

CENTER FOR PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES
TEACHING OCEANIA SERIES
VOLUME 1

MILITARISM AND NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE PACIFIC



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

Credits

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Julianne Walsh, Founding and Managing Editor.

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Preface

Despite the impressive recent growth of Pacific-related course offerings at colleges and universities there has been little sustained discussion about teaching and learning in this dynamic field of study. This pedagogical silence reflects in large part a general lack of literature on wider philosophical questions about what Pacific Studies is or should be. At the Center for Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS) we are committed to scholarship that is of and for the Pacific, and not merely about it. This means a decolonized approach to inquiry that emphasizes reflexivity and privileges indigenous epistemologies, interests, and perceptions. It also means scholarly practices that are regional, comparative, interdisciplinary, grounded, and creative (Wesley-Smith 2016; Teaiwa 2010).

Teresia Teaiwa suggests that our ultimate objective should be "deep learning," a type of learning that goes beyond the superficial accumulation of information and towards a fundamental transformation of the way learners understand the world around them (Teaiwa 2011). In Pacific Studies this has come to mean a pedagogy that empowers students and allows them to see the possibility of positive change in a postcolonial world defined in large part by economic, political, cultural, and epistemic inequalities. The course materials we provide students (and rely on ourselves)

are obviously key to the success or otherwise of this educational quest.

The journey towards deep learning in Pacific Studies usually begins in the undergraduate classroom, where interests are piqued, passions stirred, curious minds engaged and challenged. And there is not much room for error. As Teaiwa points out for Victoria University of Wellington only a small proportion of the students taking Pacific Studies classes each year will become majors and pursue further study in the field. Similarly, for student taking PACS 108 Pacific Worlds at the University of Hawai'i, this may be their only structured learning experience focused on this vast and complex region. Teaiwa notes the importance of cooperative learning in the Pacific Studies classroom, where students and instructors share responsibility for the learning process. But, even if we embrace her canoe metaphor, and imagine ourselves bound together with student learners in a common intellectual voyage of discovery we are still obliged to rely to a large extent on written or visual texts to guide the journey. It has become increasingly apparent that suitable materials are hard to come by, out-of-date, or simply not produced with an undergraduate Pacific Studies audience in mind.

A consistent theme in student evaluations of Pacific Worlds since its introduction at UH Mānoa in 2009 has been the quality and appropriateness of the required readings. Given the absence of a general textbook for an introductory survey course such as this, instructors are obliged to pull together readings from a variety of sources including academic journals, edited collections, official reports, and newspaper articles. A 2015 survey of syllabi used by different instructors in this multi-section course over a 5-year period revealed some of the perils involved in this process: many of the broad themes covered in the course were poorly supported by readings narrowly focused on a particular aspect of the subject matter, framed by disciplinary concerns, dated, too advanced in tone or content, or otherwise inaccessible to learners just beginning their educational journeys. As report author and MA candidate Andrea Staley commented, the inevitable result is that students "either do not understand and retain the content" or decide not to engage with the assigned readings at all (Staley 2015).

Spearheaded by CPIS Associate Specialist Julie Walsh, the Teaching Oceania project is designed to create materials suitable for interdisciplinary undergraduate classes in Pacific Studies and make them widely available. The materials are produced by those who steer the learning canoes, Pacific Studies instructors working together collectively on broad topics for which existing resources are sparse or inadequate. The materials are made accessible in digital form, allowing for visual media to supplement and enrich

written components, for interactive elements to be included, and to facilitate periodic updates as well as wide circulation. Making the material available in digital form has the added value of appealing to a generation of students well versed in digital media of all types, although the debate among educational specialists about learning styles among "digital natives" or "digital residents" is by no means resolved (Prensky 2001).

Teaching Oceania was launched with a two-and-a-half-day workshop held 16-18 February 2016 at Kapi'olani Community College (KCC) and on the UH Mānoa campus. Supported by funding from CPIS' National Resource Center grant and co-sponsored with KCC, and Brigham Young University-Hawai'i, the workshop was attended by 25 participants from 12 different campuses in the US and 7 countries around the region. Participants worked together in groups addressing 4 broad topics: Arts and Identity, Gender, Militarism and Nuclear Testing, and Health and Environment. Under the supervision of Julie Walsh, the resulting draft materials were further edited by Professor Monica C. LaBriola (UH - West O'ahu) with media selections enhanced by Professor Alexander Mawyer (UH Mānoa). Final texts were copy edited by the center's Jan Rensel while layout was designed and completed by Andrea Staley and Teora Morris, both CPIS BA alumnae.

Terence Wesley-Smith

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Teaching Oceania Series

The Teaching Oceania series is designed to serve the needs of undergraduate students of Pacific Islands Studies across Oceania and elsewhere. The Center for Pacific Islands Studies invites collaborative proposals for additional volumes in this series. Monica C. LaBriola (UH - West O'ahu) serves as Series Editor to ensure consistency of style, accessibility, and organization of the series.

The Teaching Oceania series is defined by:

- a regional perspective
- a collaborative process. The current texts have been written by teams of 4 or more scholars with an aim of regional representation to appeal to a broad audience through diverse examples
- a theme or topic that is not yet accessible to undergraduate students through current literature
- a Pacific Islands Studies approach, that is: interdisciplinary, creative, comparative and grounded
- attractive, relevant images, video, audio, and interactive features
- accessibility in multiple formats, interactively as iBooks, EPUBs, and broadly as PDF files
- free access to the texts at permanent links on the University of Hawai'i Scholar Space [Center for Pacific Islands Studies Community](#)

For inquiries and more information contact, please feel free to contact us.

Julie Walsh

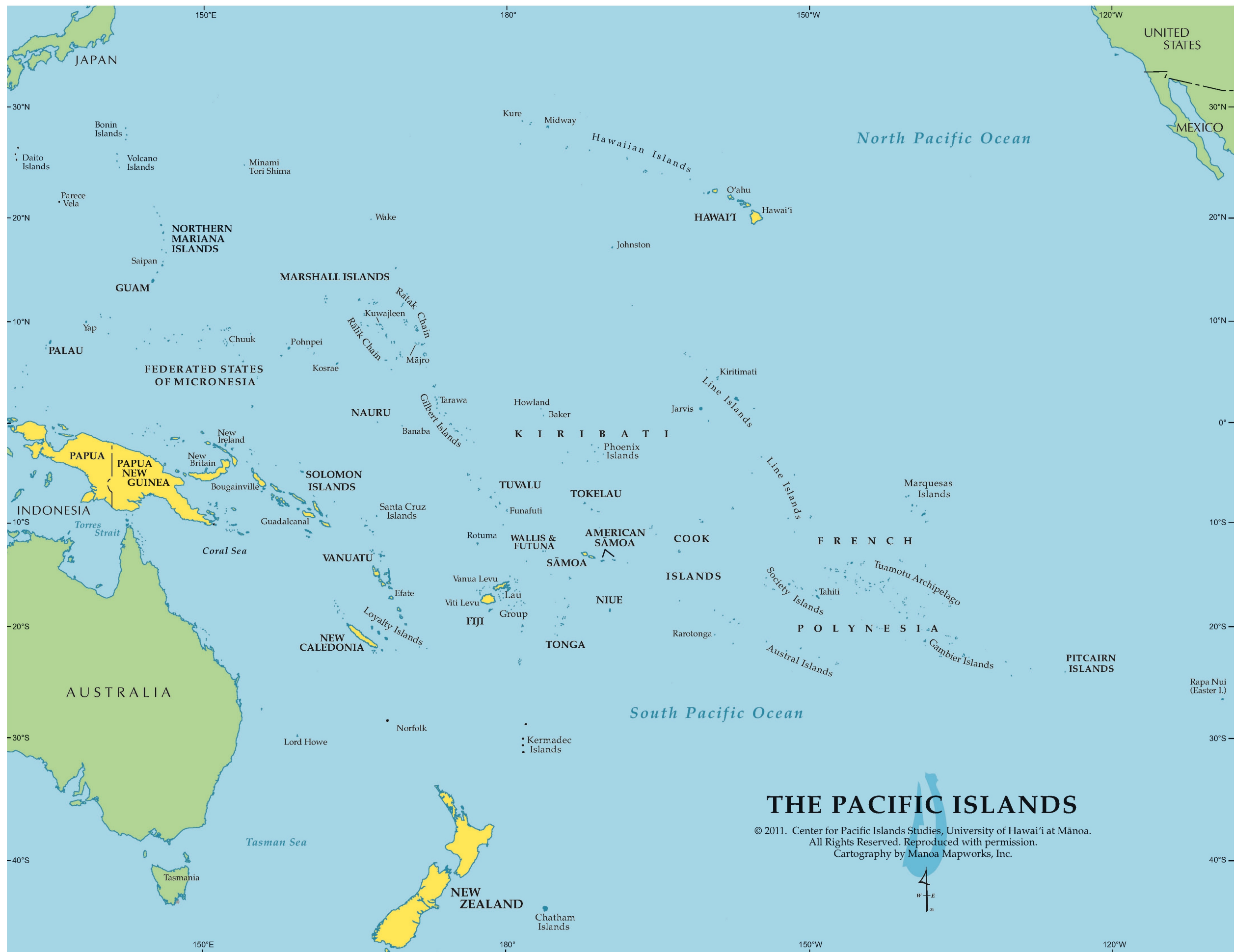
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Other Volumes

1. Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific
2. Gender in the Pacific
3. Health and Environment in the Pacific
4. Oceanic Arts: Continuity and Innovation
5. Islands of French Speaking Oceania



THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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The editors would also like to acknowledge the diligent and generous efforts of Rusty Keele (Weber State University), who identified errors and corrections for this current volume (2020).

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

1. Identify, describe, and map militarism and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands.
2. Explain and discuss the impacts of militarization and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands and on Pacific Islanders.
3. Reflect on and address indigenous and local responses and resistance to militarization and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands.

Volume 1 Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific
Teaching Oceania Series

Introduction and Overview

Introduction and Overview

Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific

Nuclear testing was pervasive in the Pacific Islands region (also called Oceania) in the second half of the twentieth century, with the United States, France, and Great Britain conducting tests in the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Johnston Atoll (Kalama Island), and Australia. The Cold War climate and perceived need to protect national interests during that period led colonial powers to inflict nuclear harm on Pacific Islanders as ideologies of **militarism** justified and normalized the impacts of testing on indigenous people and environments. In fact, long histories of military buildup by imperial powers in the region made the nuclear era possible.

Confronted with the realities of militarism and nuclear testing in the twentieth century, Pacific Islanders became enmeshed in global imperial narratives even as they voiced their desires for autonomy and sovereignty. Many individuals and communities resisted **militarization** and nuclear testing by colonial regimes and in doing so activated and energized anticolonial and postcolonial political, social, and cultural movements. Nevertheless, the nuclear

poisoning of islands and bodies persisted and the effects will last thousands of years. Meanwhile, other practices such as missile testing, maintaining active military bases, recruiting Pacific Islanders into the US or French or UN militaries, and chemical waste dumping continue to characterize the militarization of the contemporary Pacific.

This short book offers an overview of militarism and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands region. The text aims to spark critical thinking and discussions of militarism and to instill a sense of empathy with Pacific Islanders whose lives have been inextricably intertwined with militarism's histories, legacies, lived realities, and uncertain futures. Perspectives from Pacific studies, history, anthropology, and political science—as well as cultural expertise in the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Hawai'i, and Palau—offer a comparative, theoretically informed, transdisciplinary, and collaborative viewpoint and approach.

Section 1 frames the concept of militarism and the practice of nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands. Section 2 outlines historical trends in imperialism and militarization



Image 1.
Dancers from Guam entertain
the USS Frank Cable.

beginning with the arrival of the Spanish on Guam in the seventeenth century and ending with World War II. Section 3 continues with a focused look at the nuclear-testing era while Section 4 examines indigenous responses to militarism more generally. Section 5 provides a glimpse of a few contemporary “militarized currents” (Shigematsu and

Camacho 2010), and the concluding section suggests other forms of militarization for students to consider and explore in more depth.

Framing Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific

A few key terms are essential to understanding militarism and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands. It is also crucial to recognize the interconnections between militarism and nuclear testing and some of the ways the two have developed over time following decisions by individuals, groups, and nations.

Militarism is the **ideology** that a nation should maintain and be ready to use its strong military capabilities to advance its national interests. Within a nation-state, there might be considerable debate about this ideology and how it should guide governmental policy and international relations. Historically, militarism has played a significant role in the imperialist and expansionist ideologies of nation-states. Militarism results in concrete actions and effects; for a nation at large it can mean acquiring territory, increasing industrial pro-

duction, creating jobs, and improving the economy through military spending and related projects.

Whereas militarism is an ideology and a historically rooted system of power generally connected to imperialism, militarization is a "step-by-step process by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on, or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria" (Enloe 2000, 281). As a process, militarization is not exclusively

an undertaking by the military; instead, other social institutions such as schools, the tourism industry, and news media work to support militarization and the military. Militarization in Oceania has also been a deeply gendered process because it depends on a hierarchy in which some militarized objects, bodies, and spaces are marked as masculine while other ob-

Imperialism

Historian Gary Okihiro explains that imperialism "describes a phase of capitalism and the expansion of nations, as extensions of the idea of sovereignty, outside their territorial boundaries. It produces empires and colonies."

jects, bodies, and people, places, and things are marked as feminine—and the masculine (and thereby the military) is lifted up as powerful and dominant (Teaiwa 1994).

