

Archipelagic History

Vietnam, Palestine, Guam, 1967–1975

On 2 September 1975, Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam were juxtaposed on the front page of Guam's newspaper, the *Pacific Daily News* (PDN). The top half of the page featured two articles: one discussing the impending Interim Peace Agreement, brokered by US secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger, which would strengthen diplomatic relations between Israel, Egypt, and the United States; and the other reporting the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat's response "in the name of Palestine that the American solution cannot and will not succeed. We will liberate Palestine with our bodies, blood and soul."¹ The bottom half of PDN's front page, meanwhile, described unruly protests at one of Guam's Operation New Life camps.² A group of Vietnamese refugees on Asan Beach demanded that the US government allow them to repatriate to Vietnam, challenging the US military's narrative of humanitarian rescue and unidirectional migration to the West.³

This front page of the PDN invites an archival reading practice that I call *archipelagic history*: one that traces different forms of US military empire across oceans and continents in order to chart how Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam became entangled in the US imperial imagination between 1967 and 1975. Unlike other models of writing history across multiple locales, such as world history, global history, transnational history, or diasporic history, archipelagic history is not organized around a particular empire, superpower, nation-state, or ethnic diaspora.⁴ Rather, it traces connections between spaces on the seeming margins of grand historical narratives in order to draw attention to South-South relations: the exchange of political knowledge, military strategy, solidarity rhetoric, and intimate relations between subjects of the global South who resist aggression from the global North. Archipelagic history upends linear notions of causal temporality

and instead attends to the concurrent reverberations of war and imperialism across multiple sites.

Existing historiographies of this time period rarely discuss Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam in relation to one another, if at all. This neglect is due in part to area studies divisions, which posit Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam as “discretely bounded objects” of analysis with “isolated origins and independent progressive development.”⁵ This proclivity to segregate along continental lines, however, obfuscates the archipelagic nature of US empire: how US military bases, strategic allyships, and sites of imperial intervention in so-called “Communist Asia,” the “Middle East,” and the “Pacific Rim” are in reality connected. Asian American studies, with its transnational turn, has recently begun to discuss Palestine as part of West Asia and Guam as part of the Pacific Islands; however, scholarship has yet to analyze the two in relation, let alone triangulated with Vietnam.⁶ Likewise American studies, though it seeks to “decenter the United States and analyze its centralized imperial power,” often limits its study of empire to the continental United States and one “Other.”⁷ Archipelagic history, in contrast, traces what Françoise Lionnet and Shumei Shih call “minor transnationalism” and Lisa Lowe terms “intimacies”: “less visible forms of alliance, affinity, and society among variously colonized peoples beyond the metropolitan national center.”⁸ It charts imperial geographies as well as attendant anti-imperial struggles in order to illuminate contours of power.

Focusing on the 1967–75 period—from the year of the Six Day War in Israel-Palestine and President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Guam Conference” on the Vietnam War, to the year of the Fall of Saigon in Vietnam and the commencement of Operation New Life in Guam—this chapter details how Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam became entangled in an archipelago of US empire even prior to the post-1975 displacement of Vietnamese refugees. Indeed, I argue, Vietnamese refugees ended up resettling in Guam and Israel-Palestine *because* of these prior entanglements, or what Kris Manjapra calls “knotted itineraries.”⁹ To understand the refugee settler condition in Guam and Israel-Palestine as an archipelagic formation, it is important to first establish an archipelagic history of Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam’s connections prior to the advent of refugee resettlement.

Mapping this archipelagic history is challenging because US imperialism manifested differently in Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam during the 1967–75 period: direct military intervention in Vietnam, support for Zionism in Palestine, and settler militarism in Guam. As a result, struggles for self-determination were articulated distinctly at each site: competing communist and anticommunist visions of independence in Vietnam; liberation from Zionist occupation in Palestine; and an end to the indeterminate status as an unincorporated territory, via either statehood, free association, or Indigenous sovereignty, in Guam. During this period, Palestine and Guam were connected via their respective relations to Vietnam, understood alternatively as a war, a divided people, and a revolutionary struggle. US officials’ concurrent discussions of Vietnam and Palestine were shaped by Cold

