Policy Forum 11-26: National and International Protests Challenge Naval Base Construction on Jeju Island, South Korea

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National and International Protests Challenge Naval Base Construction on Jeju Island, South Korea

By Gwisook Gwon

August 23, 2011

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I. Introduction

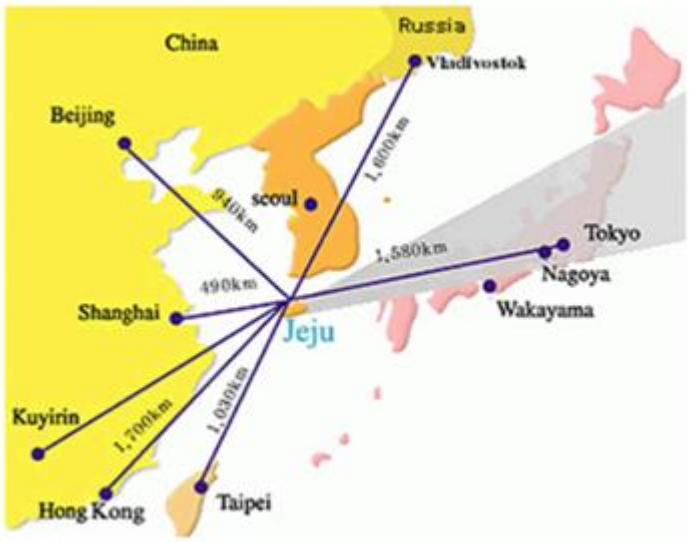
Gwisook Gwon, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Jeju National University, South Korea analyzes the 'Save Jeju Island' civil society movement, which has been protesting the construction of a naval base south-west of the Korean peninsula for the past ten years. Her article presents opposing discourses surrounding issues of democratic procedure, community solidarity and environmental protection in relation to the base construction.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Nautilus Institute. Readers should note that Nautilus seeks a diversity of views and opinions on significant topics in order to identify common ground.

II. Article by Gwisook Gwon

- National and International Protests Challenge Naval Base Construction on Jeju Island, South Korea
By Gwisook Gwon

On August 12, CNN, introduced the “Save Jeju Island” petition when it interviewed Gloria Steinem. The petition urges the Korean president Lee Myung Bak to stop the naval base building in Gangjeong village, Jeju Island, south-west of the mainland of Korea and strategically located in relation to China, Japan, Korea and Russia.



Strategic Jeju

This article attempts to explain the background of this movement by analyzing frames, discourses or

narratives developed by major actors. Only recently, this local issue has become a global one, but the movement has a complex history of almost 10 years.

The movement against construction of a naval base on Jeju Island began in 2002 when the Korean navy announced plans to pursue an 'ocean navy strategy' to build military strength at sea through deploying large warships (*Chosun.com*, May 27, 2007). Challengers pointed out that the base would become a center for a naval arms race in the Asia-Pacific and a new phase in the ROK-US military alliance with Jeju as a focal point for monitoring and challenging China. [1] With both China and Japan strengthening their naval forces with the newest vessels and submarines [2], peace activists have contended that the new base could only intensify hostilities throughout the region. [3]

Although some civil organizations nationwide had expressed opinions about the construction, the movement was initially largely limited within Jeju. While the national media had occasionally reported on the construction, most mainlanders were unaware of the opposition movement. Outside opponents of the bases only recently came to play a major role after Yang Yoon-mo's hunger strike. Yang Yoon-mo, a film critic, went on a hunger strike for 71 days including 57 days in prison, following his arrest on April 6, 2011. [4] His life-risking strike triggered a movement opposing the naval base, and the issue of an arms race played an important role in mobilizing support nationally and internally.

In 2002, the Korean navy proposed Hwasoon village (in western Jeju), the primary location of the Japanese military during the Asia-Pacific War, as the site of the base. However, the proposed site was switched from Hwasoon (2002-2005), to Wimi (2005-2007) and then to Gangjeong (2007-present). Along with this change of site, not only have the major actors in the movement, but also the frames or discourses of competing groups, been transformed. In order to explain Yang and the villagers' struggle, I pay special attention to the discourses of opposition forces in Gangjeong village. And I show how the discourses or narratives have affected the culture of the movement such as its rituals and collective identity.