Nuclear testing was a prominent component of militarism and militarization during the Cold War era, which lasted from approximately 1947 to 1991. That said, while the development and testing of nuclear weapons has been a part of contemporary militarism, few countries have had the technological or financial capacity to develop nuclear weapons programs. Although the Cold War has ended and arms treaties have somewhat limited the proliferation of nuclear arms, the presence of nuclear weapons is a continuing cause for global concern as the United States, Russia, and other nations including France, Great Britain, India, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea maintain nuclear capabilities.

Pacific Islanders and islands have experienced the effects of nuclear testing perhaps more than any other place or people. Since the end of World War II, nuclear testing by the United States in the Marshall Islands, Johnston Atoll, and Kiritimati Island (part of the nation of Kiribati) (Nuclear Weapon Archive 2005); by Great Britain in Australia and Kiritimati (Wolman 2008); and by France in French Polynesia has had numerous effects on people as well as land and ocean environments. Furthermore, radioactivity from tests

performed since the late 1940s persists in some places. Importantly, no studies have definitively proved that there are “safe” levels of radiation for humans and other life forms living near or consuming food from areas close to test sites.

The following sections examine in more detail how militarism and nuclear testing have played out and continue to operate in Oceania.

France continued to conduct nuclear tests until 1996. See Section 3.

Image 2.
Ships in Hawai'i Waters.



Activity

Define "ideology."
Compare and contrast how the ideology of militarism led to the militarization of two or more Pacific Islands places.



Image 3.
The 4th Battalion, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), salute a wreath they laid at the Tomb of the Unknown to commemorate the liberation of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands during World War II.

Imperialism and Militarism to World War II

By the end of the nineteenth century, a number of nations had established themselves as empire builders in Oceania. Spain, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States competed with one another and claimed Pacific Island places as colonies beyond their own territorial borders. The acquisition and transfer of colonies by larger nations—often through military means and for military purposes—is just one example of how Pacific Island places and people have not always had a strong voice in the governance of their own islands.

Pacific colonial outposts served as strategic stopping points for military and civilian ships and airplanes. For example, the United States used Hawai'i to train and prepare thousands of troops for the Spanish-American War in the Philippines (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1902). In winning that war those

Half a world away in the Caribbean, the US claimed Puerto Rico as a territory and held Cuba as a protectorate for a number of years.

wars, the US took control of the former Spanish colonies of Guam, the Northern Marianas, and the Philippines in the Pacific. Further south, the United States and Germany settled their colonial rivalry in 1899 by dividing the Samoan Islands, with Germany claiming the western islands (now the independent nation of Sāmoa) and the US acquiring the eastern islands (now American Sāmoa). The US Navy played a central role in gaining possession of and administering eastern Sāmoa—thus demonstrating how militarism has enabled the acquisition of Pacific Island places as “outposts” for the colonial expansion of larger nations.

Also in the nineteenth century, colonial powers including the United States sought islands with deep harbors for docking large ships; they found these at Pearl Harbor (Pu'uloa) on the island of O'ahu in Hawai'i and Pago Pago in eastern Sāmoa (now American Sāmoa). These harbors be-

Image 4.

American troops on their way to the Philippines during the Spanish American War drilled at Camp McKinley near Diamond Head in Hawai'i.



came justifications for acquiring island territories in Hawai'i and eastern

Sāmoa—as gun-

boats, warships, and later submarines required these to stop for fuel, food, water, and other supplies. Later, the US would similarly acquire and develop airstrips on islands such as Johnston Atoll south of Hawai'i, which functioned as a nuclear-testing and missile launch site in the early 1960s.

World War I brought various colonial powers into sharper conflict with one another and had a major impact on the Pacific Islands. In the Samoan Islands, New Zealand forces took German (western) Sāmoa without bloodshed in 1914 with the help of nearby Australian and French war-

ships. Britain went on to administer western Sāmoa under a League of Nations mandate from 1920 until the islands became a United Nations Trust Territory under the jurisdiction of New Zealand in 1946.

Western nations were not the only ones competing to establish colonies in the Pacific Islands. Beginning with the Meiji Restoration of the 1860s, Japan industrialized, developed its military power, and began to look to expand beyond its borders. In the early twentieth century, Japan allied itself with Britain against Germany as Germany's control over parts of the area known as Micronesia weakened. When World War I started in 1914, Germany shifted its fo-

Germany in the Pacific

Areas controlled by the German Empire during this period included the northeast corner of the island of New Guinea and several neighboring islands (e.g., the Bismarck Archipelago, northern Solomon Islands, and Bougainville); present-day Sāmoa; and several areas in Micronesia including the present-day Federated States of Micronesia, the present-day Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, and Nauru.

Japanese Mandate

Japan controlled parts of Micronesia from 1914 through the 1940s as part of its League of Nations South Pacific Mandate. Japanese-controlled areas included Palau, the present-day Northern Mariana Islands, the present-day Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands.

cus to Europe, leaving its colonial outposts in the Pacific vulnerable. Japan used its growing navy to seize islands around Micronesia and, at the end of the war, the League of Nations recognized Japan's occupation of the islands as a form of trusteeship.

World War II in the Pacific

Sometimes called the "Big Death" and the "Typhoon of War" by Pacific Islanders, World War II was one of the most devastating and far-reaching manifestations of militarism in the history of the Pacific Islands. During World War II, the region became a staging ground for some of the most intense battles in human history as the United States, Japan, and their respective allies fought across the island and ocean spaces Pacific Islanders have called home for millennia. Foreign armies waged these battles with varying levels of violence and intensity that almost always involved Pacific lives, lands, homes, sacred sites, ocean routes, and fishing grounds. Along the way, foreign imperial powers pulled Pacific Islanders into a war that was not theirs—but that profoundly and permanently transformed their islands and communities.

Describing the war as a "typhoon" due to the rapid and extensive destruction caused, Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout, and Lawrence Carucci have helped to document the experiences of those whose homes and livelihoods the Pacific War changed forever.

Although many Pacific places in the region known as Micronesia and beyond experienced Japan's rapid military buildup throughout much of the 1930s, World War II officially came to the Pacific Islands on 7 December 1941 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on the island of O'ahu and the US declaration of war on Japan the following day. Through-

out the war, American and Japanese armies relied on indigenous laborers, scouts, coast watchers, and troops to make advances and claim territory in a number of deadly battles including the Battle of Coral Sea (New Guinea); the Battle of Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands); the Battle of Tarawa (Kiribati); the Battles of Guam and Saipan, the Battle of Kwajalein (Marshall Islands); and many others on Palau, Chuuk, Wake Island, Midway Atoll, and beyond. Pacific Islanders served on both sides of these battles, with Islander contributions and allegiances generally reflecting prewar imperial affiliations.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, for example, the US Army started using Kaho'olawe Island in Hawai'i for military training and bombing practice, while the Japanese forced 2,000 residents of Sumay, Guam, to relocate to

make room for a Japanese garrison. Other Islanders and island residents were forced into labor camps, internment camps, and concentration camps against their will: for example, the Japanese forced 18,000 Chamorro into the Manenggon Concentration Camp on Guam and the US Army held several hundred Japanese Americans and German Americans at Honouliuli Internment Camp on O'ahu. Meanwhile, women and girls in these camps and throughout the islands were subjected to sexual exploitation and violence. Five Chamorro girls were raped in the Japanese takeover of Sumay, and many Chamorro women were forced to serve as "comfort women" during the Japanese occupation of Guam. While World War II was in many ways devastating for Pacific Islanders and Pacific Island environments, the war also transformed sociopolitical configurations in the region and laid the groundwork for the decolonization of many island societies that had long been ruled by foreign colonizers from afar. In fact, the war inspired and enabled Islanders to challenge the authority of the colonial powers long present on their islands. For example, the presence of African-American troops in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands inspired Islanders to challenge colonial color bounda-

ries that had long served to deny Melanesians equal economic and political status and opportunities. Just a few years later in 1962, Western Sāmoa (now Sāmoa) became the first Pacific Island nation to formally gain independence from a colonial power (New Zealand)—with other nations following over the next three decades. Meanwhile, as colonial ties weakened in some areas, the United States and France tightened their grip on their Pacific holdings—largely for military and strategic reasons related to the Cold War, global positioning, militarism, and nuclear testing.

Image 5.

Uncle Sam schooling his new students—i.e., his new colonies in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

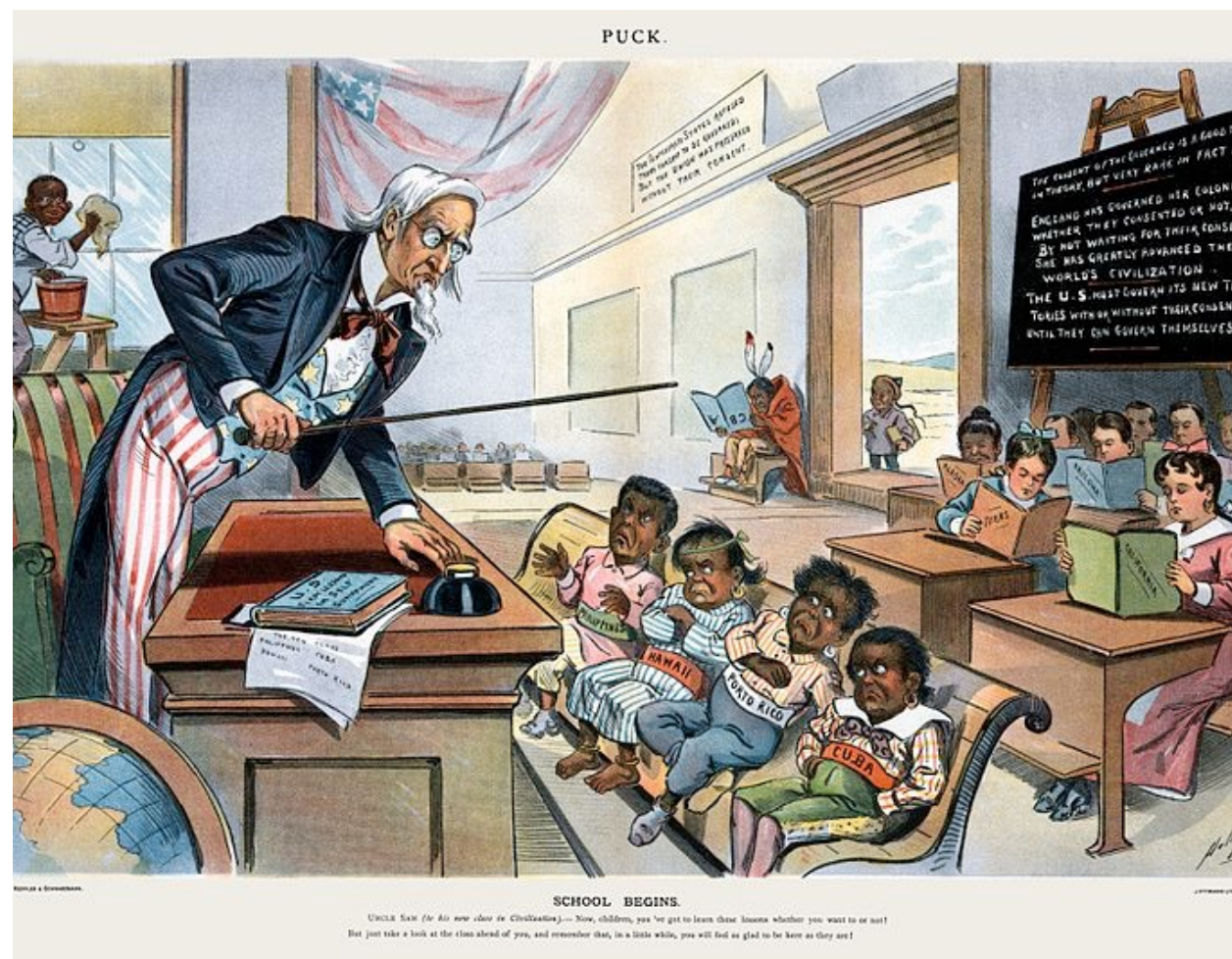




Image 6.

Pacific Islanders across the region worked as laborers during World War II. Here, Solomon Islands Labor Corps and Seabees work on the Guadalcanal airfield (Top Left).



Image 7.

On New Guinea, the Papuan Infantry Battalion helped the Australians thwart Japanese advances even as the Pohnpeian Kessitihai fought on the side of Japan. In the end, 15,000 New Guineans and countless other Pacific Islander men, women, and children perished in fighting, bombings, and executions by both sides (Top Right).

Image 8.

In addition to widespread loss of life, World War II resulted in other devastating impacts on Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders. Foreign militaries on both sides of the conflict moved Islanders from their homes and confiscated land to build airstrips or for other military uses (Bottom Right).