War suspicions of these spaces' shared susceptibility to Soviet Union intervention. In turn, revolutionaries in Vietnam and Palestine articulated a shared struggle against US imperialism via the Third World Liberation rhetoric circulating at the time. Vietnam and Guam's relationship during this period, meanwhile, was largely shaped by the US War in Vietnam. During the war, Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam functioned as key sites of US military offensive, and more than 6,000 Chamorro soldiers served in Vietnam—a staggering proportion of the island's civilian population of less than 40,000.¹⁰ Although these Indigenous soldiers were positioned in opposition to North Vietnam's anticolonial struggle for independence, unexpected intimacies and "structures of recognition" formed between Chamorro soldiers, South Vietnamese soldiers, and Vietnamese civilians, evidencing ways of relating otherwise.¹¹

The first section of this chapter is based on original archival research conducted at the Institute of Palestine Studies (IPS) in Ramallah during summer 2016. I rely primarily on the *International Documents on Palestine (IDP)*, annual anthologies of reprinted newspaper articles, public speeches, and United Nations documents pertaining to Palestine's international relations with other countries and political leaders. Collated, translated, and published in English by the Institute of Palestine Studies, these anthologies reflect IPS's editorial choices. Indeed, as a narration of Palestine's own internationalist history, the IPS archive functions as a political act of sovereignty—one that enacts state claims to writing history in the facing of ongoing Zionist erasure. Although the IPS archive privileges the PLO's particular viewpoint and, like all state archives, is subject to omissions, it functions as an important assertion of decolonial knowledge production.¹² This chapter privileges IPS's archival choices, cross-referencing and supplementing the anthologies' texts with other sources and interviews.¹³

The second section of this chapter engages both archival research and oral histories. Drawing primarily from Guam's newspaper, entitled *Guam Daily News (GDN)* during the late 1960s and later renamed *PDN* in the early 1970s, I first track how Chamorro and non-Chamorro writers represented Guam's relationship to Vietnam during the Vietnam War, as well as concurrent debates about Guam's status as an unincorporated territory with limited constitutional rights. Next, I draw from oral histories conducted with Chamorro Vietnam War veterans during summer 2018 to trace unexpected intimacies between Chamorro soldiers and Vietnamese soldiers and civilians brought together by US militarism, highlighting moments of cross-racial identification across the borders of empire.¹⁴

In sum, this chapter charts an archipelagic history between Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam, tracing different forms of US empire across distinct colonized spaces, or "islands," in order to illuminate the *nuộc* that connects them. Throughout this chapter I treat "Vietnam," "Palestine," and "Guam" as fluid rhetorical signifiers whose meanings change in relation to each other and respective political actors. The goals of this chapter are threefold: to map the archipelagic nature of US

military empire; to demonstrate how different anti-imperialist subjects enacted solidarities and unexpected intimacies with one another; and to show how the historical connections forged between Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam between 1967 and 1975 prefigured the routes taken by post-1975 Vietnamese refugees displaced in the aftermath of the US War in Vietnam.

VIETNAM AND PALESTINE

Cold War Entanglements: US Foreign Policy in Vietnam and the Middle East

According to historian Judith Klinghoffer, the Cold War's "Vietnamese–Middle Eastern connection" has been "effectively buried."¹⁵ Both the United States and the Soviet Union felt embarrassed by their concurrent foreign policies in Vietnam and the so-called "Middle East" and subsequently attempted to reject "any relationship between the two conflicts."¹⁶ Whereas "American policy makers were widely criticized for permitting their preoccupation with Vietnam to lead to the neglect of the Middle East" and later were "constantly accused of being willing to sacrifice Israeli interests on the altar of an advantageous exit from Vietnam," the Soviets "were accused of inciting the Arabs to war, and then 'selling them out.'"¹⁷ Supplementing Klinghoffer's analysis with *IDP* and other archival sources, this first section details the occluded history of Vietnam–Palestine connections during the 1967–75 period. I begin by demonstrating how US foreign policy officials, subscribing to a "Cold War logics and epistemology," used the perceived threat of Soviet expansion into Southeast and West Asia to justify concomitant US imperialist intervention in the two regions.¹⁸

On 17 May 1948, the Soviet Union became the first country to recognize the newly established state of Israel. However, Moscow's relations with Israel soon deteriorated, and the superpower began to denounce Zionist aggression. Positing itself as the leader of the non-Western world, the Soviet Union pivoted its support to the surrounding Arab nations in the form of weapons and other military resources. During the War of Attrition (1967–70), for example, the Soviet Union stationed fighter pilots in Egypt, which engaged in combat with the Israeli Air Force. At first, US officials were too preoccupied with the Cold War struggle in Southeast Asia to counter growing Soviet Union influence in the Middle East. However, after Israel's "lightning victory" during the Six Day War in 1967—a striking counterpoint to the United States' own quagmire in Vietnam—"Americans en masse fell in love with Israel."¹⁹ Moreover, the 1968 Têt Offensive prompted US officials to begin debating in earnest whether to scale back the unpopular war in Vietnam in order to pivot attention to the Middle East.