Theorists of cultural analysis in social movements define discourse as "the summation of symbolic interchange of what is being talked and written about, of the interrelations of symbols and their systematic occurrence." [5] The analysis of discourse is an important tool for understanding the shared beliefs and experiences that were overlooked by resource mobilization approaches. Frames or discourses are also significant strategic tools for recruiting participants. [6]

I examine discourses and related narratives through the speech acts, including public statements and stories, of actors. I have observed the struggle and interviewed the oppositional parties, especially residents of Gangjeong, since 2007.

The Navy vs Jeju Residents: National Security vs The Vision of Jeju Island

When the plan to build a naval base in Hwasoon village was made public in June 2002, the major actors were the navy and Jeju society. Although Hwasoon residents and civil groups led the protest, most residents of Jeju took this as a social problem of Jeju Island rather than of Hwasoon. While the navy moved to persuade the residents of Hwasoon to accept the base in the name of national security, the whole society of Jeju divided into pro and con forces over base construction. The protestors' discourse focused on the inconsistency with the vision for Jeju as an Island of peace and human rights. [7] At the end of that year the Jeju government asked the Maritime Affairs Ministry to stop the planned construction on the basis of public opinion.

The Navy & the Jeju Government vs Jeju Island: National Security & Regional Development vs the Image of 'Island of Peace'

The conflict between the navy and anti-base residents of Jeju resumed when the navy again proposed to construct their base at Hwasoon. The new plan called for a base with a land area of about 400,000 square meters. With an investment of 8 trillion won, the base was to moor 20 sophisticated warships including 7,600-ton Aegis-equipped KDX-III destroyers.

This time the Jeju government became involved. Governor Kim Tae-whan, who was elected in 2006,

established a task force (T/F) to analyze the effects of the construction of the naval base on various fields of Jeju society.
The official justification the navy presented was national security. The base would protect the oil route near the Island and check potential threats from China or Japan. They also emphasized the economic advantages that came with the construction of the naval base in order to appeal to local residents (*Jeju Sori*, May 31, 2007). The Jeju government, by contrast emphasized the necessity to secure approval of the residents, the promotion of regional development, and compatibility with the image of 'Island of Peace' proclaimed by the central government in April 2005 (*Jeju Sori*, May 14, 2007).
As mentioned above, some protestors criticized the naval base in connection with its role in implementing a US missile defense system aimed at China on the grounds that it would inflame hostilities. However, this did not develop into a major discourse because most residents lacked information to judge. Moreover, the navy strongly denied the possibility of conflict. The main subjects of conferences and the local media were those raised by the Jeju government. Jeju people again divided into two groups.



Navy posters at the construction site.

While the navy had a hard time gaining the consent of the residents of Hwasoon, in August 2005 some Wimi villagers (in southeastern Jeju) asked the navy to bring the base to their area for local development. However, within months, most villagers voiced disagreement with this request. Fierce protests continued in Wimi until a survey of public opinion in May 2007 decided against Wimi as a site for the base. The residents developed their own discourses in the interaction with the navy and the local government. The alternatives they proposed were keeping peace by peaceful means, the right to live for villagers, and the agreement of villagers.

The Jeju Government vs Gangjeong Village: Regional Development vs Democratic Procedure & Breakdown of Community
After the Jeju governor outlined a roadmap for site selection based on an April 10, 2007 public opinion poll, attention on Jeju focused on the selection of the site. The construction was taken for granted, and media attention focused on the method of the survey. [8] When about 100 villagers in Gangjeong (in southern Jeju) asked to be the third candidate site for the base during a temporary town meeting on April 27, 2007, the construction of the naval base tended to become a problem for particular villages rather than of the whole society of Jeju. [9] Before the rest of the villagers in Gangjeong had addressed the situation, the first of two surveys were done in a single week. The Governor then announced on May 14, 2007 that Gangjeong village had been selected.
Since then, the opposing residents have struggled to reverse this abrupt decision. They formed

organizations such as ‘the committee on measures to oppose base construction’ and ‘the committee of Gangjeong village’. Those groups, held a plebiscite on August 20, 2007 to ascertain opinions of residents despite a boycott by pro construction villagers. The result was 36 for and 680 against the construction. Following the vote, the oppositional villagers began to speak as the leading actors.