Activity

Consult a resource that recounts the experiences of Pacific Islanders during World War II (e.g., *Memories of War: Micronesians in the Pacific War* by Suzanne Falgout, Lin Poyer, and Lawrence Marshall Carucci). Write a one to two page reflection paper on how the war negatively impacted and/or empowered one group of Pacific Islanders.

Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

The Cold War and the Nuclear Arms Race

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as superpowers locked in a global competition for power, prestige, and allies. Although they had been allies during the war, with Adolf Hitler and fascism defeated in Europe, the alliance quickly dissolved as the two powers promoted their political and economic ideologies around the world—capitalism and democracy for the Americans and communism and one-party rule for the Soviets. The conflict was known as the Cold War because the United States and the Soviet Union did not directly engage each other in large-scale fighting; instead, they remained locked in a decades-long struggle for global **hegemony** in which each side used political, economic, military, and other strategies to assert its influence and to limit the power and influence of the other.

A central feature of the Cold War was a nuclear arms race in which each side accumulated nuclear weapons as

part of a military strategy known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). According to MAD, a nuclear attack by one side would lead to a retaliatory attack by the other—thus resulting in the destruction of both sides. In theory, the fear of nuclear annihilation would prevent each side from initiating an attack on the other. For the strategy to work in practice, each side needed enough nuclear weapons to deter the other from launching an initial attack. The “deterrence” strategy motivated the United States and the Soviet Union to accumulate enough nuclear weapons to destroy the other several times over. It also led both sides to conduct nuclear tests within their own borders and in areas they controlled as part of their global empires and spheres of influence.

Nuclear Testing in Oceania

Within this Cold War context, the United States, Great Britain, and France conducted nuclear tests in the Pacific Is-

lands and Australia beginning in the 1940s. The United States conducted sixty-seven tests on **Bikini** and **Enewetak Atolls** in the Marshall Islands from 1946 to 1958, several tests on Kiritimati Island in Kiribati from the late 1950s to early 1960s, and a series of atmospheric and high-altitude nuclear explosions on Johnston Atoll (Kalama Island) from 1958 to 1975. Meanwhile, Great Britain conducted twelve nuclear tests in Australia and Kiribati from

1952 to 1958 and France conducted 193 nuclear tests on Moruroa and **Fangataufa Atolls** in the Tuamotu Archipelago in French Polynesia from 1966 to 1996. In each case, a colonial or military relationship allowed the nuclear power to use the islands or territory for nuclear testing, even when it did not have the full consent of the residents or traditional owners of the areas in question. The nuclear powers often used the islands' remoteness, isolation, and the presumed

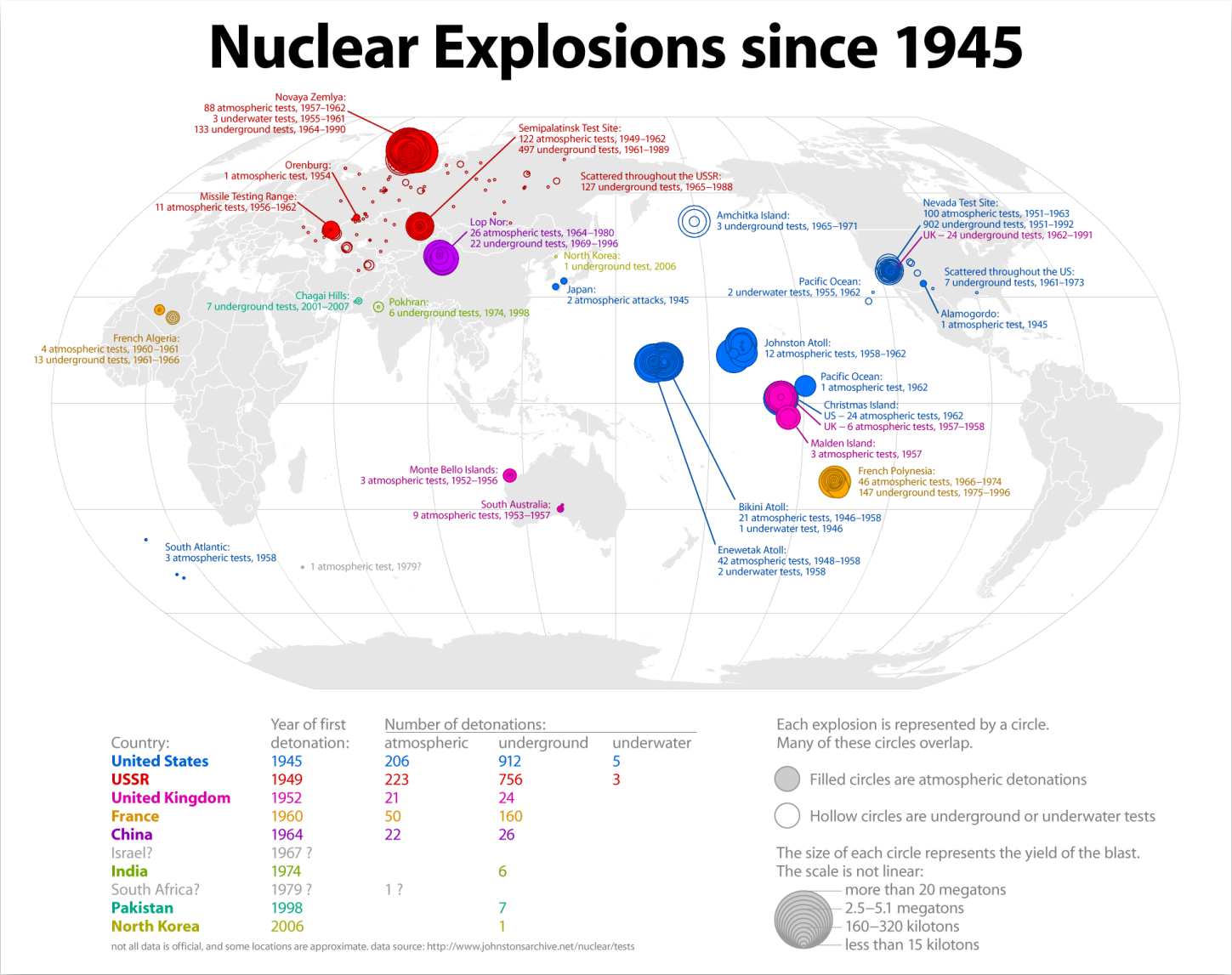


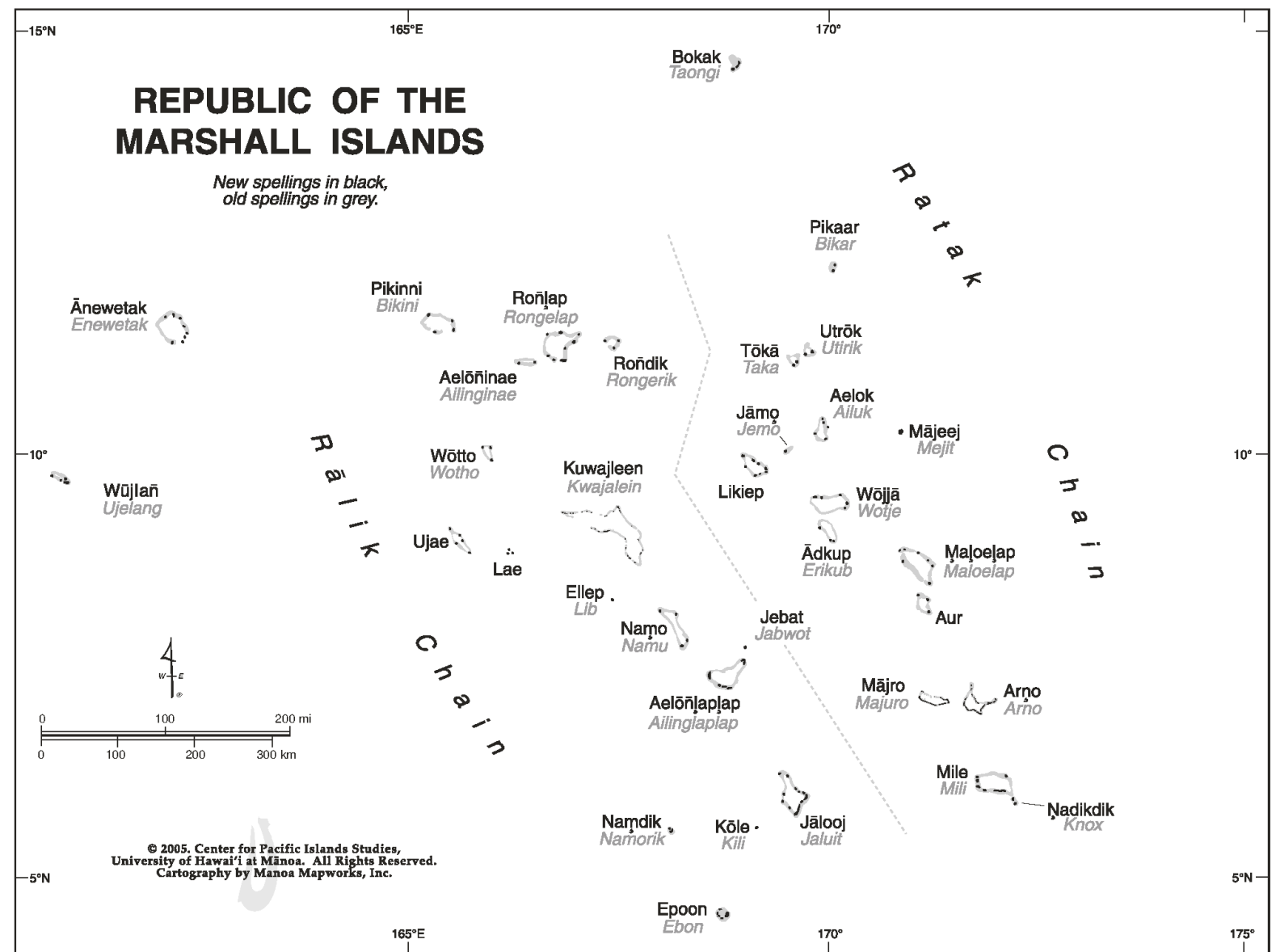
Image 9.
Nuclear explosions since 1945.



Image 10.
The 1962 Starfish Prime nuclear test above Johnston Island could be seen in Hawai'i, approximately 800 miles away.

“primitiveness” of indigenous people to justify their actions. In fact, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has been quoted as saying in reference to US activities in the Pacific Islands: “There are only 90,000 people out there; who gives a damn?” (McHenry 1975, 98). This quote encapsulates US and other nuclear powers’ attitude toward potential effects of nuclear testing in the region and toward the region’s people as a whole.

At the end of World War II, the United States took control of areas in the Pacific Islands that were formerly under Japanese Mandate; these included the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and the Marshall Islands. The US Navy controlled much of the area from 1944 until the US Department of the Interior took over the administration of the newly established **United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)** in 1951. The stated goal of the TTPI was to prepare former Japanese Mandate areas for self-governance and economic self-sufficiency; the TTPI was also considered a strategic trust that provided a buffer zone between the United States and the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War. In practice, the region served as a pseudo-colony of the United States—an arrangement that allowed the US to use parts of the Marshall Islands for nuclear testing from 1947 to 1958. Similarly, Great Britain and later France used continuing imperial relationships with Australia, Kiribati, and French Poly-



nesia to conduct nuclear tests in those areas. The following sections will focus on nuclear testing and its effects in the Marshalls Islands and, to a more limited extent, French Polynesia.

Map 2.
Map of the Marshall Islands.

Bikini Anthem

Written in 1946 by Lore Kessibuki on Rongerik Atoll:

*"No longer can I stay; it's true.
No longer can I live in peace and harmony.
No longer can I rest on my sleeping mat and pillow
Because of my island and the life I once knew there.
The thought is overwhelming
Rendering me helpless and in great despair.
My spirit leaves, drifting around and far away
Where it becomes caught in a current of immense power
-And only then do I find tranquility"*

[Accessed at <https://www.bikiniatoll.com>]



Image 11.

Bikini Day Jaki (woven mat).

Bikini Atoll

US nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands began in 1946 with the displacement of the people of Bikini Atoll in preparation for the first series of nuclear tests, codenamed Operation Crossroads. To clear the way for the tests, the US Navy negotiated with Bikini leaders to move the atoll's 167 residents east to Rongerik Atoll—a move that Bikinians understood as temporary and believed would be "for the good of mankind," as US Army representatives had assured their traditional leader (Keju-Johnson 2003). When Rongerik's food supply proved insufficient to support the population, the US relocated the Bikinians to Kwajalein Atoll and finally to Kile Island. On Kile, Bikinians faced numerous challenges including insufficient food supplies, lack of fishing grounds, drought, typhoons, dependence on canned food supplied by the US Department of Agriculture, and accompanying health problems (e.g., high blood pressure and diabetes).