In a *New York Times* article entitled "We Should De-escalate the Importance of Vietnam" dated 21 December 1969, former undersecretary of state (1961–66) and US ambassador to the United Nations (1968) George W. Ball dismisses Vietnam

as an “area of marginal strategic importance,” belittles US commitments to South Vietnam’s vision of a democratic state, and instead argues that the United States should bolster its strategic interests in the Middle East.²⁰ In “Suez Is the Front To Watch,” published half a year later, Ball dispenses with the liberal Cold War rhetoric of spreading “democracy” and “freedom” often used to justify foreign intervention during this period. Centering capitalist concerns, he posits that South Vietnam commands little economic or geographical significance and suggests that the United States would be better off securing the Middle East, which in contrast is “an economic prize of extraordinary value,” an “area of concentrated American investment,” that “*does* lie near the center of world power,” which he identifies as Central and Western Europe.²¹

A shift in Cold War foreign policy regarding the Middle East would also appease the increasingly vocal bloc of liberal Jewish American voters who criticized the US War in Vietnam but advocated greater US intervention in defense of Israel following the Six Day War: a seemingly contradictory anti-Vietnam War, pro-Middle East interventionist position held by what Klinghoffer calls “Hoves and Dawks.”²² In his June 1970 article, however, Ball advises the Nixon administration to frame US intervention in the Middle East not as an “action to defend Israel from destruction at Arab hands” but rather as one to “prevent the Soviet Union from using Arab surrogate armies to extend its dominion over the Middle East.”²³ In doing so, he suggests, Americans are less interested in shedding blood on behalf of the “liberty” of small nations like South Vietnam or Israel than in combating the perceived threat of Soviet domination. In a television interview conducted a week later, President Richard Nixon echoed Ball’s analysis, admitting that the situation in the Middle East was “more dangerous” and, by extension, more important than the situation in Vietnam, given the potential “collision of the superpowers.”²⁴ In sum, Nixon’s pivot to the Middle East and subsequent abandonment of the South Vietnamese was driven by the desire to maintain “U.S. interests” and the Cold War “balance of power.”²⁵

Although US Cold War policy during the 1967–75 period prompted comparisons between Israel and South Vietnam, prior to 1967 many Israeli liberals actually identified more with the North Vietnamese cause. By December 1965, a series of demonstrations critiquing US intervention in Vietnam and supporting the communist-led Vietnamese liberation struggle had erupted across Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.²⁶ Many Israeli Jews empathized with the North Vietnamese because as survivors and descendants of the Holocaust, they too saw themselves as victims of Western persecution, struggling to maintain their own precarious nation-state. Radical leftist Knesset member Uri Avery, for example, compared the US killing of Vietnamese freedom fighters to the German slaughter of Holocaust Jews.²⁷ Israel’s political elite, raised in the European socialist tradition, “felt closer” to Hồ Chí Minh, the North Vietnamese communist leader, than to Nguyễn Cao Kỳ, the prime minister of South Vietnam from 1965 to 1967.²⁸ In fact, David

Ben-Gurion had befriended Hồ Chí Minh in 1946, when the two lived in the same Paris hotel. Before the Zionist establishment of Israel in 1948, Hồ had suggested that Ben-Gurion establish a Jewish government in exile headquartered in Hà Nội. Returning the sentiment of solidarity, Ben-Gurion asserted in 1966, “If I were the American President, I would have pulled out the American army from Vietnam, even though such a move might possibly have grave consequences.”²⁹ As a displaced Jew, Ben-Gurion identified with Hồ’s aspirations for a liberated nation-state. Once Ben-Gurion’s nationalist aspirations manifested as a settler colonial project, however, Hồ distanced his own Vietnamese revolution, aligning instead with the emergent Third World Liberation movement, whose emphasis on decolonial, anti-racist, pro-Indigenous politics necessitated a critique of Zionist theft of Palestinian lands.

