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An International consultation

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June 6, 1988

over 30 people from a dozen countries attended the day-long session to discuss ways to improve communication and networking among people and groups opposing foreign military bases and facilities, warship port calls and military exercises in their own and countries. The goal of the meeting was to reveal common issues and ways we can support each others work.

The day began with presentations by Sue Culling (Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific), Jan_Minkiewicz (Peace and Freedom, Poland), Hyuk-kyo Suh (Korea Information and Resource Service), and Madjid Abdullah (POLISARIO, North Africa) on the impact of foreign military presence on their countries and regions.

Eastern Europe

Jan talked about Eastern Europe as one big Soviet base as Soviet troops never left after World War II. These troops have been used directly and indirectly to maintain Soviet influence. Soviet bases are placed in very isolated areas with strict controls as to who can go near them. some independent peace groups oppose the Soviet presence, but demonstrations at the bases are impossible. soviet commanders work to avoid contact between their troops and the local population; troops are told they are defending socialism; local population might disagree. Normal contacts would produce problems, as markets and circumstances tend to be better in Eastern Europe than USSR. Sees two types of foreign bases: those as part of power policy (e.g. USSR in E. Europe and U.S. in Central America) and those rationalized by presence of other superpower (e.g. USSR in Vietnam). We need to find a middle way and overcome the East/West divide.

North Africa

Madjid spoke of French presence in North Africa including nuclear testing in Algeria (prior to independence) and in Senegal. The U.S. dismantled its bases in Morocco in 1978, but has contingency bases for use in Middle East crises. A nuclear weapon accident occurred at one base in 1958. At U.S. urging--in the words of Henry Kissinger, 'to prevent an Angola on the Atlantic'--Morocco seized part of Western Sahara in 1975, when Spain gave up its colony. A referendum was blocked on self-determination. Morocco then occupied the rest of the Sahara when Mauritania abandoned its claims. Morocco has received increased U.S. military aid, military advisors and port calls since occupation. Joint military exercises have also been held. Morocco sent some troops to Gulf states and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. and France see the war in Western Sahara as a testing ground for low-intensity conflict desert warfare and for new weapon systems. Soviet bases in Libya or Algeria are a future possibility. Madjid the issue in Western Sahara as one of decolonization, where people should be allowed to express themselves and choose their own form of government or to be part of another country. Western Saharans (through non-aligned

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i participants came from the following countries: Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Finland, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Poland, United states, West Germany, Western Sahara

POLISARIO) are fighting for self-determination. Morocco gets direct support from s. Africa, France, U.S. and occasionally Israel. Rumania sells weapons to Morocco as well. Resources (especially phosphate deposits, second largest in the world) are seen as key. Few NGOs in third world oppose foreign military presence except liberation movements.

Korea

Hyuk-kyo called Korea a forgotten issue. Korea has been divided for over 40 years and the presence of U.S. troops are a major block to democracy in south Korea and reunification of the country. Chinese and Soviet troops have long been withdrawn from the north. The U.S. withdrew when Soviets did after WW II, but returned under UN flag when civil war broke out in 1950. There are now 40 U.S. bases in the south, but there is no bases agreement, no leases or compensation. In fact south Korea (ROK) pays almost \$1 billion yearly to support the U.S. presence. Regular exercises take place with mock bombing raids on Korean towns and port calls to heavily populated cities. U.S. troops are kept in a high state of readiness with the latest in weaponry shared with south Korean military. Nuclear weapons are also stored there. U.S. will be directly involved in any conflict that takes place on the peninsula. The U.S. is in charge of the ROK's army. Unlike in NATO, there is no requirement for consultation. South Korean troops have served as U.S. proxies in Vietnam and were asked to participate in Persian Gulf expedition. There is little debate about U.S. troops, bases or nukes, because of repression. The first international conference in Korea on these issues is scheduled for August 22-23. Mid-September Olympics will be key time in Korea: 2 U.S. aircraft carriers will be based off coast.

Pacific

Sue Culling spoke about colonialism, racism and militarism as key to the perpetuation of the nuclear cycle in the Pacific. French nuclear testing continues in Muruo (Polynesia) and French troops occupy Kanaky (New Caledonia). Indonesian troops are in East Timor and West Papua. Australia, Japan, Aotearoa (New Zealand) the Philippines and others have U.S. military and spy bases. The U.S. has a heavy naval presence in the Pacific. The INF agreement does not deal with sea-based systems at all.