In an effort to alleviate some of these problems, the United States initiated a partial resettlement of Bikini in 1972. By that time, the United States had conducted twenty-three nuclear tests including the 1 March 1954 **Castle Bravo** hydrogen test, the most powerful atmospheric test ever conducted by the United States. Unfortunately for the Bikinians, the resettlement was far too soon and people quickly showed signs of radiation exposure sickness due to the high levels of radioactive fallout still present in the soil and traditional food sources (e.g., coconut and coconut crab). In response, the residents initiated a lawsuit against the United States that demanded a full radiological survey of the atoll. When initial reports revealed higher radiation levels than previously believed, the United States re-evacuated the remaining residents of Bikini to several locations including Kile Island, Ejit Island in Majuro Atoll, and Ebeye Island in Kwajalein Atoll.

Today, Bikinians continue to struggle with the legacies of nuclear testing and premature resettlement on their home atoll; these include high rates of cancer and thyroid disease and other health issues, lack of access to adequate medical treatment, ongoing displacement, disputes with the traditional owners of the land they currently reside on, and many others. Meanwhile, the people of Bikini still long to return to their home atoll, even as its place in American popular language and culture continues to obfuscate the real impacts of nuclear testing on the people of that place.





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Image 12.

Castle Bravo dry fuel hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll, 1 March 1954.

Image 13.

Bikini Islanders board a US Navy landing craft before "Operation Crossroads" in July 1946.

Rongelap Atoll

The Bikinians were not the only people in the Marshall Islands affected by the US nuclear-testing program. In fact, wind conditions on 1 March 1954 carried nuclear fallout from the Castle Bravo test across the Marshall Islands and had a severe impact on the people of **Rongelap Atoll** in particular.

Although the United States maintains that winds shifted at the last minute and that personnel were unable to evacuate the people of Rongelap in time to prevent exposure, recently declassified documents suggest that US officials may have known winds were heading directly toward Rongelap but did not notify or evacuate its residents because they wanted to use the exposed people for radiation

BIKINI IN POPULAR CULTURE

The two-piece swim suit, modeled in this photograph by Micheline Bernardini, was designed by French clothing designer Louis Réard in 1946 prior to the detonation of the first nuclear test in the Marshall Islands on Bikini Atoll. He named the suit a "bikini," comparing the effects of the anticipated nuclear tests to the societal effects wrought by the new suit. The use of the term bikini today without recognition of the history of nuclear testing is a form of symbolic violence, defined as an unconscious mode of domination subtly embedded in everyday thought, action, and objects that maintains its power precisely because people fail to recognize it as violence.

Another example of symbolic violence and the erasure of the consequences of nuclear testing at Bikini is SpongeBob SquarePants, the cartoon character whose origin derives from radioactivity at Bikini.



experiments (also known as **Project 4.1**). Rongelap residents present on the day of the test report that, not long after they saw a bright flash in the sky, a white powder fell from the sky like snow (the powder was irradiated coral dust). Because they did not know what the substance was, many people went outside and children even played in the irradiated powder. Within hours, people began to exhibit signs of severe radiation exposure including violent vomiting and diarrhea, severe burns to their skin, and hair loss. Despite this intense and direct exposure to high levels of radiation, US officials did not evacuate people from Rongelap for several days after the Bravo test.

As a result of their acute and prolonged radiation exposure, the people of Rongelap and their descendants continue to suffer from radiation-related illnesses and health effects such as thyroid and others cancers. Women have experienced a high rate of miscarried pregnancies, stillborn births, and birth defects among their children. Like the Bikinians, the people of Rongelap have experi-



enced prolonged displacement from their home atoll and multiple relocations and re-evacuations since their initial exposure. Despite the high levels of radiation present on Rongelap, for example, the United States allowed people to return to the atoll in 1957. Their exposure to radiation continued for three decades until the people of Rongelap requested help from Greenpeace, a nongovernmental organization that used its ship *Rainbow Warrior* to evacuate the people to Mejato and Ebeye islands in Kwajalein Atoll, where much of the Rongelap community continues to reside today.

Video 1.

Watch the trailer for *Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1*, or rent the full film [here](#). To learn more about the film and its maker, visit the film's [website](#).

DARLENE KEJU-JOHNSON

A Champion for Nuclear Survivors

Darlene Keju-Johnson was one of the first Marshallese women to speak publicly about the nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands and its negative impacts. As a young woman, Darlene spoke to large audiences about the children born to women who were irradiated by the bombs, and she helped educate people outside of the Pacific about the nuclear tests and their long-term effects.

Darlene's speech before the 1983 World Council of Churches was a passionate testimony for her people. Watch her testimony [here](#).

She was a leader in the creation of Jodikdik ñan Jodikdik lio Ejmour (Youth to Youth in Health) and devoted her life to helping educate Marshallese about health using cultural performances. She died in 1996 after a battle with breast cancer (Walsh 2012, 303). Photo: Darlene singing at her master's degree oral presentation at the University of Hawaii, 1983.





Image 14.

Runit Dome holds more than 111,000 cubic yards of radioactive debris in a large crater created by a nuclear test on Runit Island. The crater has been capped with a concrete structure; today, it is suspected that Runit Dome is beginning to crack and may already be leaking radioactive material into the air, soil, and ocean. Despite the presence of the Runit Dome, residents of Enewetak began to return to live on the atoll in 1980 after the United States declared it safe for habitation.

Enewetak Atoll

Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands also underwent a dramatic physical, environmental, and cultural transformation as the result of the forty-four nuclear tests conducted on that atoll. In 1947, the United States relocated the people of Enewetak to Ujelang Atoll to the west, where they struggled to live for several decades with scarce food supplies and harsh weather conditions. In 1977, the United States initiated a massive cleanup project on Enewetak Atoll that included the removal of and storage of radioactive debris on Runit Island. The US then began the resettlement and restoration of Enewetak, which continues today.

Despite the horrors of nuclear testing, various sites of American and global popular culture continue to produce images of irradiated landscapes and people through film, television, books, and many others—effectively overwriting and overriding the real-life tragedies faced by the people of Bikini, Rongelap, Enewetak, and beyond. Nevertheless, the people of Enewetak, Rongelap, Bikini, and other areas of the Marshall Islands impacted by nuclear testing continue to share their experiences in an effort to educate people about the realities of nuclear testing and to access just compensation for the tragic losses they have suffered.



Image 15.

The image of Gojira (Godzilla) in Ishiro Honda's 1954 film is among the most potent visual metaphors of the nuclear age.



Image 16.

Evacuation of Rongelap islanders to Mejato by members of the Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior crew.

COFA

The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of Palau are all independent nations in free association with the United States. Each nation has a separately negotiated Compact of Free Association with the US outlining various military-strategic, economic, political, social, and other benefits for both sides. At the center of each compact is a strategic and economic relationship that grants financial benefits and military defense to each nation in exchange for perpetual US access to the region for strategic purposes. The US also maintains the right of "strategic denial" in the area, which means other nations' militaries cannot access the area without permission from the United States. The three compacts also contain provisions that allow citizens of the Marshall Islands, the FSM, and Palau the right to travel to and work in the United States without a visa. This provision has resulted in increasing rates of out-migration from the region as people move to the US in search of jobs, education, and medical care.

Compact of Free Association and the Nuclear Legacy

In 1978, the Marshall Islands voted to separate from the other districts in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, pursue independence, and negotiate a Compact of Free Association with the United States. After several years of negotiations, the Marshall Islands and the United States agreed on a compact that would link the two nations economically and strategically for an initial fifteen years. As part

of the negotiations, the United States agreed to provide monetary compensation to members of the four island communities officially recognized by the United States as having been exposed to nuclear fallout (Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrik—also known as the Four Atolls). To this end, Section 177 of the compact provided US\$150 million for past, present, and future compensation

claims against the United States for nuclear testing and its impacts (Walsh and Heine 2012, 87). Section 177 also established the Nuclear Claims Tribunal to review and award any personal injury and property damage claims related to nuclear testing in the Four Atolls. Although the monetary compensation and medical treatment provided through Section 177 were insufficient to address the health-care needs of the Four Atolls communities—and provided no compensation to those who lived on atolls not officially recognized as having been exposed to nuclear fallout—compact negotiations closed the door for any future compensation claims. What's more, to receive the initial compensation, the Four Atolls had to surrender the option of pursuing any future monetary compensation from the United States.

According to Section 177 of the compact, the Marshall Islands' only option for pursuing additional nuclear compensation is to file a **"changed circumstances" petition**, if and when additional information should become available about the effects of nuclear testing. Despite the declassification of materials in the 1990s that suggest the impact of nuclear testing may have been more widespread and severe than previously determined, however, no attempt to petition the United States for additional funding has been successful to date. As a result, many Marshall Islanders affected either directly or indirectly by nuclear testing have sought medical, economic, and other opportunities in Hawai'i, Guam, and the continental United States, where they often face racism, discrimination, and misunderstandings about their country's history and relationship with the United States.

"No Aloha"

"No Aloha for Micronesians in Hawai'i": This Civil Beat newspaper headline in 2011 voiced an undercurrent of racism in Hawai'i. Waves of forced migrations within the Marshall Islands have resulted in severe social and cultural disruptions, such as loss of land rights and diminishing community integrity. With free visa entry into the US under the Compact of Free Association, since the late 1980s voluntary movement has extended abroad—especially to Hawai'i—for education, employment, and medical services. Without deep cultural awareness, mounting tensions exist between the incoming Marshallese (and other Compact of Free Association migrants) and Native Hawaiian and other local residents, giving rise to mutual stereotyping, racism, discrimination, and violence (Blair 2011).

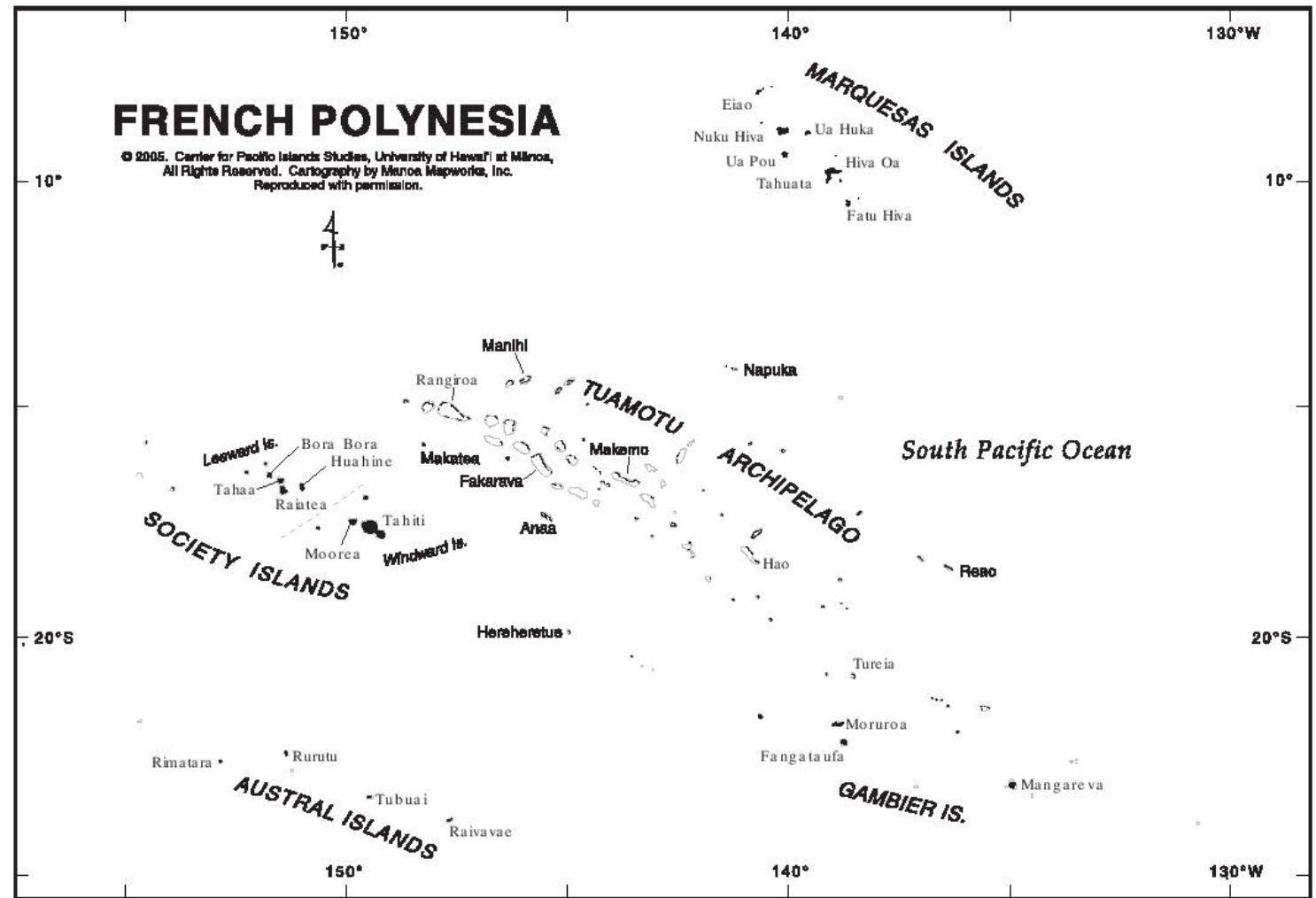
"Four Atolls"

The United States only officially recognizes four Marshallese atolls—Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrik—as having been exposed to nuclear fallout. As a result, Marshall Islanders who were living on other atolls during the tests have not had access to monetary compensation or health care through the Nuclear Claims Tribunal, although it is widely believed that many other people were affected by the fallout on their islands.