Israel’s Cold War entanglement with South Vietnam over North Vietnam solidified in 1966, when popular Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan toured South Vietnam to study US counterinsurgency tactics. Israeli leftists, foreign officials, and American antiwar activists interpreted the trip as a deliberate move to align Israel with the United States and, by extension, *against* North Vietnam, Palestine, and the Soviet Union in the Cold War order.³⁰ The next year, following the Six Day War, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol named Dayan the minister of defense, tasked with maintaining security over the newly occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, where Dayan put his newfound counterinsurgency intelligence to use. As US support for Israel increased after 1967, exemplified by the sale of Phantom jets used in the Vietnam War to Israel in 1968, Palestine and other nonaligned nations projected the US war against North Vietnam onto Israel’s own politics.³¹ By the following decade, this shift had solidified: in a 1974 speech at the United Nations General Assembly’s 2282nd meeting, Arafat denounced Israel’s “backing of South Viet-Nam against the Viet-Nameese revolution.”³² Occluding the Israeli left’s prior support of the (North) Vietnamese anticolonial struggle, Palestine and nonaligned nations of the emerging Third World Liberation movement accused Israel of supporting the United States’ proxy war in Vietnam.

Third World Solidarities: Archipelagic Critiques of Western Imperialism

In Cold War debates regarding the Soviet Union’s growing influence in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, US officials drew implicit connections between Vietnam and Palestine during the 1967–75 period. In the texts discussed above, however, neither Ball nor Nixon explicitly name the Palestinian people. Ball refers to “the refugees” as one problem preventing Israel and the Arab states from “reaching a settlement” and Nixon characterizes the “*fedayeen*”—Arabic for “those willing to sacrifice themselves (for God)”—as “superradicals” who make for a “very difficult situation.”³³ Neither acknowledges that Palestinians have an independent stake in the conflict, given their forced displacement by Zionist settlement and occupation. Indeed, 1967 constituted a key “moment of opportunity for Palestinians to

decouple themselves from pan-Arabism, reconstitute their own particularistic identity and take the lead in their own national liberation.”³⁴

In contrast to US officials like Ball and Nixon, Third World Liberation leaders used the analytic of Western imperialism to draw connections between Vietnam and Palestine and express anti-imperial solidarity. While some actors, such as the Soviet Union, focused on Egypt’s, Syria’s, and Jordan’s territorial losses at the hand of Israel, others, such as China, explicitly identified Palestinians’ distinct grievances. All condemned the United States and Israel as imperialist forces, though how they defined the precise relationship between the two countries differed based on political ideology.

Some non-Western actors characterized the United States and Israel as independent actors who nonetheless coordinated their imperialist attacks. For example, in August 1968 the Ba’ath Party of Syria and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union declared that “the Zionist-imperialist aggression against the Arab countries and the American imperialist aggression against the people of Vietnam arise from an over-all imperialist plan” that “constitute[s] a danger to world peace and the security of all peoples.”³⁵ In making this claim, the parties mapped archipelagic connections not only between Vietnam and Palestine but also between anti-imperialist and anticolonial struggles in Cuba, Cambodia, Laos, South Africa, Rhodesia, and elsewhere. Similarly, following the Israeli attack on Karamah, Jordan, in March 1968, the Soviet government took the opportunity to condemn not only Israel’s “continuing aggression against neighboring Arab states” but also US intervention in Vietnam, drawing parallels between the two “aggressive imperialist forces” by identifying their common objective: “to strike a blow at the national liberation movement and its advanced detachments.”³⁶ By identifying a common enemy in Western imperialism, the Soviet Union articulated a global “national liberation movement,” short-circuiting the geographic distance between Vietnam and the Middle East. Such declarations were also self-interested: invoking a Cold War framework, the Soviet Union positioned itself as the leader of this anti-imperial movement.

