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Re: **Comment on the DEIS and Recommended Actions**

After numerous conversations with members of the island community, students, researchers and mental health service providers, I have compiled a response to the DEIS and its implications for the psychological health and general well being of the people of Guam.   It is my professional opinion that if some of the issues outlined in this letter in response to the DEIS are not addressed immediately, the repercussions to the island and its people may be longstanding and irreversible.   If we are to plan a future of stability, safety, and prosperity for Guam, we cannot ignore the extent of impact this build up will have without proposing concrete and viable solutions. The question is, are island residents' prepared to handle such rapid adaptation to the permanent social, socio-economical, political, cultural, and geographical shifts that will impact their way of life on all levels?

The DEIS acknowledges there will be "significant impact" on the social environment in Guam. However, the DEIS does not address how the U.S. Department of Defense has planned to allocate resources to address the potential damage this build up will have on the social capital, social efficacy and mental health of the islands' people.

In this letter, I highlight and identify detrimental consequences of non action in dealing with the rapid changes to the social environment of Guam.   However, at best, my proposition is one of harm reduction and mitigation, and does not replace my belief that a people's free agency and right to self determination should not be negotiable.   Following is an outline of key areas of concern for which a proper action plan must be developed and implemented to increase the sustainability and adjustment of all individuals concerned. I have furnished a brief list of empirically derived research out of hundreds available to support my arguments in this letter. However, the research is only as good as those that will acknowledge it and put it into effect.

1. Preservation of the Indigenous -
    Complete Disregard to the desires and needs of the islands' indigenous population, the Chamorus – nobody has asked them what they want; unilateral decisions were made by government officials without a democratic process. Such disregard can lead to:
    a. Learned helplessness
    b. Social defeat
    c. Disempowerment and disenfranchisement
    d. Marginalization

    *these have been associated with high alcohol consumption, drug use, low self esteem, poor self efficacy, criminal conduct, depression, suicide and other detrimental social and mental health consequences. Indigenous populations are particularly vulnerable.

2. Retraumatization – salt to injury; "soul wound" – Increased military presence may induce reliving of trauma during WWII and other colonial impositions

3. Noise pollution –
     a. highly associated with anxiety
     b. Military buildup → planes, machinery → "scary" or fear inducing

   *Fear leads to paranoia, defensiveness and mistrust – can translate into behavioral problems

4. Culture – Values, Beliefs, and Practices
   a. Militarism – primarily values the need of the military, all other ways of life must be made secondary, or even eradicated to address and cater to what the military needs to operates optimally.   Military culture and values takes precedence and must be adopted immediately.
   b. Values of cooperation, peace, and negotiation must be replaced with military values of force and use of conflict. This in turn disrupts the intergenerational socialization practices. How will that impact child development and child rearing?
   c. What actions are taken to preserve culture, and not merely the artifacts of culture?
   d. Cultural contact zones – when different cultures come into contact with each other, particularly amidst rapid changes of which people have little control over, it creates apprehension, mistrust, and conflict. What programs have been instated or are being developed to increase the military's cultural sensitivity towards the various cultures in Guam? Will the military personnel be required to attend mandatory training?

5. Geographic changes and ecological changes
   a. Urbanization – highly correlated with schizophrenia, depression
   b. Population surge and competition for resources – housing costs, utilities, cost of living will increase – this will increase crime, unemployment, prostitution, drug use, increase in low income job market and reduction in high paying positions associated other industrial development →supply and demand chain – possible increase in drug trafficking and human trafficking if demand increases
   c. Industry – there will be a shift in the types of businesses that will increase – entrepreneurs will likely shift their focus from family restaurants or recreation to focus on accommodating the military.
   d. Physical space - The people of Guam will start eventually feeling displaced and uncomfortable in areas that will be primarily occupied by military. Former areas of enjoyment, heritage, and spiritual significance are being eradicated (i.e. Mt. Lam Lam, Pagot Caves, beaches, etc). This sense of confinement and restriction (from which was initially their land and space) will increase feelings of anger, rage, or worse, mere surrender and escapist behaviors

6. Psychological Health – When agency and freedom are removed, the following reactions can be expected: Helplessness, Confusion, Inadequacy, Inferiority, Shock, Apathy, Anger, Indifference, Maladaptive identity formation, increase in Risky Behaviors, increase Maladaptive Behaviors such as domestic violence, criminal conduct, etc.

7. Social capital – What is being done to address how the government plans to increase this? The buildup will lead to a more pronounced social and economic disparity – associated with increased stress and anxiety, inequality is associated with higher rates of schizophrenia, and not exactly good for any social tapestry.

8. Special Populations

    a. Micronesians in Guam are overrepresented in crime rates (Guam Police Report 2003-2009); suicide (DMHSA), domestic violence and have the lowest per capita income of all other ethnic groups and often lived in overcrowded homes (U.S. Census 2000).   Demand for low wage jobs may increase influx of migration from neighboring islands. Will there be sufficient affordable housing, social services and public transportation available to accommodate these groups?
    b. U.S. Marines have reportedly one of the highest rates of suicide rates in the U.S. A higher rate of domestic violence and substance problems are also reported. Will the social services be adequate in supporting military persons located in Guam?

B.   Mitigation

It will be particularly important to appropriate funds to address the increased demand for mental health services. There will be an increased need for licensed clinical psychologists, therapists, substance abuse specialists and social workers. There will also be a need to support social and behavioral research, program evaluations and assessments.   The facilities for inpatient and outpatient mental health services are already inadequate to meet the current population's needs. Guam is an underserved population. High suicide rates and increased domestic violence and substance problems are reported for this region. Environment and social change has the propensity to increase these at risk behaviors and exacerbate pre-existing conditions.

 In addition, recruiting and retaining new personnel for these high stress jobs often requires competitive salary packages. Guam has a high turnover rate for practicing psychologists.   Furthermore, there will be a strong need to support training and education for this type of work at the university level.   Training and education should be considered to increase military personnel's cultural sensitivity and interaction with civilian population. Workshops to increase intergroup interactions and cohesiveness for various ethnic and cultural groups need to be developed using culturally informed specialists.

Furthermore, improved infrastructure becomes a key component in reducing daily stress and competition for resources.   Urban living has been associated with positive outcomes if the environmental conditions are met to enhance pro-social behaviors. Development of more affordable and adequate rental housing is needed. The high cost of living and real estate is a response to the anticipated military build-up.   Affordable utilities, water sources, sewage and waste, better roads, more street lights and more signal lights are needed.   Public parks and beaches should be retained as much as possible with open access.   To reduce air pollution, more stringent regulations must be imposed on buses and trucks by the Department of Motor

and Vehicles.   More control on the regulation and licensing of bars and massage parlors should be implemented to ensure that such businesses are not disproportionately overrepresented in the economy of Guam. Small businesses and recreation that address the needs of both the civilian and military populations should be financially supported and encouraged.   And lastly, creating an environment in which diversity is celebrated and appreciated, where equality supersedes preferential treatment, and where all individuals, civilian and military are valued as equal members of society, there is hope for sustainability and growth for Guam.   And lastly, I would like to say that the Chamoru people of Guam are the most affected by this military build-up as this is their ancestral home and birth land.   While they are a resilient group as history has indicated, it is important that they are given the ultimate voice in Guam's future direction.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my response. I trust you will ensure the welfare and well being of all Guam residents.

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