French Polynesia

Much like the situation with the United States in the Marshall Islands, colonialism in French Polynesia made it possible for France to conduct nuclear tests on Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls in the Tuamotu Archipelago over a period of thirty years. France initiated the relocation of its nuclear program from its colony in Algeria (Africa) to the Pacific Islands soon after Algeria declared independence in 1962. France was able to shift its nuclear program to French Polynesia because it continued to control the area as an overseas territory, thus making it an integral part of France—similar to Hawai'i's current status as a US state.

In 1962, France established the **Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique (CEP, or Pacific Experimentation Center)** on Moruroa Atoll in the Tuamotu Islands and conducted its first nuclear test on 1 July 1966, despite protests from various sectors of French Polynesia's indigenous and pro-independence population. From 1966 to 1996, France conducted approximately 193 nuclear tests on Moruroa and Fangataufa, including atmospheric tests from 1966 to 1974 and various underground tests from 1974 to 1996.



Although French nuclear testing resulted in a number of accidents and incidents—including one that propelled radioactive material into Moruroa's lagoon and others that caused islands in Moruroa to sink by several meters and likely caused cracks in the base of Moruroa Atoll—France maintained that underground testing was clean and safe. France has only recently admitted that its nuclear-testing program likely spread radioactive fallout over much of French Polynesia, particularly on Mangareva in the Gambier Islands, the closest inhabited islands

Map 3.
Map of French Polynesia.

to the test sites. Due to the long-held secrecy surrounding the French nuclear program, people affected by radiation exposure—including residents of Mangareva and thousands of veterans and civilians who worked at or near the CEP—have been denied treatment and compensation for their symptoms, which, much like in the Marshall Islands, have included elevated rates of leukemia, thyroid, and other cancers. Former CEP employees have revealed that French officials took insufficient precautions during testing and that few measures were taken to ensure their safety. In fact, it has been reported that employees were expected to work near or at testing sites wearing scarcely more than shorts and a t-shirt. Moreover, residents of neighboring Mangareva Island were never evacuated through at least twenty-three major nuclear fallout events over the course of thirty years of testing. After the first several disasters (dubbed “accidents” by France), Mangareva residents spent the days immediately before and after subsequent tests in a large aboveground fallout shelter that may have been tragically inadequate (Radio Australia 2012).

In addition to health and environmental effects, nuclear testing increased French Polynesia’s economic dependence on France, as the tests and testing infrastructure infused vast quantities of money and jobs into the local economy. Paradoxically, indigenous and local communities came to depend on nuclear testing on for their survival and

economic well-being; with so many people dependent on the territory’s economic relationship with France and as many considered the relationship essential, it became increasingly difficult for French Polynesia’s pro-independence factions to gain consistent support for its agenda of political independence. The tests also involved enormous transfers of military and civilian personnel from France, which further transformed local social and cultural contexts. To be sure, the construction of shopping centers, movie theaters, restaurants, and other developments further induced a majority of people in French Polynesia to favor a continuing colonial relationship with France over political independence.



Video 2.

From the trailer for *Blowing up Paradise*. Ben Lewis, 2005. Click [here](#) to open the film in your web browser.

Activity

Create a timeline of nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands, including major tests and relocations in the Marshall Islands and French Polynesia.



Image 17.

The Able cloud forming above Bikini.

Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization

Contemporary militarization and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands are extensions of centuries of colonial and imperial exploitation. And yet, where these have wreaked havoc on indigenous bodies, cultures, and daily lives, Pacific Islanders have enacted diverse forms of resistance and revitalization that reveal persistence, creativity, and resourcefulness. In fact, as long as foreign powers have tried to grab islands and waters of Oceania for their military interests and economic pursuits, Islanders have endured—at times using overt forms of defiance and at other times indirect assertions of indigenous ways of living based on maintaining balance and reciprocity. These efforts have included localized struggles and broad regional and international networks; spontaneous actions and highly coordinated initiatives; artistic expressions and legalist strategies; direct defensive movements; and the proactive revitalization of cultural forms that seek to bring healing and alternatives to the violence of militarization.

Early Instances of Armed Resistance

Pacific Islanders have consistently and regularly opposed attempts by external powers to impose themselves on local populations, with resistance to colonial and military regimes taking many forms over time and across the region. In fact, violent and nonviolent attempts to push back against conquest and empire form a significant dimension of the histories of many Pacific Island places, and they continue into the present. Starting from early Spanish efforts to formally colonize Guam in the 1660s, **Chamoru** people took up their weapons against intrusive foreigners. In 1671, Chamoru warrior Chief Hurao explicitly encouraged the people of Hagåtña to regain their freedom by defending their homeland and expelling the foreigners: “We can easily defeat them. Even though we don’t have their deadly weapons ... we can overcome them by our large numbers. We are stronger than we think! We can quickly free ourselves from these foreigners! We must regain our former freedom!”

Chief Hurao

Chief Hurao of Hagatna Ancient Speech of 1671 as recorded by a French Priest Charles Le Gobien. Translated from French to English by Reverend Paul Daly C.P.S., in Charles Le Gobien's "History of the Mariana Islands," 1700, Paris.

Chief Hurao's speech can be viewed and heard spoken in Chamoru [here](#).



(Click [here](#) to view the entire speech). Chief Hurao's words foretold the generations of resistance that would follow across Oceania as European and Asian imperial powers have vied for control over the vast ocean, its islands, and peoples. His words also link ongoing Pacific Islander resistance to militarization to a strong sense of independence and self-rule. More than 300 years after Hurao inspired his people, **Kanaka Maoli** organizer George Helm described Native Hawaiian efforts to stop the US Navy's bombing of Kaho'o-lawe in much the same way: "We are against warfare but more so against imperialism" (quoted in Morales 1984).

The New Zealand Wars (1845–1872), the Franco-Tahitian War (1844–1847) and lingering hostilities through the 1880s in the Society Islands, as well as revolts in New Caledonia are just a few examples of armed resistance in the region over the past two centuries. The New Zealand Wars were among the most costly and violent conflicts pursued by the British Empire during Queen Victoria's reign. At the height of the conflict in the 1860s, 18,000 British combatants, including artillery and cavalry, fought 4,000 Māori combatants from different iwi (tribes). During the conflict, Māori combatants invented "modern" trench and guerrilla

Video 3.

Trailer for *Utu*, Geoff Murphy (1983). The film depicts a Māori soldier's quest for utu, or vengeance, after his home village and family are attacked and killed by the British army during the New Zealand Wars. Click [here](#) to open film in web browser.

warfare—thus demonstrating their resourcefulness and determination as well as the limits of British imperial power. More New Zealanders died during these conflicts than in the First World War, which was far more publically memorialized.

Starting around the same time, the Franco-Tahitian War unfolded in the Society Islands in the wake of French Admiral Abel Aubert Dupetit Thouars's seizure of the Kingdom of Tahiti, under the pretext of responding to Tahitian Queen Pōmare's failure to honor some of the obscure provisions of an existing treaty between France and Tahiti. Soon after France claimed to possess the Society Islands, the Tahitian military challenged the French for control. Initially centered on the island of Tahiti, the conflict quickly spread

across the Society archipelago. Despite significant asymmetries between Tahitian combatants and French naval and marine resources, the French suffered significant defeats and were expelled from several northern islands in the archipelago, including Huahine and Bora Bora. And while French forces eventually took military and political control of all the Society Islands, lingering hostilities and resistance in the north continued through the 1880s.

More than forty violent events and several organized conflicts also characterized the early decades of French attempts to claim dominion over New Caledonia in the southwestern Pacific. French land grabs in the 1860s and 1870s along the west coast led to the Great Kanak Rebellion of 1878–1879. “The war was sparked by the taking over of

Image 18.

New Zealand War Memorial and Auckland War Memorial Museum. GNFL, 13 January 2008.



Melanesian lands, the damage to village gardens by settlers' cattle, disputes over women, and the desecration of burial sites. Several hundred Melanesians and over 200 Europeans were killed and the defeated tribes were driven from their ancestral lands" (Henningham 1992, 10). Dec-

Violent Resistance

"A woman, Biloris Samor, fought back when beaten by the Japanese; and a man, Kiman Phymon, took a machete and went looking to avenge the execution of a close family member for stealing tobacco" (Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2000).

ades later, the Kanak Revolt of 1917 brought the tensions, inequalities, and disparities of French colonial rule back into focus when several Kanak tribes resisted settler encroachments on their land and forced French recruitment of Kanaks for service in World War I (Henningham 1992, 10). Similar stories of armed resistance to European and American colonial-

ism—and to other colonial powers such as Chile in Rapa Nui and Japan across Micronesia—can be found across much of Oceania.

Everyday Forms of Resistance

During World War II, the United States and Japan fought battles that brought sweeping change to the lives of Pacific Islanders in Micronesia and Melanesia in particular. On Chuuk, Japan's naval base in Micronesia, military buildup meant that foreign soldiers outnumbered

Chuukese people four to one. And yet despite Japan's hegemonic presence, Chuukese people and indigenous people across the Pacific asserted their desire for sovereignty throughout the war. On Chuuk, for example, airfield workers went on strike against poor treatment by the Japanese while others sought retribution—sometimes with machete in hand—for the beating, rape, and execution of indigenous women and men.

In the wake of the US military's victory in the Pacific War, the United States added the Northern Mariana Islands, the Caroline Islands (the present-day Federated States of Micronesia), and the Marshall Islands, as well as Okinawa and the nearby Ryukyu Islands to its existing pool of colonial territories in the region, which already included Hawaii'i, Guam, and the Philippines. Shortly thereafter, the United States began its infamous program of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, which inflicted complex and enduring damages on the community's well-being (see [Section 3](#)). Indigenous responses to continuing imperialism and nuclear testing included formal protest and diverse forms of resistance embedded in various depictions and representations of those events. The following are just a few examples of many efforts to resist foreign domination and exploitation.

On 7 July 1954, Dwight Heine, a special United Nations representative of the Marshall Islands, petitioned the

United States government to conduct its nuclear tests elsewhere or to at least give more attention to the well-being of Marshall Islanders. Heine's testimony reveals that Marshall Islanders felt a near total loss of control over their lives and a sense of grave injustice as a result of the tests and their consequences:

I have come here as a guest of the State Department to answer questions that may arise when the Marshallese petition to the United Nations regarding the last H-bomb test comes up before the Trusteeship Council for discussion. Some of our people were hurt during the recent nuclear test, and we have asked the aid of the United Nations, of which the United States is a member and to which it is answerable for its administration of the trust territory, to stop the experiments there. Or, if this is not possible, then to be a little more careful. I have noticed that it is illegal to set off fire-crackers in New York to celebrate the Fourth of July. I read in the paper that several people were arrested for violating this safety rule. The H-bomb is a "super-fire-cracker" which needs "super safety rules" in its handling (quoted in Walsh 2012, 468).

Heine's testimony is just one of many examples of how Marshall Islanders have used formal protest and legal action to try to hold the United States accountable for its actions in their country.

Holly Barker's 2008 ethnography *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-nuclear, Post-colonial World* suggests that, in addition to these kinds of formal petitions, Marshallese communities exposed to radiation have used Marshallese language as a site of resistance against the US government's representations of their history and lived experiences with nuclear testing. In fact, affected atoll communities developed a distinct radiation language to express their full experiences and social realities. Significantly, the people who engage in this language come from atolls beyond the four officially recognized by the US government as irradiated—thus suggesting that nuclear fallout has had a broader impact than the US has acknowledged. In terms of reproductive health, for example, the traditional Marshallese word for "still-birth" does not convey the new experience of molar pregnancies—that is, when cells become enlarged rather than dividing

Advocacy

Holly Barker and Barbara Rose Johnston are applied anthropologists who worked for the Marshallese government to construct Rongelap's land claim with the Nuclear Claims Tribunal. The ethnographic interviews uncovered myriad consequential damages to the community of Rongelap. Their work convinced the tribunal to award US\$1 billion for compensation in 2007, although insufficient funds have prevented any payments. To ask the US Congress for additional funds would require Congress to accept a Changed Circumstances Petition, which has been denied by the US government to date (Johnston and Barker 2008).

after conception. Those affected by these anomalies have borrowed the English word “grape” to describe the birth defects they have witnessed in stillborn babies clearly affected by radiation. Others, meanwhile, have looked to their environments and local realms of experience to find words to describe their stillborn babies, using reference points such as turtles, jellyfish, and the insides of giant clams. By creating this radiation language, survivors convey culturally appropriate notions of blame, powerlessness, and injury in and on their own terms.

In addition to creating this unique radiation language, Marshall Islanders have composed songs and poetry as forms of resistance. The Marshallese language song “Mr. Urine”—usually sung in a humorous style to mask the pain—recounts the dehumanizing treatment of male and female patients on Rongelap who had to urinate in front of each other during post-exposure examinations. Another song, “ERUB,” is a play on the Marshallese term erub (to break or be broken), the letters of which also stand for the four atolls that the US has officially recognized as irradiated (Enewetak, Rongelap, Utrik, and Bikini). The song reminds people within the Marshallese community how the nuclear-testing program impacted others beyond those four atolls. Another song called “177 Song” (referring to Section 177 of the Compact of

Free Association, which outlines compensation for nuclear survivors) speaks of the emotional trauma caused by nuclear testing.