Other political actors argued that Israel was just a proxy for US imperialist interests in the Middle East. For example, a May 1969 appeal by the Executive Secretariat of the Afro-Asian–Latin American Peoples’ Solidarity Organization to “Support the Arab and Palestinian Peoples’ Struggle against Israel’s Aggression” characterized “Israel’s acts of aggression and crimes” as part of “a plan drawn up by the imperialist powers which stand behind Israel and goad it on,” foremost among those powers being “American imperialism, which uses Israel to protect its economic, military and political interest in this part of the world.”³⁷ For countries outside the Middle East, US imperialism presented a much more immediate threat than Israeli aggression; they thus enfolded their criticism of Israel into a larger Cold War critique of US foreign intervention. Such rhetorical statements denied Israel’s own complex history and agency: although the United States has indeed contributed significant amounts of military and financial aid to Israel at the expense of the

Palestinian liberation struggle, and both the United States and Israel function as settler colonial states, Zionists who hoped to create a safe haven for Jews displaced by the Holocaust—even though this haven was predicated upon the displacement and dispossession of native Palestinians—did not consider Israel a mere lackey of some US imperialist “plan.”³⁸ Nonetheless, for many nonaligned countries such as Yugoslavia, the “connection between the Middle East and Far East” was “quite clear: in our opinion the United States is responsible for both these crisis [*sic*].”³⁹ In a 1974 interview, President Houari Boumediene of Algeria likewise insisted that “problems” in Vietnam and Palestine “are identical” and questioned how “Zionist propaganda [could] have secured the silence of the world” when this same world “opposed the American presence in Vietnam.”⁴⁰ Although Zionism echoed some of the postcolonial nonaligned rhetoric of national independence, Israel’s sovereignty was built upon settler colonial foundations, aligning Israel more with the United States than with the anticolonial, pro-Indigenous Third World Liberation movement by the late 1960s.

Although a Cold War framework simplistically pits socialism and authoritarianism against capitalism and liberal democracy, socialists’ interests were far from homogeneous.⁴¹ Wary of the Soviet Union’s unchecked rise to power over the socialist world, in June 1968 Chinese journalists published an article in the *Peking Review* accusing “the Soviet revisionist renegade clique” of “working hand in glove” with US imperialism to push through “a so-called ‘political settlement’ of the Middle East question in an attempt to force the Arab countries to an all-around capitulation to the US-Israeli aggressors.”⁴² They critiqued UN resolutions that would “coerc[e] the Arab countries into unilaterally accepting a ‘cease-fire,’” which would delegitimize the Palestinian armed uprising led by Arafat.⁴³ Although this article reveals the interregional competition for power that underwrote Cold War arguments critiquing Western imperialism, it also highlights the specificity of the Palestinian liberation struggle. While countries like Egypt and Jordan might settle for US-brokered peace with Israel in exchange for inclusion in Western capitalist markets, Palestinian liberation fighters could not afford to abandon the struggle for their stolen homeland. The *Peking Review* article, however, credited the ongoing “awakening” of Palestinian consciousness to “Mao Tse-tung’s thought.”⁴⁴ Although some leftist parties under the larger PLO umbrella, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), did draw inspiration from Maoism, others engaged different ideologies of Marxism, Indigenous resistance, and national liberation.⁴⁵ The *Peking Review*’s claim, furthermore, occluded the longer history of Palestinian struggle against the Ottoman Empire, British colonialists, and Zionist settlers.

Some political statements dispensed with Cold War rhetoric, highlighting instead the racial dimensions of imperialism in order to articulate a more grounded transnational solidarity from below. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, prominent Black leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois encouraged African

Americans to support Zionism, drawing comparisons between the Black independence movement and the Jewish fight for a homeland. By the 1960s, however, many radical Black leaders aligned with the Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation struggles, drawing connections between the “permanent state of war” against domestic people of color and the United States’ intervention in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.⁴⁶ The Black Panther Party, for example, critiqued the Israeli government as “an imperialist, expansionist power in Palestine” and foregrounded parallels between the racial oppression and political imprisonment suffered by African Americans and Palestinians.⁴⁷ Likewise, in an advertisement featured in the 2 November 1970 issue of the *New York Times*, a prominent group of self-identified “Black Americans” expressed “complete solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, who like us, are struggling for self-determination and an end to racist oppression.”⁴⁸ This group connected the United States’ “support for King Hussein’s slaughter of Palestinian refugees and freedom-fighters” with its “support of reactionary dictatorships throughout the world,” such as those in “Cambodia and Vietnam.” As in the above *Peking Review* article, the group identified both “Zionists and Arab reactionaries” as aiding “American Imperialism.”⁴⁹ Unlike those previously cited statements, however, this one critiqued not only US support for Israeli settler occupation but also Israeli support for “United States policies of aggression in Southeast Asia, policies that are responsible for the death and wounding of thousands of black youths.”⁵⁰ By pinpointing how Western imperialism impacted multiple communities, this group mapped an archipelago of solidarity between Vietnamese freedom fighters, Palestinian fedayeen, and disenfranchised Black Americans sent off to war.