Demanding a Vote for Residents, June 19, 2007

While both the navy and the Jeju government emphasized regional development, investment in various facilities, and maximum compensation for residents rather than national defense in a classical attempt to buy off local opponents of the base, [10] opposition groups built collective identity through grievances, narratives, and experiences of movement.

The collective identity of protestors was at first based on their anger toward the pro-construction villagers and former Jeju governor, Kim Tae-whan. The residents I interviewed accused those villagers of selling out their home town with its 400 year history and the governor of betraying their support in the 2006 election. At the same time, the protestors evoked a proud collective memory of the village, referring to it as the ‘number one village’.

With the solidarity of rage, the opposition residents evoked the democratic process. They criticized the undemocratic process of the construction forces and asked the local government to review the project by legitimate procedures such as a plebiscite. They also called into question numerous administrative processes that excluded the voice of residents.
To legitimate the cause, they created nonviolent rituals such as an art festival, a movement to collect signatures, a one-man relay protest, the presentation of petitions, and shaving heads. [11]



Head Shaving Ritual, April 21, 2009.

In particular, they twice organized a ‘peace festival’ to send peace messages to everyone concerned and to energize themselves with various performances. In turn, these experiences strengthened their collective identity with a pride of custodianship of their own village as well as of advocates for democracy and peace.

In May 2008, when the national assembly proposed building a combined port for both cruise vessels and naval vessels, the residents called on the Jeju governor to reexamine the site again. This led to demands for a recall of the Island governor by vote in August 2009. The governor responded to the recall effort by arguing in favor of the national project.

Another issue raised by villagers was the problem of the breakdown of the community. Along with the division of opinions, some family members even refused to join together to offer memorial services for their ancestors, perhaps the most important ritual for family union in Jeju society. And, according to the residents, 80% of 200 informal social groups and a traditional private village fund were disrupted. Old friendships dissolved, resulting in heavy stress for almost all of the villagers in Gangjeong. The villagers called this the 2nd 4.3, alluding to the disaster that had created extreme trauma in Jeju society in the years 1948-53. The protestors attributed this tragedy to the undemocratic administration and the dividing strategy of the power holders.



Ritual Protest: Three steps and one deep bow.
Source: Jeju Sori, August 21, 2008.

The next main issue was the environment. The navy from the outset had promised to build the base on environment-friendly principles. However, opposition residents raised another environmental issue challenging the selection of the site. They have highlighted the fact that the coast in Gangjeong village is a nationally protected coastal area and its sea is the only area in Korea where the UNESCO-designated soft corals exist. Further the red-foot crabs, a government-designated endangered species, live there in addition to the unique rock formations. They have asked why the navy needs this protected area for a naval base. Moreover, they have advanced the movement to preserve nature through re-identifying their own groups.

The environmental issue was escalating when the navy moved to the next procedure without conducting a feasibility study of environmental effects. The Jeju government responded in December 2009 by announcing a decision to revise its designation of the area’s protected status. The protestors filed lawsuits in response, but the court rejected their challenge. [12]
During these processes the navy re-emphasized its intention to move forward with construction

while stating its commitment to the environment by announcing that it would transplant the rare species to another area. Although the issue of the environment failed to stop the rush to construction, it drew attention from environmentalists.

The New Jeju Government of 2010 vs Gangjeong Village; Win-Win Solution vs Stopping Construction

After a groundbreaking ceremony in January 2010 and the arrest of approximately 50 protestors, a resident told me that "we are very frustrated and cannot trust outside parties like the media, the court and the Jeju Council." Having suffered from all kinds of accusations, fines, and arrests over 4 years, and having reached the limit of resource mobilization, they concluded that the only possible way to halt the base was to sacrifice their own bodies.

Woo Keun-min, the new Jeju governor elected in 2010, suggested a so-called 'win-win project' to solve the conflict following his inauguration in July. He proposed a special law to support development of the region in the vicinity of the naval base on the basis of the opinions of the residents (*Seogwipo.co.kr*, November 29, 2010).