Meanwhile, contemporary Marshallese poets—the children and grandchildren of nuclear victims and survivors—continue to compose pieces about the legacies of nuclear testing to raise awareness beyond the Marshall Islands. Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner’s poem “History Project” describes the pain and anger she felt while sharing the

experiences of her family and community with an audience of insensitive non-Marshallese judges at a high school History Fair in Hawai’i. In the end, Jetnil-Kijiner’s poem refuses to let the violence of nuclear testing be forgotten or brushed aside. Together, these and other linguistic representations and creative efforts demonstrate that the social, cultural, and physical impacts of nuclear testing are far more widespread than officially recognized. Perhaps more importantly, they mark a people’s effort and will to heal and persevere.

In addition to cultural resistance through language, song, and poetry, Pacific Islanders have exercised a variety of government resolutions and

actions to confront and challenge legacies of imperialism and nuclear testing in the region. The nuclear-free constitution of Palau is just one example of such legislation. In the early 1970s, leaders from the various island groups that made up the Trust Territory of

Song of Resistance

“177 Song,” composed by the Rongelap community:

*When will I be released from my sufferings
that I still now do not understand? Would
you guide me and give me strength?*

*I am irradiated because I am weak from
thyroid disease and despair, I only want to
live in peace.*

*This is not only my wish but all those who
belong to the number 177”*

(Barker 2013, 91)



Video 4.

"History Project," by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner. Southbank Centre, London, 2012. Click [here](#) to open film in web browser. Visit Kathy's blog page [here](#).

the Pacific Islands established the Congress of Micronesia as part of a larger effort to navigate the journey toward political decolonization. During the 1972 congress, representatives from Palau endorsed a resolution opposing any land use by the US military. Palau thereafter spent a decade maneuvering for independence and for the world's first nuclear-free constitution banning nuclear substances and weapons from its land and territorial waters.

The nuclear ban was unacceptable to the US government but the Palauan people, who knew well the devastation of nuclear warfare in Japan and nuclear testing in the Mar-

shall Islands, stood firm in their commitment to a nuclear-free constitution. Numerous groups helped advocate for the constitution, and women elders from the community were absolutely critical. Gabriela Ngirmang, a Mirair (a matriarchal leader) of the Ikelau clan, was among the most noted leaders who advocated for a nuclear-free Palau. The people of Palau sustained many losses as a result, including the assassination of the country's first president, Haruo Remeliik, in 1985.

GABRIELA NGIRMANG

"I have done nothing. All I am trying to do is to make a little difference so that future generations may not experience the war like I did, that they may enjoy a beautiful and peaceful future, united with respect for one another and respect for the environment. Unity brings harmony. Harmony brings the balance that is inherent in Palau's traditional system of values and beliefs. I always have hope because I believe that God will not abandon us; only when we abandon God do we feel hopeless. It is important to always have faith. Faith in God will sustain one in working for social justice and other social action work."

Women elders were crucial to the Palauan people's struggle for a nuclear-free constitution, and Gabriela Ngirmang was a pillar among them. Speaking about why she became involved in this movement, Ngirmang noted her traditional position and obligation as a Mirai—a titled matriarchal leader—to take care of the people and safeguard the culture: "If anyone comes hungry, I have to feed them, with what little I have. My fear for my own life was less than my hope and dreams for the people of Palau. I wanted the people of Palau to keep thinking as Palauans and not be enticed with goods and dollars of foreigners."

World People's Blog, Gabriela Ngirmang, World People's Blog, September 25th, 2006, accessed at:

<http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/736>.



In some Pacific Island nations, people have put themselves in the path of bodily harm in their efforts to protect their homelands and surrounding waters from the destructive forces of militarization—even as they also pursue formal legal avenues of justice. As one of the first casualties of US imperial expansion in the Pacific in the nineteenth century, the US seized additional Hawaiian lands for military use during World War II. Among the lands taken was the entire island of Kaho'olawe, which the US Navy used as an air-war testing and training site during the Vietnam War. Kānaka Maoli and others employed a multipronged strategy of legal action, physical blockade, and cultural revitalization to stop the navy from bombing the sacred island. People who had grown up watching, hearing, and feeling explosions on Kaho'olawe from across the channel got involved and formed an organization that was eventually called Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO).

In January 1976 (during the season of Makahiki, which honors peace), resisters from the neighboring island of Moloka'i who aimed to put their bodies between the island and the bombs landed on Kaho'olawe. Later that year, members of PKO filed suit in US Federal District Court in a case known as *Aluli et al. v. Brown* (Civil Suit No. 76-0380), with the goal of halting naval bombing activities on Kaho'olawe. Eventually the US Navy was required to conduct an



environmental impact assessment of its activities. In the meantime, Kānaka Maoli continued to land on, restore, and revitalize the island. In the end, Kanaka Maoli resisters made nine known landings on Kaho'olawe in direct defiance of and opposition to the US military's authority before the navy agreed to allow controlled access to the island. Early landings required a broad network of supporters to help raise funds, locate and run boats, lobby legislators, care for children, and make phone calls. From 1976 to

Image 19.

Operation "Sailor Hat", 1965. Detonation of the 500-ton TNT explosive charge for Shot "Bravo", first of a series of three test explosions on the southwestern tip of Kaho'olawe Island, Hawai'i, 6 February 1965.

Protect Kaho'olawe

Click [here](#) to read a testimony given by Loretta Ritte, who was speaking against the destruction on Kaho'olawe.

"Kaho'olawe Aloha 'Āina focuses on the cultural, political and military significance of the little-known "target island" of Kaho'olawe in the Hawaiian archipelago." Watch the video production by Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana [here](#).

1990, PKO facilitated work trips, cultural education, and efforts to "re-green" the island. Bombing was finally halted in 1990 by a US presidential order; the work of healing the land continues today.

The same year that protectors of Kaho'olawe made their first landing, the double-hulled wa'a (canoe) Hōkūle'a made its first voyage from Hawai'i to Tahiti—a journey of approximately 2,500 miles. Since its inception, the voyage was intended to challenge colonial

knowledge regimes that cast doubt on whether Kānaka Maoli and their cousins across Oceania could make intentional, long-distance voyages across the vast Pacific Ocean. To this end, the first voyage of the Hōkūle'a was a scientific test and an act of cultural revitalization. Some members of the crew hoped to sail to Kaho'olawe as a symbolic sign of protest before heading toward Tahiti in 1976, but in the end this did not happen. Instead, after the inaugural journey, motivations shifted from gaining anthropological insights

on ancient voyaging to reestablishing an identity as a people of the sea. When master navigator Mau Piailug of Satawal in Yap led a Hawai'i crew on Hōkūle'a's first voyage, the vessel became an icon for the restoration of pride and renewed faith in the value of ancestral knowledge. Hawaiian navigators such as Nainoa Thompson, Billy Richards, Shorty and Clay Bertlemann, and others soon became students of "Papa Mau" and went on to influence a rebirth of indigenous Polynesian voyaging traditions that inspired the rebuilding of canoes across the region. The legacies of the voyages of Hōkūle'a are phenomenal; over the years, the canoe has sent waves of inspiration to communities in Hawai'i and other Pacific Islands to build, sail, and navigate their own voyaging canoes. Much like Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, the resulting revitalization movements are in many ways connected to confronting the legacies of ongoing militarized practices and spaces.

Canoes in the Marshall Islands share a similar story of symbolic protest and cultural rejuvenation. In 1960, the US expanded its military installa-

Mai ka Piko Mai a Ho'i

"Mai ka Piko Mai a Ho'i: Return to Kaho'olawe."

Fourteen years after Native Hawaiians stopped the US military from bombing the Hawaiian island of Kaho'olawe (Kanaloa), the activists who led the movement tell their stories. Watch their stories [here](#).

tion on Kwajalein Atoll as a testing facility for intercontinental ballistic missiles, and at least 4,000 residents from two-thirds of the atoll were relocated to 78-acre Ebeye Island. Soon after, Kwajalein landowners launched a peaceful protest of their relocation, the ensuing economic compensation, the length of the land-use lease, the possibility of making the Marshall Islands an exclusive US military preserve, the overall treatment of Marshall Islanders by the US, and the resulting disconnection of people from their culture and traditions. These pro-

tests culminated in a four-month long "sail-in" in 1982 coined "Operation Homecoming." By sailing canoes to several islands that the US military had declared off-limits, the people of Kwajalein Atoll succeeded in disrupting several ballistic missile tests—thus forcing the US to renegotiate the Compact of Free Association on terms somewhat more favorable to Marshall Islanders.

A growing resurgence of canoe sailing in the Marshall Islands since the Kwajalein protests has allowed the nuclear refugees of Rongelap and Bikini to reclaim their

A navigator's journey from nuclear exodus to cultural awakening

Once the Rongelapese were re-settled on their homeland in 1957 three years after their dislocation from the Bravo fallout, an elder began teaching his grandson, named Korent Joel, his knowledge of navigating by detecting how islands disrupt the patterning of waves. The young Korent's learning of wave navigation, however, only lasted a few years. His grandfather became sick from living on radiated soil and consuming contaminated foods. Prior to the community's decision for self-exile, the grandfather made the decision to send Korent to Hawai'i to learn Western navigation and captain cargo ships. In 2003, nearly half a century after his exodus from Rongelap, Captain Korent began working with the local canoe building program called Waan Aelon in Majol (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) and University of Hawai'i anthropologists and oceanographers to complete his traditional training and pass on the knowledge to a younger generation of sailors. This collaborative project led to his successful first attempt to navigate at sea by using the waves as guides in 2006, which allowed him under traditional protocols to become a chiefly sanctioned and socially recognized navigator. In 2010 and 2015, Captain Korent's navigation apprentice Alson Kelen, a descendant of Bikini, sailed a 35-foot voyaging outrigger canoe 60 miles between two atolls. Together, this navigator and his protégé are reclaiming their identity beyond that of nuclear survivors by re-connecting to their ancestral maritime heritage from Rongelap and Bikini (Genz 2015).



Image 20.
Portrait of Captain Korent Joel,
Marshallese navigator.

identity as navigators. Oral histories reveal that this northern region was one of the last strongholds of canoe building, voyaging, and navigation in the archipelago until waves of colonialism and militarism peaked with nuclear testing. The forced relocation of the Bikinians in 1946 largely severed their ancestral connections to the sea, while the people of Rongelap continued to sail until they suffered direct radiation exposure from the 1954 Bravo test. When news of the Hōkūle'a reached the Marshall Islands in the mid-1980s, a sustained effort was launched to document surviving canoe traditions. The canoe-building program Waan Aelōñ in Majel (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) later worked with surviving nuclear refugees from Rongelap and Bikini who retained some of their knowledge of navigating by wave patterns. These efforts, which culminated in canoe voyages in 2010 and 2015, have enabled the people of Rongelap and Bikini to reclaim their ancestral maritime heritage and to begin moving beyond their identity as nuclear victims. And as in so many other places in the Pacific, they are awakening the spirit of the sea for their people.

Francophone, or French-speaking, parts of the Pacific have also suffered and resisted the impacts of nuclear and other military test bombings. When the French government first considered the islands of French Polynesia as sites for nuclear tests in the 1960s, the Territorial Assembly immediately passed a resolution urging the French government to oppose all nuclear tests that would be hazardous to people and environments in neigh-

boring archipelagoes—and especially those in French Polynesia. The assembly also requested that French officials learn more about the impacts of US nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands and consult with the Territorial Assembly before launching the nuclear program; tragically, President Charles de Gaulle turned a deaf ear to these requests. Construction on the Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique started in 1963 and atmospheric testing began over Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls three years later.

Even as nuclear testing in French Polynesia pushed indigenous and local residents to reject proposals for sovereignty and independence ([see Section 3](#)), continued testing outraged others around the region and inspired many to act. In 1971, Pacific Island leaders came together at the first meeting of the South Pacific Forum (now the **Pacific Islands Forum**). The fledgling regional organization had the explicit goal of subverting the “no politics” rule set forth by the South Pacific Commission (SPC), a regional organization controlled by Australia, New Zealand, France, the United States, and other colonial powers. Since the very first meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, island leaders called on France to put an end nuclear testing in French Polynesia.

Over the following two decades, numerous protest vessels attempted to physically disrupt nuclear tests in French Polynesia. Among the best known of these vessels was the Greenpeace vessel *Rainbow Warrior*, which French operatives bombed and sank

in 1985 in the port of Auckland, New Zealand (killing a Dutch photographer), before it was scheduled to embark on a protest voyage to Moruroa. Soon after the bombing, Forum members formalized their opposition to continued French testing with the passage of the **South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty** (SPNFZ; also known as the Treaty of Rarotonga), establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a large area of the independent Pacific. Treaty signatories banned the use, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons within the borders of the zone and eventually pressured France into ending nuclear testing in the region.