Leftist student groups and academic activists in the United States also identified Third World solidarities between Vietnam, Palestine, and domestic people of color. Following the Six Day War, the Organization of Arab Students endorsed resolutions not only promoting Palestinian independence and Arab unity but also declaring solidarity with African Americans and the National Liberation Front. Recognizing linkages across struggles, they asserted, “Our battle is an inseparable part of the imperialistic design being executed against the dynamic revolutionary forces in the Third World.”⁵¹ Likewise, the 1969 convention resolution of the Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) drew explicit connections between the “Palestinian Revolution” and the “just cause of the people of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Black Community in the U.S.”⁵² In his presidential address the same year, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod declared that the AAUG stood united with “our Black Brothers in the United States, South Africa, Rhodesia and in Mozambique and Angola,” as well as “the gallant fighters of Vietnam.”⁵³ Echoing these sentiments, Naseer Aruri, a founding member of AAUG, recalls in his memoir: “We perceived our own struggle for emancipation in the Arab world in the same context of the anti-colonialist movement in Vietnam and the struggle for equality in the United States. We often considered our movement as

part and parcel of the fight for third world liberation.”⁵⁴ Student groups such as the Arab Student Association, the Tri-Continental Progressive Student Committee, the Liberation Support Movement at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Anti-Imperialist Movement at Columbia University organized film screenings and teach-ins that drew connections between Vietnam and Palestine, and passed out leaflets with slogans such “Vietnam-Palestine One Struggle” and “Southeast Asians Struggle for Independence, Palestinians Struggle for Freedom, G.I.s Struggle for Liberty.”⁵⁵ In “Communiqué #4,” released following the successful jailbreak of Timothy Leary in 1970, the Weather Underground, a militant left-wing organization originally founded at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, declared: “With the NLF [National Liberation Front] and the North Vietnamese, with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Al Fatah, with Rap Brown and Angela Davis, with all black and brown revolutionaries, the Soledad brothers and all prisoners of war in Amerikan [*sic*] concentration camps we know that peace is only possible with the destruction of U.S. imperialism.”⁵⁶ Like the organizations discussed above, the Weather Underground identified resistance to US imperialism as the common factor linking an archipelago of Third World Liberation struggles across Vietnam, Palestine, and the Americas.

Direct Addresses: Vietnam to Palestine, Palestine to Vietnam

Archipelagic discourses of solidarity were produced not only about but also by Vietnamese and Palestinian revolutionaries between 1967 and 1975, evidencing Robert J. C. Young’s assertion that “anti-colonialism was a diasporic production, a revolutionary mixture of the indigenous and the cosmopolitan, a complex constellation of situated local knowledges combined with radical universal political principles, constructed and facilitated through international networks.”⁵⁷ In spring 1967, prominent Palestinian resistance poet Samih al-Qasim, who remained in Israel after 1948 as a third-class citizen, translated a half-dozen quatrains of Hồ Chí Minh’s *Prison Diary* from English to Arabic for the popular Arabic-language publication *al-Jadid*. Drawing attention to “the parallel fates of political prisoners both at home and around the world,” Qasim not only highlighted the routine incarceration of Palestinians in Israeli prisons but also suggested that living under Zionist martial law in Israel (which lasted until 1966) was a form of imprisonment itself.⁵⁸ Qasim’s poetry also invoked the Vietnamese liberation struggle. In “From a Revolutionary in the East” (1964), for example, he writes:

From a revolutionary in the East
to revolutionaries lighting up the darkness
to fellow revolutionaries, wherever they are
in the Nile, in the Congo, in Vietnam.

...

My brothers! With blood you write
your history—and headlines!⁵⁹



FIGURE 2. General Võ Nguyên Giáp shares photos of the establishment of the Vietnam People's Army with PLO leader Yasser Arafat during his visit to Hà Nội, March 1970. Photo courtesy of AFP.