According to villagers, this policy divided the opposition into 'hard liners' and 'the reasonable', the latter being prepared to accept the incentives offered by the state. Following their failure to convince the state to reexamine the choice of the site on the basis of villager opposition, conflicts between the groups deepened (*Jeju Sori*, December 17, 2010). Even after 75% of 106 residents voted in favor of stronger protest action, the number of protestors in the construction area decreased. The hard liners had to fight the contract companies such as Samsung C & T and Daerim Industry as well as the police and the navy. Yang Yoon-mo along with other protestors lay down under the construction trucks and he was arrested again on April 6, 2011.

The Navy vs Gangjeong Village & Peace-Makers: Continuing the Work vs Peace and Life

Since Yang's hunger strike, the frame or system of meaning, of the protest has changed. The news about Yang spread quickly throughout the mainland of Korea, in particular, in culture and art circles through internet networks. The internet café created by Gangjeong village has become a vital center, with support of non-residents, in delivering news of Gangjeong and in collecting kinds of resources. [13] The blog for international supporters has attracted networkers and international peace organizations. [14] Even twitter, installed on May 1, 2011, has come to play a vital role in connecting residents and sympathizers. Through all these social networks, understanding of the situation has spread, and many anti-base and environmental activists have visited the village to help. Growing numbers of national and international organizations issued public statements of solidarity and calls to preserve peace in Northeast Asia (*Sisa Jeju*, June 3; *Oh My News*, June 8; Jeju Sori, July 5). On June 8, two months after Yang's arrest, 'National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing the Naval Base on Jeju Island' was formed by 140 organizations and 440 individuals (*NAPRI*, June 8). This network seeks to coordinate opposition to the construction on a nationwide scale and to put pressure for the national assembly to investigate the procedure of the construction. Even overseas organizations and 101 international peace organizations issued public statements objecting to the construction as a threat to peace in the Asia-Pacific region. These new actors, have boosted the opposition movement among residents, making it possible to raise funds and mobilize other resources nationally and internationally.



Yang's arrest on April 6, 2011.

On June 1, Yang Yoon-mo was sentenced to one and a half years in prison, with a stay of execution of two years. On July 2, during his physical recovery following the fast, the Gangjeong resistance and supporters organized a large-scale protest 'to revoke the plan for the construction of the naval base on Jeju Island.' Some 1,000 protestors from various sectors of society gathered in front of the city hall of Jeju city. Among them were well-known members of the national assembly, religious leaders, NGO representatives, members of twitter of Gangjeong, documentary directors, neighboring villagers, and 150 residents of Gangjeong. The owner of the twitter for Gangjeong, who had herself been arrested, told me "See! This is the outcome of Yang's strike. His approach to life led to this gathering of supporters."



Peace March with outside supporters, July 2, 2011.

The common values of the challengers, including residents, are preservation of the quality of life and nature, promotion of democracy, and preservation of peace through peaceful acts. The issue of potential armed conflicts has again come to the fore, and it has been widely discussed in the national internet press (*Oh My News*, June 29; *Pressian*, June 29). When civil organizations held a concert to support Gangjeong residents on May 28, the village chief declared that "this is just the beginning of peace". This announcement illustrates the symbolic transition of the frame for the movement. The village chief again declared the victory of peace in a protest on July 2.

Throughout, the navy has continued construction despite strong protests. The navy and the construction companies moved the huge dredge boat from Hwasoon to Gangjeong on June 20 and continued related construction.

When five opposition political parties of the Jeju district requested that construction be halted to resolve the clash, the navy responded that this would cost about 100 million won per day and would make it impossible to complete construction by the target date of 2014 (*Jeju Sori*, April 27, 2011). The Ministry of National Defense also rejected the request to stop construction by the Jeju government (*Jeju Sori*, May 18, 2011).