There are several U.S. facilities in New Zealand, but the government has not pressed the issue of their being consistent with NZ nuclear-free policy. Several facilities are listening posts for telecommunications in the Pacific. Since the 1984, port call decision, New Zealand has not spoken out on other issues in ways that might offend the U.S.

Discussion

General agreement on need for international cooperation and strategies among antibases activists in different countries. Many questions about how to make this happen.

Many questions about why U.S. public and peace movement are not more concerned about issues of foreign bases. Comments: Noted that this was first U.S. meeting on the topic. Concern about North Americans (especially white ones) dying in wars, but public doesn't see bases as cause of war. Portrayed as bulwark against communism (rationale may have to change with Reagan embracing Gorbachev). Emergence of

American empire predates communism. After WW II, European colonial powers forced to withdraw (e.g. Britain), even though it seemed public could not accept the change. 0.8. military forward deployment following WW II was justified as containment of communism. Now new concern about decline of empire. Questions about whether U.S. can afford foreign deployment with federal deficit and whether allies are paying enough. This is not a questioning of strategic usefulness or morals or ethic, but only whether foreign military presence is working. For example, Persian Gulf flotilla is not working; attacks on shipping doubled.

U.S. now looking to leave land bases; working to have more mobile intervention (navy). Fewer political hassles. Peace movement gains (such as, ending Vietnam War and moves toward reductions in nuclear arsenals) were noted.

Some argued that the 1988-1991 Philippine bases review and possible treaty should be a priority internationally. There are efforts in Philippine legislature to put teeth into constitutional ban on nuclear weapons. Philippine bases useful for three of four areas where Pentagon sees war breaking out (Persian Gulf/Middle East; Europe; Northeast Asia; Central America is fourth area). Impact could affect other campaigns. In January 1989, over a thousand activists from Japan/New Zealand and Australia (peace brigade) will go to Philippines to help campaign. Pressure needed on U.S. government. other critical areas mentioned were Kanaky with 8000 French troops; Greece, bases agreement also up for renewal; Belau, trying to protect nuclear free constitution. High U.S. officials are worried that if one nation is allowed to be nuclear free without suffering consequences others will quickly follow suit.

Need better international, definition of what constitutes a foreign base: Some say any facility that could be potentially used by U.S., for example, but others feel this is too vague and difficult to discuss. Criteria could include presence of troops, C3I facilities, weapon storage and deployment. Local movements' definitions should be respected.

Japan holds many bases. Involves country in intervention and regional conflicts, though Japan has supposedly renounced war. Navy involved in U.S. strategy against the USSR (although technically not supposed to have a military). Nuclear ban remains unenforced because Japan never questions presence or absence of nuclear weapons. Concern about rise in Japanese economic and military might and its potential impact on Asia. U.S. is critical of trade policy but encourages military build up and use of aid to encourage U.S. goals in region.

Suggestions/Projects/Announcements etc.:

a Provide resources to 3rd World people to come to European and U.S. conferences.
t Need stories about what is happening to children as a result of foreign military presence.

i Issues of prostitution and Amer-asian children should be highlighted

American Friends Service Committee is working on a book on foreign bases (not just U.S.): needs data on social impact of bases: criminality, land/ecology, prostitution, drugs. Also will do tour in 0.5. of anti-bases women.

Outreach to sailors and 615 from local peace movements

Get more 0.8. peace activists to go to where bases are and see for themselves.

Pamphlet on 0.8. Bases in the Philippines should be ready soon, contact Boone Schirmer

Foreign Bases Project (FBP) is working on an overview discussion of foreign bases and naval issues for the International Peace Bureau, along with a map of foreign bases (needs info about locations and functions of facilities and movements and actions against bases)

Need international bulletin or newsletter (FBP is considering this)

Should debate officials from both East and West

Need for expertise in movement (e.g. Philippine group marched on Clark Air Base demanding to inspect facility for nuclear weapons; would not have known what to look for if they had been let in.) Also need conversion expertise.

Audrey Schirmer will be working on film about impact of bases in Italy, Philippines and one other country.)

Report prepared by John Miller, Foreign Bases Project