Locating himself squarely in the “East,” in this poem Qasim subverts Western colonial distinctions between the “Far” and “Near” East and thus imagines stronger geopolitical connections between Vietnam and Palestine. The poem also posits Third World revolutionaries as historical actors capable of writing their own history and headlines through armed guerrilla warfare, instead of mere reactionaries to US-Soviet Cold War maneuvers.

During the 1967–75 period, Palestinian fedayeen identified with Vietnamese revolutionaries and condemned US imperialism in Vietnam in their public speeches and political platforms.⁶⁰ They also, like other decolonization movements around the world, drew inspiration from Vietnam. Following General Võ Nguyên Giáp’s unexpected victory in 1954 over the French in the Battle of Điện Biên Phủ, Palestinian soldiers took on the nickname “Giap.”⁶¹ General Giáp’s writings, translated into Arabic, circulated throughout Palestinian refugee camps, and posters of Hồ Chí Minh decorated camp walls.⁶² Based on subsequent Vietnamese successes in holding off American troops, the leftist PFLP concluded that the guerrilla warfare “course adopted by Vietnam and Cuba is the only way in which underdeveloped countries can triumph and overcome the scientific and technological superiority of imperialism and neocolonialism.”⁶³ Recognizing that they could not compete with the superiority of the US-backed Israeli military on its own terms, Palestinian fedayeen declared a people’s war, encouraging workers and peasants most vulnerable to “the oppressive exploitation process exercised by world imperialism and its allies in our homeland” to take up arms.⁶⁴ Arafat, the iconic PLO leader of militant resistance for many decades, affirmed as well the “firm relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Vietnam revolution through the experience provided to us by the heroic people of Vietnam and their mighty revolution.”⁶⁵ In 1966, Khalil al-Wazir of the Fatah party visited Vietnam, and over the following years, Arafat sent several groups of Palestinian soldiers to train in Vietnam and learn Vietnamese guerrilla tactics.⁶⁶ Fedayeen in turn invited the

Vietnamese to visit the Palestinian military bases in southern Lebanon.⁶⁷ In March 1970, Arafat accompanied a delegation of Palestinian liberation fighters to Hà Nội to visit Hồ Chí Minh and General Võ Nguyên Giáp.⁶⁸ During their meeting, the latter told Arafat: “The Vietnamese and Palestinian people have much in common, just like two people suffering the same illness.”⁶⁹ Giáp thus drew archipelagic connections between the Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation struggles, positioning them against the common enemy of Western imperialism.

The fedayeen imagined turning the Middle East into a “Second Vietnam” and one of the surrounding Arab capitals, such as Amman or Beirut, into an “Arab Hanoi,” which would then serve as a center for revolutionary action based on the North Vietnamese model.⁷⁰ For example, capitalizing on American anxieties regarding an impending military defeat in Vietnam, the Palestinian Commando Organizations released a statement on 9 August 1970 declaring, “We must make the Middle East a second Vietnam to defeat Zionism and imperialism and to liberate completely the soil of the Palestinian and Arab homeland.”⁷¹ This statement emerged from the then solidifying Third World Liberation solidarities, which defined strategic alliances between Vietnam, Palestine, and other Third World nations. At the Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students, held in East Berlin in 1973, the PLO was invited to take up the “banner of the global struggle” from Vietnamese freedom fighters, whose struggle was thought to have concluded after the signing of the 1973 Paris Peace Accords ending US combat in Vietnam.⁷² With North Vietnam’s victory against US imperialism seemingly secured, the Third World Liberation movement turned its attention to the next major anti-imperialist struggle: Palestine.⁷³ Reflecting on the event, Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish reported: “In the conscience of the peoples of the world, the torch has been passed from Vietnam to us.”⁷⁴