Protesting sea dredging, June 20, 2011. Source: The internet café of the Gangjeong village

The Navy, Samsung, and the Police vs Protestors: Crack Down vs Resistance

Meanwhile, the navy announced that it was proceeding with construction in a land area of 489,000 square meters with an investment of 9.8 trillion won. It stated that 14% of the work has already been completed at a cost of 1.4 trillion won (*Kyunghyang.com*, July 25, 2011).

At the time, some 40 protestors have been charged with obstruction and fined 50 million won (*The Hankyoreh*, July 26, 2011). In addition to applying for an injunction of off-limits against 77 protestors, the navy and Samsung C & T claimed 290 million won in compensation for damages by 14 protestors. A court decision on an application for an injunction is expected around the end of August.

Following an arrest of the leading three protestors on July 16 and a visit by the national police chief on July 21, about 300 policemen have been stationed at the entrance to Jungdeok, the intended naval base site and home of protesting villagers (*Jeju Sori*, July 25, 2011). [15] The chief called for rigorous enforcement in the event that construction is obstructed (*Jeju Sori*, July 21, 2011). Within a week, the national maritime police chief echoed the same order during his visit to Segwipo (the city that encompasses the southern half of Jeju including Gangjeong) (*Headline Jeju*, July 27, 2011).
The villagers and support organizations criticized government abuse and announced an all-out fight to protect the village and the peace (*Jeju Sori*, July 25, 2011). Since then, chained protestors, including Hyun Ae-ja, an ex-member of national assembly of Segwipo, have guarded the entrance to Jungdeok, and other protestors have stayed in the protestors' tent through the night.
On August 8, some 200 policemen blocked residents who tried to repair equipment in Jungdeok such as tents destroyed by typhoon Muifa (*Headline Jeju*, August 8, 2011). The next day they returned with the navy to prevent residents from bringing vinyl and other materials to the site. They arrested one activist for obstructing a police officer and assault (*Headline Jeju*, August 9, 2011). [16] The village chief criticized the navy for isolating activists in Jungdeok from villagers, and called for continued resistance against the crackdown.

On August 14, tension has heightened in the village when the protestors learned that 500-600 policemen, 16 police buses, 10 vehicles with suppression gear including 3 water cannons were dispatched from the mainland. The protesters responded by confirming their determination to protect their village (*Headline Jeju*, August 14, 2011). Being attacked by Jeju Islanders, the Jeju Council, oppositional political parties, national and international civil and religious organizations, and others, those police officers returned to Seoul on August 19, but around 160 police officers were again dispatched from the mainland in the same day. Moreover, on August 18, the Ministry of Defense has suggested an enforcement of the law when the court reaches a decision on its application for an injunction (*Sisa Jeju*, August 19, 2011).

While the navy and the police used force to stop the protests, the navy and/or Samsung C & T enforced another law over the last three months, accusing the protestors of impeding performance of duty. This provision was even more stressful for villagers precisely because it was so vague. One resident noted that a photographer taking pictures of the scene and a car owner who parked near the construction site were accused of obstruction of business. Another resident added that the law always sided with the navy and/or Samsung. They described this situation as re-enactment of the 4.3 massacre of 1948: "all kinds of complaints and accusations and fines are killing us this time instead of guns at that time."

Conservative vs Liberal Media: 'Pro-North Korea Forces' vs Peace Forces

While physical clashes occurred around Gangjeong, ideological clashes erupted in the national media. Conservative media re-emphasized the necessity to build the naval base and attacked activists as 'pro-North Korea leftists' (*Chosun.com*, July 20, 2011). [17] A leader of the Grand National Party, the ruling party, used the same words in the national assembly, demanding strict enforcement by the authorities (*Sisa Jeju*, July 27, 2011). Pro-construction organizations in an August 5 rally likewise attacked the pro-North Korea force. The label 'leftist' or 'communist' had often been used to suppress opposition views during earlier authoritarian regimes.

By contrast, liberal media criticized the integration of US and ROK defense systems while giving voice to the protestors (*Pressian*, July 29, 2011; *Hankyoreh 21*, August 5, 2011). Moreover, these media interviewed outside supporters (*The Hankyoreh*, July 29). They found that these supporters were ordinary citizens, artists, researchers or members of civil organizations who were concerned with peace. Four recent articles in *The New York Times* conveyed the views of anti-base forces, disseminating the issue worldwide. [18] Even CNN and ALJAZEERA broadcasted the protests of the naval base on Jeju Island on August 12, and on August 14 respectively.