In 1995 and after a three-year moratorium on nuclear testing in the area, French President Jacques Chirac announced a new program of underground tests and was met with unprecedented antinuclear protests. A crowd of approximately 15,000–20,000 people occupied the streets of Pape'ete in Tahiti, bringing worldwide attention to the ongoing tests. After the first detonation at Moruroa, protests intensified, resulting in an estimated US\$40 million in damages to the Fa'a'a International Airport and to downtown Pape'ete. Meanwhile, the struggle over how the tests and protests were being portrayed and represented became as important as the material struggle over whether the nuclear warheads would be exploded within island reef structures. On one side, the colonial government argued that under-



SPFNZ

Negotiated in 1985, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ)—also known as the Treaty of Rarotonga—formalized a nuclear-weapon-free zone in parts of the Oceania. The treaty bans the use, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons. Signatories include Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Sāmoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. France ratified the treaty in 1996, but only have bringing its nuclear-testing program in French Polynesia to a close; the United States signed the treaty in the same year but has not ratified it. Largely due to their political affiliation with the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau are not party to the treaty.

Image 21.
Greenpeace's flagship vessel Rainbow Warrior.

ground tests were safe because they were contained (i.e., underground) and described the antinuclear protests as social chaos wrought by angry Tahitians. On the other side, **Mā'ohi** projected their own images and voices through Te Ao Mā'ohi (The Mā'ohi World), a concept coined by activist and political leader Oscar Temaru to emphasize the central importance of Mā'ohi genealogical connections to their land. Te Ao Mā'ohi used genealogy to reveal how, for Mā'ohi, nuclear testing was nothing short of lodging a missile in their mother's womb—and that the testing had to stop for their land and culture to survive and thrive.

Since the 1990s, antinuclear advocacy and activism was also deeply tied to Mā'ohi efforts to achieve greater autonomy from France. During the earlier round of French testing, Oscar Temaru founded the pro-independence party that eventually called itself Tavini Huiraatira (People's Servant Party). After France resumed its nuclear-testing program in the 1990s, Tavini Huiraatira steadily gained popular support. By 2004, Temaru had been elected president, and a coalition of parties supporting increased autonomy or outright independence had ascended to power in the local parliament.

Amid massive protest demonstrations and a formal protest by members of the Pacific Islands Forum in Paris, the

decades-long struggle to end nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands concluded in 1996 when France formally ended its nuclear-testing program and signed and ratified the SPNFZ, along with Great Britain (the United States signed but has yet to ratify the treaty).

As long as foreign imperial powers continue to flex their military muscles in the Pacific Islands, local and regional protest and resistance will endure—and opposition to ongoing genocide in West Papua by the Indonesian military is just one example of the continuing struggle. The University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies has described Indonesian military repression of West Papuan nationalists as “slow-motion genocide” and reports that up to 100,000 West Papuans have been killed since the Indonesian occupation in the 1960s (Taylor 2011). In response, the Free Papua Movement or **Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)** emerged in 1965 and remains active in 2016. The movement and the indigenous people of West Papua assert not only their right to independence but also their vigorous determination to protect lands that have been expropriated, exploited, and polluted by large-scale corporate mining projects that bring huge financial benefits to the Indonesian government. The largest of these is the open-pit gold and copper Grasberg mine, jointly operated by Freeport-

Indonesia and Rio Tinto (Rio Tinto 2008). OPM engages in a range of activities from diplomacy to armed opposition; resistance includes ceremonies as apparently simple as raising the Morning Star flag, a symbol of Papuan independence outlawed from being flown alone by the Indonesian government. Also important for the Free Papua Movement have been international solidarity efforts prompted partly in response to ongoing collaboration between foreign militaries have also been important for the Free Papua Movement. One example is a partnership between the Indonesian and US militaries through programs such as Garuda Shield, which allows US troops in Hawai'i and Indonesian troops to participate in combat training and noncombat operations. This collaboration has accelerated following the launch of the Obama administration's strategic "pivot" of attention toward Asia and the Pacific. Indonesia also regularly participates in **Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises** in Hawai'i (see Section 5 for more).



Image 22.
Unofficial Morning Star flag,
used by supporters of West
Papuan independence.

**FREE WEST
PAPUA**



Activity

Provide an example of each of the following types of resistance to militarism in the Pacific Islands: nonviolent protest; armed resistance or warfare; regional and international initiatives; legal initiatives; symbolic protest; artistic expression; cultural revitalization; and academic scholarship.

Previous Page

Image 23.

West Papuan resistance.

Contemporary Militarized Currents

The Mariana Islands

The Marianas archipelago—partitioned into the unincorporated territory of Guam and the commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)—is home to the Chamoru (Chamorro) people and has long been represented by the US as “the tip of America’s spear” pointed toward Asia.

Hillary Clinton

Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote a foreign policy article on “America’s Pacific Century” discussing the pivot toward Asia in 2011 (Clinton 2011).

My home island of Guåhan and the other islands of the Marianas (namely, Saipan, Luta, and Tinian) are about to be re-occupied by the US military.... When looking at the current map of what the military already owns, I see a cookie cutter landscape. It’s as if the military has taken cookie cutters and [taken] the lands that it wanted then left my people with the scraps of dough. With this proposed buildup, the US seems to be taking what’s left of our scraps, rolling out the dough, and placing more cookie cutters on what we have barely been able to hold onto. Consequently, we Chamoru will be left on the edges of our lands, barely touching them and barely seeing them.

Chamoru demilitarization activist Kisha Borja-Quichocho personal communication to Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2010

In the Pacific, militarism is not just a historical phenomenon; it is an ongoing reality. One contemporary example is the Asia-Pacific Pivot initiated under US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the early 2010s. By shifting more US military capacity toward Asia, the pivot has augmented US military hegemony over the lands and waters of Oceania. In 2016, it has already led to a significant proposed military expansion in the Mariana Islands including Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). On Guam, the expansion includes the planned relocation of 5,000 US marines from Okinawa, the mooring of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, and the creation of a live-fire range around a wildlife refuge in the northern part of the island. The expansion on Guam goes hand in hand with the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Area (MITT), approved in 2015, which claims nearly a billion square nautical miles around the archipelago and will allow for an increase in allowable weapons testing. The



Image 24.

United States Indo-Pacific Command "area of responsibility." United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) : The oldest and largest of the Unified Combatant Commands of the United States armed forces, located in Hawai'i.

US is also considering a CNMI Joint Military Training (CJMT) proposal, which would allow two-thirds of the island of Tinian and the entire island of Pagan in the CNMI to be used for live-fire bombing and weapons training (Perez 2015, 2014).

As intensified militarization and expansion continues in the early twenty-first century, so too does Pacific Islander resistance and revitalization. Recent opposition to militarization on Guam, for example, has taken many forms, including literary and other creative cultural expressions. Beginning in 2014, the grassroots cultural organization Our Is-

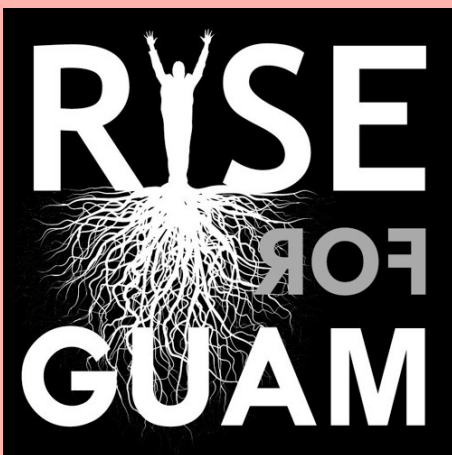
Audio 1. "Our Islands Are Sacred." Infinite Dākot-ta

Click [here](#) to listen.



Audio 2. "Guahan Weeps." Minatatnga.

Click [here](#) to listen.



lands Are Sacred (OIAS) revived the ancestral ceremony known as Lukao Fuha celebrating the Chamoru new year; inspired by family traditions, historical accounts, and creative envisioning, Lukao Fuha is a collective activation of inafa'maolek (restoring harmony or order).

Contemporary Chamoru artists also deploy introduced cultural forms in their own ways to give voice to the complex emotions and perspectives provoked by militarization; these include original music compositions such as hip-hop and written and spoken word poetry. In these and other ways, contemporary Pacific Islanders continue to renew ancestral relationships with their lands and surrounding waters, recognizing that these places and spaces are sacred and part of their cultures and genealogies. The reminder that "our islands are sacred" connects people and cultures across Oceania past, present, and future.

In Hawai'i, the center of the US military joint command for the Asia-Pacific, Kānaka Maoli have long resisted bombing and training on sacred lands. In the wake of the Asia-Pacific Pivot, resistance continues against weapons training that leaves depleted uranium at the Pōhakuloa Training Area located on a high plateau between the two highest mountains of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa on the island of Hawai'i. Although Pōhakuloa is a piko (umbilicus) of the Hawaiian people, its 133,000 acres were illegally seized by the United States from the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1898 and continues to be used by the US Army for live-fire training in the twenty-first century.

The US also hosts its Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises at Pōhakuloa and other sites throughout the lands and oceans of Hawai'i every two years. These resource-intensive exercises and the security discourse that legitimizes them directly contradict and undermine what Pacific Islander leaders deemed in the 2013 Majuro

RIMPAC

RIMPAC is the world's largest international, military maritime training and display. Led by the US military, RIMPAC exercises first began in 1971 to bring together invited military allies of the US forces. Twenty-three countries participated in the twenty-fourth RIMPAC in 2014, engaging forty-seven ships, six submarines, more than 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel in water, air, and land components. The 2014 RIMPAC war games were led by a combined task force headed by a US Commander and assisted by Australian and Japanese admirals. RIMPAC emphasizes the military and capitalist trade interests of the rim countries, and the strategic importance of accessing and crossing over the Pacific's center. The Obama administration's Asia-Pacific Pivot claimed the 2000s as "America's Pacific century" and prepared the way for the TransPacific Partnership trade agreement (Clinton 2011).



Video 5.

Pōhakuloa: Now that you know.

Do you care? [Take action.](#)

Watch the full video [here.](#)

Declaration to be the region's most pressing security threat: climate change. At the start of RIMPAC 2014, Hawai'i-based Kanaka Maoli and Filipina demilitarization organizers Shelley Muneoka and Kim Compoc wondered, "What is the carbon footprint of RIMPAC's live-fire training, sunken ships, explosive ordnance disposal, and expended fuel?" (Compoc and Muneoka 2014). This and similar questions posed by Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other local activists remind point to the vital importance of questioning and challenging ongoing US militarization in Hawai'i, American Sāmoa, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, CNMI, and beyond. Meanwhile, the continuing and expanding nature of imperialism in Oceania reveals that, much like war-

ships and nuclear fallout, currents of resistance must traverse national and cultural boundaries if they are to have real and lasting transformative local, regional, and global impacts and outcomes.

Pacific Islanders in the US Military

In addition to the ongoing militarization of the Pacific Islands region, Pacific Islanders are joining the US military at unprecedented rates—and as a result are highly overrepresented in the US Armed Forces. From Hawai'i and American Sāmoa to Guam, CNMI, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, young Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander men and women enlist in the US military at

far higher rates than other groups—usually out of economic necessity, as a stepping-stone toward university enrollment, and out of a sense of pride and duty to family and “nation.”

All active and reserve branches of the US military currently recruit in the islands. Military recruiters—often local, fellow Islanders—specifically target high school and college campuses. Recruiters entice young people with promises of a decent wage and benefits such as college tuition and

other opportunities for a better future. Chamoru scholar Michael Lujan Bevacqua noted that recruits may be attracted to the “shininess and the niceness” of the military, which offers economic opportunities they may not otherwise find outside the armed services (quoted in Hicks 2014). A senior army instructor at Saipan Southern High School illuminated how easy it is to recruit CNMI students: “From this last graduating class, it was almost forty out of 165 that joined



Image 25.

Canadian Forces Army Capt. Withny Dagrain leads primary school children in a Pacific Partnership cheer at a community service event on Tarawa, Kiribati, during Pacific Partnership 2013. US Pacific Fleet, 2013.

the military, mostly Army. All active. Every year it fluctuates but it's never less than twenty-five kids. Always somewhere between twenty-five and fifty" (quoted in Aguon 2008, 121). Meanwhile, a Chamoru elementary school teacher in Saipan reported, "All of my male students, and I teach fifth graders, want to join the military" (quoted in Aguon 2008, 124). In Palau, the government building for the State of Melekeok proudly displays pictures of village sons and daughters who have joined the US military; indeed, joining the military is seen as a ticket out of the islands and toward a better future. In reality, Pacific Islander recruits frequently join at lower-ranked infantry levels rather than into higher officer ranks—and in turn access fewer benefits and opportunities than they might expect or hope for when first recruited.

According to the US Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Minority Veterans, an estimated 34,605 veterans identified as Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander as of 30 September 2015. Meanwhile, Pacific Islanders comprise one of the largest groups per capita to be casualties of war. In fact, Guam's rate of troop deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in Iraq and Afghanistan was 5.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants compared to 1.44 per 100,000 for the US national average, 1.61 per 100,000 for Texas and 1.29 per 100,000 for California) (Harden 2008). The realities of war and new

threats of terrorism have led some Pacific Islander parents to have second thoughts about allowing their sons and daughters to join the US military.

