

POETRY

from fatal impact statements [volume four : aircraft carrier berthing]

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Preface:

In 2006, the United States and Japan agreed to relocate 8,000 marines from Okinawa to the U.S. Territory of Guam; this move became part of a military buildup on Guam—the largest buildup in the Pacific since World War II. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Department of the Navy prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to assess the buildup’s potential environmental impacts. Released in 2009, the DEIS was a nine-volume, 11,000 page document. The release of this document details the plans for the military buildup: construction of facilities to house and support 8,600 marines, their 9,000 dependents, 7,000 transient Navy personnel, 600-1000 Army personnel, and 20,000 foreign workers; the establishment of an Air and Missile Defense Task Force; the placement of a firing range complex on sacred lands; and the creation of a deep-draft wharf in Apra Harbor for nuclear powered aircraft carriers. My poem addresses the environmental impacts of dredging Apra Harbor, which will destroy 2.3 million square feet of living coral reef and the birthing habitats of several native species of marine life. Some text is taken directly from Volume Four of the DEIS. For more information on the buildup, go to the Navy’s website: www.guambuildupeis.us. For information on how the indigenous people of Guam are resisting the buildup, please go to www.weareguahan.com.

military buildup : dredge :

deep-draft
wharf in...

*in chamorro “apapa” means “low” the original name for cabras island named during spanish times
the port of san luis de apra—*

to build transient carrier port
to support transient nuclear powered aircraft carrier

strike-

...apra harbor
*with its once
rich fishing grounds once
home to many villages once—*

group : manned
by over five thousand personnel by aircraft and escort ships

berth [us]

guam]

to meet international treaty requirements
to fulfill us national security

in response to threats to galleon-trade and missionary efforts spanish government ordered construction of three fortifications in what would become apra harbor : fort santiago [atop orote peninsula] fort san luis [at anchorage near sumay] fort santa cruz [on a reef near entrance of the inner]

to provide mutual defense [japan-us]
deter aggression dissuade coercion in
western pacific in

the proposed dredging : apra harbor : our homeland : their homeport :
in the proposed berthing : continuous rotational
presence : valiant

shield

*during us naval administration [1898-1941] apra harbor used as coaling station
for ships coming from us to asia—flights*

*from san francisco to manila included layovers in honolulu midway wake guam—routes
extended into macao hong kong shanghai—routes
increased mail delivery—*

minimum dredge depth : 49.5 ft | turning basin : 1,092 ft radius | channel width : 600 ft

in the dredging : transient

veils of
sediment

plume

silt
curtains

*—with american recapture of guam from japan [1944]
all land abutting apra harbor taken by us navy—*

*villagers of sumay relocated to postwar village of santa rita—
village of piti relocated no longer fronts piti channel—*

inner and outer

*harbor
dredged*

*glass
break-*

*water constructed on
reef—*

slit

*who will
shield us?*

~

cut and fill—pile
driving—toxic

runoff—erosion—
vehicle and vessel emissions—is

the death of

~

in the proposed dredging :

a grey tailed tattler feeds
in apra harbor

a pacific reef heron feeds
in apra harbor

a green sea turtle nests
in apra harbor

a hawksbill sea turtle nests
in apra harbor

a napoleon wrasse swims
in apra harbor (in chamoru)

a spinner dolphin spins
in apra harbor

a scalloped hammerhead shark
in apra harbor

a mariana common moorhen flies our common sky
above apra harbor

end
-angered

toninos
tanguisson
atuhong
halu'ta
haggan bed'di
haggan karai

~

stormwater discharges may contaminate
elevated sediment concentrations may contaminate
chemical leaks may contaminate
alteration of stream channels or reservoirs may contaminate
non-point source runoff may contaminate
saltwater intrusion from increased aquifer pumping may contaminate
water availability in reservoirs may reduce
altering diverting restricting surface water into wetlands may reduce
altered watercourse or drainage conveyance may reduce
nuclear waste may contaminate
amount of potable water may reduce
water quality and public health may reduce

~

berthing

‘ocean ...

‘temporary loss of habitat during construction from
noise lighting and activity’

‘permanent loss of habitat’

... disposal’

dredging

~

*marine introductions have had little attention until mid-1990s
when five marine biodiversity surveys conducted on guam—
approximately 5,500 non-native species were recorded many of
which occupy apra harbor—according to the global invasive
species database twenty-one marine invasive alien species have
been identified on guam with an estimated 8,600 more invasive
marines to be relocated from*

~

sea turtles use
natural light cues

to orient
toward the ocean—

bright
construction
lights

from dredging
platforms disorient nesting

and hatchlings

~

'estuarine water column'

'marine water column'

~

—seagrass
beds—inter
tidal—share
a common
mouth—