Opposition Parties vs the Government: Reconsidering Construction vs Keeping Construction

On July 29, the mayor of Segwipo city accepted a government order to block the only path to enter Jungdeok. Seoul pressured the Jeju government with warnings of administrative and financial penalties for almost a year (*The Hankyoreh*, July 29, 2011). The Jeju governor, however, has remained quiet about the base project, except for re-addressing a win-win project (*Headline Jeju*, August 18, 2011).

With a general election and a presidential election coming in April and December next year respectively, the political parties have begun to raise the issue of the base. On August 4, the five opposition political parties called for a temporary halt in construction pending a full review by the national assembly. Immediately after their call, however, the Ministry of National Defense announced that it would push ahead with construction for national security and budget reasons. The Ministry denied again that the base was an outpost of the US military defense system (*Jeju Sori*, August 4, 2011).

The Democratic Party, the main opposition party, reached an agreement with the Grand National Party to convene a subcommittee to examine the construction budget, but it failed to obtain a temporary halt in construction. Finally, on August 11, a few members of the ruling Grand National Party visited to assess the situation in Gangjeong. The base will be an issue in the coming elections.

The Pro-construction Organizations vs the Protestors: Pushing ahead with Construction vs Terminating Construction project

Pro-construction villagers and their support organizations have issued public statements or held demonstrations in the course of the conflict. However, for the first time, on August 5, they held a large demonstration near the construction site. Some 400 supporters of construction demanded moving ahead with construction in the interest of national security and safeguarding peace. Supporters were from the Korea Veteran Association, the Navy Veteran Association and other conservative associations (*Sisa Jeju*, August 5, 2011). Their banners criticized the outside supporters as "pro-North Korea garbage". After the rally, they tried to march to Jungdeok, but 500 police blocked them to prevent clashes.

While pro-construction villagers gained outside support, [19] anti-construction villagers also won additional support. Father Moon Jeong-hyun, a leading exponent of the anti base movement in Pyeongtaek, moved to Gangjeong in July.



Father Moon sitting surrounded by youth conscripted as riot police in front of naval base construction headquarters

Catholic priests in Jeju parish have stayed in the tents of Jungdeok to block a sudden police action since July 25. Jeju parish also held mass in Jungdeok with about 1,000 believers on August 11 (*Jeju Sori*, August 11, 2011). Moreover, Gwangju parish, Korean YMCA, the Korean Teachers & Education Workers' Union, WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), Christian Conference of Asia, and others expressed solidarity with the villagers. The Global Campaign to Save Jeju Island was formed with a Website. [20] A growing number of public intellectuals worldwide, including Noam Chomsky, Richard Levins, George Katsiaficas, and Gloria Steinem have expressed support for the villagers.



Mass at Jungdeok on August 11, 2011.

On August 6, anti-construction villagers and supporters held a 2nd rally calling for an end to the plan to construct the base. About 800 participants came from throughout the nation. Most were ordinary citizens including a circle of culture and arts, members of civil organizations, and villagers. This time, leaders of opposition parties played a prominent role during the two-hour rally. [21] In positioning for the elections, each side emphasizes the search for peace, but the logic of the two is diametrically opposite.

With the development of the movement, a change has occurred in the collective identity and rituals of the protestors. A young villager told me that he had gained understanding of the older generation since struggling together. After learning about the history of the community, he came to identify strongly as a member of it. He and other villagers express strong determination to preserve their community for future generations.



Peace, Joy and Life Celebration

Meanwhile, outside supporters have come from all over the mainland and even outside the country. Some came to Jungdeok to support Gangjeong villagers from the start, but others reported that they became engaged after discovering the beauty of the seaside, the suffering of villagers, or the possibility of communal living. The result is that the collective identity of the protestors is changing from the solidarity of rage in 2007 to communal solidarity.

Along with new types of support, the rituals of the anti-construction groups become more diversified. As seen in the 2nd rally on August 6, songs, dances and plays constituted a large part of the demonstration.