As Pacific Islander youth look to the future, it is important that they be aware not only of the opportunities military service can offer but also of the historical legacies of militarism in Oceania; the continuing impacts of militarization on the lives, lands, and cultures of the Pacific region; the costly realities of war; and the range of other, nonmilitary options that could lead them to their desired futures.

"The Kingfisher on the Wayside"

According to Palauan educator Elicita Morei, "Even though feelings of sadness and loss are intense when a child comes back in a coffin, that reality gets blurred when the Army or Marines escorts the body back home with such dignity that parents and the small, tight-knit community then looks at their child's death as life not wasted but rather given in a duty and an obligation. This attitude stems from Palauans' proverbial belief that young boys and men are 'warriors and are the feed of the kingfisher on the wayside'. Young people in Palau, when we ask them why they want to join the military, often say they want the challenge and to see the world."

Activity

In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue connected to militarism in the Pacific Islands today? Explain your answer.

Conclusion

Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific

Militarism and the militarization of Pacific Island places and bodies continue to be significant features of political, social, and cultural experiences in twenty-first century Oceania. This book brings into focus a few of the ways militarism has been and is an intersecting and entangled feature of life in the Pacific Islands. It also highlights some of the traumas, wounds, disruptions, and displacements caused by the massive military-industrial complex required to support and enable nearly fifty years of nuclear testing by US, French, and British colonial regimes in the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, and beyond.

There is no limit to the ways in which the many dimensions of militarization in the Pacific Islands could and should be considered and discussed—and this book really only scratches the surface of the diverse and multilayered histories and experiences of militarism and nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands. As you continue to explore how

militarism functions and its impacts on lives and environments in Oceania, consider some of the following: military and space bases; radar domes; fleet buildups; chemical weapons and nuclear-waste storage; ballistic missile testing and the “Star Wars” strategic defense initiative; periodic bombing as part of training and readiness activities; dedicated military rest and relaxation (R&R) zones; land and property rights issues around military properties; commercial activities around military bases; and privatization and private military corporations. Finally, continue to think about and find examples of the many ways that indigenous and local activists and ordinary people have responded to and resisted militarization in the region—and some of the real impacts they have had on local and regional communities despite continuing asymmetries between colonial powers and local actors.

Glossary

Bikini Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands where the United States conducted twenty-three nuclear tests, including its largest nuclear test—the hydrogen bomb codenamed Castle Bravo.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 13)

Related terms: Castle Bravo, Enewetak Atoll, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Castle Bravo

Codename for the largest nuclear test ever conducted by the United States, detonated 1 March 1954 on Bikini Atoll.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 16)

Related terms: Bikini, Enewetak Atoll, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique

Headquarters of the French nuclear-testing program in the Pa-

cific Islands, established in 1962 on Moruroa Atoll in the Tuamotu Islands (translation: Pacific Experimentation Center).

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 26)

Related terms: Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls, Nuclear testing, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Chamoru

Indigenous people of the Mariana Islands including Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); also spelled Chamorro.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 29)

"Changed circumstances" petition

According to Section 177 of the US Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands, this is the Marshall Islands' only option for pursuing additional nuclear compensation if and when new information about the impacts of nuclear testing

should become available. No changed circumstances petition has been successfully filed to date.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 25)

Related terms: Castle Bravo, Enewetak Atoll, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll.

Enewetak Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands where the United States conducted forty-four nuclear tests and site of the Runit Dome, which holds more than 111,000 cubic yards of radioactive debris in a large crater created by a nuclear test on Runit Island.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 13)

Related terms: Bikini, Castle Bravo, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls

Sites of French nuclear weapons testing in the Tuamotu Islands, French Polynesia, from 1966 to 1996.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 13)

Related terms: Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique, Nuclear testing, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Hegemony

The dominance of one state or political power over others.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 12)

Related terms: Ideology, Militarism.

Ideology

A system of ideas so strongly held that it becomes difficult for individuals to notice how influential or active those ideas are in shaping their thoughts and behavior.

Section 1 - Framing Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific (see page 3)

Related terms: Hegemony, Militarism.

Kanaka Maoli

Native Hawaiian (adjective); Kānaka Maoli: Native Hawaiians (plural noun).

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 30)

Mā'ohi

The indigenous people of French Polynesia.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 42)

Militarism

Ideology and historically rooted system of power generally connected to imperialism; the ideology that a nation should maintain and be ready to use its strong military capabilities to advance its national interests.

Introduction and Overview (see page 1)

Related terms: Hegemony, Ideology, Militarization.

Militarization

“Step-by-step process by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on, or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria” (Cynthia Enloe).

Introduction and Overview (see page 1)

Related terms: Hegemony, Ideology, Militarism.

Nuclear testing

Major component of the Cold War arms race in which countries with nuclear capabilities tested nuclear weapons to determine their functionality and to display their power on a world stage. From 1947 to 1996, the United States, France, and Great Britain all tested nuclear weapons in parts of Oceania—including the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Johnston Atoll, and Australia—with devastating outcomes for indigenous people and environments.

Introduction and Overview (see page 1)

Related terms: Bikini, Castle Bravo, Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique, Enewetak Atoll, Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)

Organized movement that has used a variety of tactics since 1965 to advocate for the decolonization of West Papua from Indonesia. Also known as the Free Papua Movement.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 42)

Pacific Islands Forum

Founded as the South Pacific Forum in 1971, the Forum is a regional organization made up of the independent, self-governing Pacific Island nations. Forum goals include stimulating economic growth, enhancing political governance and security for the region, and strengthening regional cooperation and integration.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 40)

Project 4.1

Designation for a medical study conducted by the United States on Rongelap Atoll, Marshall Islands, after winds blew nuclear fallout from the detonation of the Castle Bravo hydrogen test to Rongelap from Bikini Atoll. Declassified documents suggest that the study was planned in advance and that the people of Rongelap were intentionally left on the atoll so that the effects of nuclear fallout on their bodies could be documented.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 20)

Related terms: Bikini, Castle Bravo, Nuclear testing, Rongelap Atoll, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)

Led by the US military out of Honolulu, Hawai'i, RIMPAC is the world's largest international warfare display and exercise.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 43)

Rongelap Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands severely impacted by nuclear fallout from the Castle Bravo hydrogen bomb test on 1 March 1954.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 18)

Related terms: Bikini, Castle Bravo, Enewetak Atoll, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZ)

Established a nuclear-weapon free zone in a large area of the independent Pacific Islands region and banned the use, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons within the borders of the zone. Also known as The Treaty of Rarotonga.

Section 4 - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and Revitalization (see page 41)

Related terms: Bikini, Castle Bravo, Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique, Enewetak Atoll, Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls, Nuclear testing, Project 4.1, Rongelap Atoll.

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)

United Nations trust territory administered by the United States in parts of Micronesia after World War II. Areas administered as part of the TTPI included the modern-day Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Section 3 - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War (see page 15)

United States Pacific Command (USPACOM)

The oldest and largest of the Unified Combatant Commands of the United States armed forces, located in Hawai'i.

Section 5 - Contemporary Militarized Currents (see page 47)

References

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Image 5. Uncle Sam schooling his new students—i.e., his new colonies in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Illustration: J. Ottmann Lith. Co., 1899. Public Domain. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:School_Begins_%28Puck_Magazine_1-25-1899%29.jpg. (Found on pg. 9).

Image 6. Pacific Islanders across the region worked as laborers during World War II. Here, Solomon Islands Labor Corps and Seabees work on the Guadalcanal airfield. Photo: US Naval Construction Battalion Center, 1943. Fair use. Retrieved from <http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/pacwar/Pages/viewtext.php?s=browse&tid=161&route=browseby.php&category=109&by=category&s=browse>. (Found on pg. 10).

- Image 7. On New Guinea, the Papuan Infantry Battalion helped the Australians thwart Japanese advances even as the Pohnpeian Kessitihai fought on the side of Japan. In the end, 15,000 New Guineans and countless other Pacific Islander men, women, and children perished in fighting, bombings, and executions by both sides. Photo: Anonymous, date unknown. Fair use. Retrieved from <http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/pacwar/Pages/viewtext.php?s=browse&tid=220&route=browseby.php&category=146&by=category&s=browse>. (Found on pg. 10).
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- Image 13. Bikini Islanders board a US Navy landing craft before "Operation Crossroads" in July 1946. Photo: NARA, Still Pictures Unit, Record Group 374-G, box 7, folder 60, "Tests: Operation Crossroads." Reproduced from www.nsarchive.org with the permission of the National Security Archive. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb553-70th-anniversary-of-Crossroads-atomic-tests/>. (Found on pg. 18).

- Image 14. Runit Dome holds more than 111,000 cubic yards of radioactive debris in a large crater created by a nuclear test on Runit Island. The crater has been capped with a concrete structure; today, it is suspected that Runit Dome is beginning to crack and may already be leaking radioactive material into the air, soil, and ocean. Despite the presence of the Runit Dome, residents of Enewetak began to return to live on the atoll in 1980 after the United States declared it safe for habitation. Photo: US Defense Special Weapons Agency. Public Domain. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Runit_Dome_001.jpg. (Found on pg. 22).
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Video 5. Pōhakuloa: Now that you know. Do you care? Take action at kamakakoi.com. Ruben Carrillo, 2013. Reproduced with permission by the owner. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/63867248>. (Found on pg. 49).

Bikini Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands where the United States conducted twenty-three nuclear tests, including its largest nuclear test—the hydrogen bomb codenamed Castle Bravo.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Castle Bravo

Codename for the largest nuclear test ever conducted by the United States, detonated 1 March 1954 on Bikini Atoll.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique

Headquarters of the French nuclear-testing program in the Pacific Islands, established in 1962 on Moruroa Atoll in the Tuamotu Islands (translation: Pacific Experimentation Center).

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Chamoru

Indigenous people of the Mariana Islands including Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); also spelled Chamorro.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Changed circumstances petition

According to Section 177 of the US Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands, this is the Marshall Islands’ only option for pursuing additional nuclear compensation if and when new information about the impacts of nuclear testing should become available. No changed circumstances petition has been successfully filed to date.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Enewetak Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands where the United States conducted forty-four nuclear tests and site of the Runit Dome, which holds more than 111,00 cubic yards of radioactive debris in a large crater created by a nuclear test on Runit Island.

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls

Sites of French nuclear weapons testing in the Tuamotu Islands, French Polynesia, from 1966 to 1996.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Hegemony

The dominance of one state or political power over others.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Ideology

A system of ideas so strongly held that it becomes difficult for individuals to notice how influential or active those ideas are in shaping their thoughts and behavior.

Related Glossary Terms

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Index

Kanaka Maoli

Native Hawaiian (adjective); **Kānaka Maoli**: Native Hawaiians (plural noun).

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Mā'ohi

The indigenous people of French Polynesia.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Militarism

Ideology and historically rooted system of power generally connected to imperialism; the ideology that a nation should maintain and be ready to use its strong military capabilities to advance its national interests.

Related Glossary Terms

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Index

Find Term

Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Introduction and Overview

Militarization

“Step-by-step process by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on, or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria” (Cynthia Enloe).

Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Introduction and Overview

Nuclear testing

Major component of the Cold War arms race in which countries with nuclear capabilities tested nuclear weapons to determine their functionality and to display their power on a world stage. From 1947 to 1996, the United States, France, and Great Britain all tested nuclear weapons in parts of Oceania—including the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Johnston Atoll, and Australia—with devastating outcomes for indigenous people and environments.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Introduction and Overview

Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)

Organized movement that has used a variety of tactics since 1965 to advocate for the decolonization of West Papua from Indonesia. Also known as the Free Papua Movement.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Pacific Islands Forum

Founded as the South Pacific Forum in 1971, the Forum is a regional organization made up of the independent, self-governing Pacific Island nations. Forum goals include stimulating economic growth, enhancing political governance and security for the region, and strengthening regional cooperation and integration.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Project 4.1

Designation for a medical study conducted by the United States on Rongelap Atoll, Marshall Islands, after winds blew nuclear fallout from the detonation of the Castle Bravo hydrogen test to Rongelap from Bikini Atoll. Declassified documents suggest that the study was planned in advance and that the people of Rongelap were intentionally left on the atoll so that the effects of nuclear fallout on their bodies could be documented.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)

Led by the US military out of Honolulu, Hawai'i, RIMPAC is the world's largest international warfare display and exercise.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Rongelap Atoll

Atoll in the Marshall Islands severely impacted by nuclear fallout from the Castle Bravo hydrogen bomb test on 1 March 1954.

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZ)

Established a nuclear-weapon free zone in a large area of the independent Pacific Islands region and banned the use, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons within the borders of the zone. Also known as The Treaty of Rarotonga.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Indigenous Responses, Resistance, and

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)

United Nations trust territory administered by the United States in parts of Micronesia after World War II. Areas administered as part of the TTPI included the modern-day Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Related Glossary Terms

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Militarism and Nuclear Testing in the Pacific - Nuclear Testing and the Cold War

United States Pacific Command (USPACOM)

The oldest and largest of the Unified Combatant Commands of the United States armed forces, located in Hawai'i.

Related Glossary Terms

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