peace and cooperation in East Asia for themselves and for all of us.

People of the world can move one step closer to a peaceful world and the new era of coexistence by standing in solidarity with Jeju people's struggle

We, together with the wish of the peoples of the world for world peace, hereby declare the International Action Week for No Naval Base in Jeju Island and strongly urge the followings:

- Stop Jeju naval base construction immediately!
- Guarantee human right to peace, human right to environment and freedom of expression of Gangjeong villagers!
- Guarantee Gangjeong villagers' right to speak during the World Conservation Conference which will be held in Jeju!

- Allow Gangjeong village to remain a community of life and peace, and keep Jeju Island as the Island of World Peace!
- No militarization of the sea! Make the sea of East Asia the sea of Peace!
- No to arms race in the Asia Pacific! Yes to peace in the Asia Pacific!
- Give peace a chance!

**2 September 2012**

Proposed by:

Gangjeong Village Association

Jeju Pan-Island Committee for Stop of Military Base and for Realization of Peace Island

National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island



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## The Environmental Disaster by Jeju Naval Base Construction

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