The candlelight vigils every evening in front of the construction site show a similar pattern. The Gangjeong café, the center for communication, posted comic films and an ad for inviting mainlanders to spend their summer holiday camping in Jungdeok. Visitors and supporters spent their time walking, talking, or erecting towers with small stones. While some are still chained, demonstrators are creating softer, life-affirming means to vitalize the movement.



Tents to protect Jungdeok.

I have attempted to explain the background to the Gangjeong struggle by analyzing frames, discourses or narratives developed by major actors opposing base construction. The navy responded by emphasizing economic advantages to persuade the residents of Jeju Island, especially those of the relevant villages, to accept the base. The navy's weakness lies in its failure to gain the consent of the residents and in the fact that base construction is at odds with powerful images of Jeju Island.

The former Jeju government presented issues of the image of the Island of peace, invigoration of the local economy, and the consent of residents at first, but it put these factors aside and moved to site selection on the Island, circumventing the democratic process and stoking popular opposition. Later it highlighted the economic benefits to local residents. These policy shifts had the effect of isolating Gangjeong from outside supporters of the village. Moreover, the shifts had the effect of moving the residents of Jeju farther from the original issue of peace. The current government called for a win-win solution, but its proposal for conflict resolution had the effect of intensifying opposition.

Gangjeong opposition groups faced the difficult problem of justifying their protests against all of the supporters of the plan under complex circumstances. Meanwhile, they have continued to promote their discourse of peace and to counter the claims of proponents of local development predicated on a provocative military base in a protected area. They have raised important issues of democratic procedure, community solidarity and environmental protection. With a strong collective identity, they created or revived numerous rituals of protest over four years. Recognizing in 2011 that they had to place their own bodies on the line, they reemphasized the discourse of life and peace with growing support from outside the village, Jeju Island and Korea. Yang Yoon-mo's hunger strike was pivotal in mobilizing outside support throughout Korea and internationally. Moreover, it re-ignited the issue of the peace in the Asia-Pacific region, recruiting participants with the help of social networking and/or of national and international media. From Jeju Islanders to worldwide intellectuals, and from Korean oppositional political parties to civil and religious organizations abroad, outside supporters have been growing. Widely adopted master frames, as Snow and Benford conclude, have made it possible to align the experiences of sympathizers and incorporate prevalent beliefs and symbols on a scale that extends from the local community to the global. [22]

However, the military authorities have recently responded with a strict enforcement of the law, with

support of conservative media and the pro-base organizations. After additional police officers and suppression equipment vehicles have arrived at Jeju, the sense of urgency has grown. At this writing, tension has mounted around the village while participation and support have increased for both sides, leading to a slight change of collective identity and rituals among the protestors.

III. Notes

[1] The author edits the main text of the article and the updates: “National and International Protests Challenge Naval Base Construction on Jeju Island, South Korea”, The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol 9, Issue 33 No 2, August 15, 2011.

[2] Gwisook Gwon is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Jeju National University on Jeju Island. Her book, The Politics of Memory, a study of the Jeju 4.3 uprising, was designated an excellent book of the year 2007 by The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Korea.

[3] I am very grateful to Sung-youn Cho, Douglas Hansen, Heonik Kwon, and Mark Selden for constructive comments.

IV. References

[1] Cha, Kyoungeun, “Jeju and a Naval Arms Race in Asia”, Institute of Policy Studies, June 18, 2010; Uooksik Jung, “Oh! Peace”, Pressian, May 17, 2011.

[2] See Cha, Kyoungeun, ibid.

[3] Bruce Gagnon, co-coordinator and co-founder of ‘the Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear power in Space’, is a leading peace activist. See space4peace.blogspot.com.

[4] ‘Vimeo’ and ‘Youtube’ posted a film interview with Yang Yoon-mo. This film was made by Jane Jin Kaisen and Guston Sondin-Kung. Jane is an independent Danish filmmaker. Kim Min-Su (a young Gangjeong villager) filmed the footage of Yang's arrest. The film was posted on Vimeo (http://vimeo.com/24007992) on May 21, and on Youtube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD8zkOHN83W) on May 24, 2011. Yang was released on June 1. He is again hospitalized for treatment at this writing.

[5] Johnston, Hank, 1995, “A Methodology for Frame Analysis”, in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (eds.), Social Movements and Culture, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 218.

[6] Taylor, Verta and Nancy Whittier, 1995, “Analytical Approaches to Social Movement Culture”, in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (eds), ibid.

[7] Jeju residents have pursued peace and human rights as their vision for the Island since suffering from ‘the Jeju 4.3 massacre’. About 30,000, over 10% of the population, died or missing during 1948-1953, and the trauma has remained until today. See Jeju Weekly, March-May, 2011.

[8] The survey was designed to poll opinions of residents living in each administrative district with which the particular village was affiliated. As a result, opinions of the affected villages were largely ignored.

[9] The population of Gangjeong village was about 1,900, and eligible voters were about 1,400 according to resident registration as of 2007. However, the expected total number of votes was about 1, 050 since about 350 voters were not in the area at the time (Oh My News, November 13, 2007). See Ahn, Christine 2011 for details about the selection of the site. Christine Ahn, “Naval Base Tears Apart Korean Village”, Foreign Policy in Focus, August 19, 2011.

[10] Previous research also noted this transition of discourse. See Cho Sung-youn, 2008, “From an Island of Suffering to an Island of Peace”, Yoksabipyoung, no. 82.

[11] The ritual of shaving the head is a popular act showing strong determination of protesters and a means to strengthen solidarity in Korean society.

[12] This case is appealed to the Supreme Court. A decision to appeal is expected within the year.

[13] See the internet café of the Gangjeong village. http://cafe.daum.net/peacekj

[14] This blog is owned by Choi Sung-hee, a peace activist. She was imprisoned for holding a banner that said “Do not touch one stone. Do not touch one flower.” She participated in a hunger strike several times after her arrest on May 20, 2011. She was sentenced to 8 months in jail with a stay of

execution for two years on August 17.
[15] On July 16, about 20 undercover police officers arrested three leading activists in the anti-base movement in the village: village chief Kang Dong-kyun, Brother Song Kang-ho, and base opposition leader Ko Kwon-il. Kang Dong-kyun was released in the next day, but Song Kang-ho was released in the end of July. Lastly Ko Kwan-il was released on bail on August 9.
[16] The police reported that he was booked but not detained on August 10 (Headline Jeju, August 10).
[17] According to Yeo, referring to the supporters as an "outside force" was a government strategy to separate them from villagers in the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek. See Andrew Yeo, "Back to the Future: Korean Anti-base Resistance from Jeju Island to Pyeongtaek", The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol 9, Issue 32 No 3, August 8, 2011.
[18] Three writers, Christine Ahn, an executive director of Korean Policy Institute (August 5, 2011), Gloria Steinem (August 6, 2011), and Xiao Ling from Singapore (August 10, 2011), urged a halt to the militarization of Jeju Island for peace and life in Jeju and throughout the Asia-Pacific region. On August 18, 2011, Choe Sang-hun introduced the complex issues of the naval base, including breakdown of the community, environment, and American missile defense program.
[19] According to residents, only seven pro-base villagers showed up for the rally and some participants were mobilized by the government.
[20] The Save Jeju Island website administered by Matt Hoey, an aerospace nuclear weapons analyst, posts regular news updates. http://www.savejejuisland.org/Save_Jeju_Island/Welcome.html
[21] Among political leaders, Back Ki-wan, a prominent activist from the 60's, Jung Dong-young, a presidential candidate of the Democratic Party in 2007, and Kwon Young-gil, a presidential candidate of the Democratic Labor Party both in 2002 and in 2007, and members of national assembly showed up. Jung Dong-young mentioned the potential military conflicts between China and the USA, and promised to construct a peace park in Gangjeong, not the naval base.
[22] Snow, David and Robert Benford, 1992, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest", in Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), Frontiers in social Movement Theory, New Haven: Yale University Press.

IV. Nautilus invites your responses

The Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network invites your responses to this essay. Please send responses to: bscott@nautilus.org. Responses will be considered for redistribution to the network only if they include the author's name, affiliation, and explicit consent.

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