Vietnamese freedom fighters in turn expressed support for the Palestinian struggle. North Vietnam and the PLO established ties in 1968. In a message to the International Conference for the Support of Arab Peoples held in Cairo on 24 January 1969, Hồ Chí Minh, who could not attend in person, asserted that the “Vietnamese people vehemently condemn the Israeli aggressors” and “fully support the Palestinian people’s liberation movement and the struggle of the Arab people for the liberation of territories occupied by Israeli forces.”⁷⁵ Vietnam, moreover, was “determined to fight the American aggressors until total victory” and thereby “fulfill its obligations” to both “its own nation” *and* “its friends in the fight against imperialism and colonialism, for independence of liberty.”⁷⁶ In fighting US imperialist forces in Southeast Asia, Vietnam hoped to weaken US imperialism’s capacity to suppress liberation movements in other parts of the world, including Palestine.⁷⁷ Conversely, in December 1969 Arafat argued that Palestinians were fighting not only for themselves but for “the freedom of peoples who are fighting for their liberty and existence, the freedom of the people of Vietnam who are suffering like the people of Palestine, the freedom of all humanity from oppression,

discrimination and exploitation.”⁷⁸ Vietnamese and Palestinian revolutionaries thus articulated a larger archipelago of interconnected struggles against Western imperialism, unsubordinated to Soviet expansionism.

The direct impact that Vietnamese pressure on US military forces in Vietnam had on US foreign policy in the Middle East is hard to quantify; however, sometimes US politicians inadvertently admitted that a weakening of US imperialism on one front benefited the national liberation struggle on the other. For example, in a 12 July 1970 television interview, US senator Stuart Symington, chairman of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East, speculated that Nixon’s “hand is being forced somewhat in the Middle East as a result of our stalemate, you might say, in the Far East.”⁷⁹ As much as the US administration tried to compartmentalize its foreign policy initiatives in Vietnam and Palestine, these struggles’ respective leaders articulated commonalities and vowed to fight on each other’s behalf.

Such Third World Liberation solidarities could also produce unintended results, however. Frustrated by its defeat in Vietnam, the United States would redouble its efforts in the Middle East, anxiously proving its imperial might at the expense of Palestinian liberation. Analyzing American cultural production from this period, Melani McAlister argues that for the United States, “Israel, or a certain image of Israel, came to function as a stage upon which the war in Vietnam was refought—and this time, won.”⁸⁰ Attributing US defeat in Vietnam to a failure of political will, American conservatives, inspired by Israel’s brazen capture of the West Bank and Gaza during the Six Day War, asserted that the United States should act “not only *with* Israel but also *like* Israel on key international issues.”⁸¹ In *Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationhood* (1974), Noam Chomsky—Jewish American intellectual, prominent anti-Vietnam War activist, and stalwart supporter of Palestine—makes a parallel, though critical, observation in suggesting that the United States saw Israel as a “sort of magic slate rewrite of American failure in Vietnam.”⁸² While Vietnam won independence in 1975, Palestine remains colonized.

These 1967–75 assertions of solidarity between Vietnam and Palestine continue to resonate in the contemporary moment. In a speech celebrating the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 28 November 2014, for example, Saadi Salama, ambassador of the State of Palestine in Vietnam, declared that Vietnam’s “solidarity and friendship given to Palestine’s legitimate struggle over decades has become a strong motivation for the two countries to overcome geographical distances to get closer and further promote special friendship.”⁸³ Indeed, Vietnam’s successful struggle for independence continues to inspire Palestine: “When in Palestine, if you say you are a Vietnamese, you will be welcome as a distinguished guest. For those in the land that is still in search of independence, the two words ‘Viet Nam’ have become a symbol of struggling spirit for the national sacred peace.”⁸⁴

Salama's own connection to Vietnam was intimately shaped by the 1967–75 period.⁸⁵ Born in 1961, he remembers when Israeli military tanks invaded his Palestinian village on the outskirts of Hebron on 7 June 1967, as part of the Six Day War that initiated the ongoing occupation of the West Bank. Four years later, as ten-year-old Salama sold newspapers in Hebron's bustling city center, he was struck by the visual parallels between the images of the Vietnam War covering the newspapers' front pages and his own life under Israeli occupation: how the white faces of the US soldiers carrying M16s and riding ominous tanks in Vietnam mirrored the fair-skinned faces of the Israeli soldiers carrying M16s and riding M3 half-tracks in Hebron. It was then and there that Salama realized that the Palestinians and Vietnamese, "living under occupation," shared the "same struggle for freedom and national independence" against "foreign invaders."⁸⁶ Shaped by these experiences, Salama chose to study abroad in Vietnam during the 1980s, worked at the embassy of the State of Palestine in Hà Nội between 1989 and 1992, and returned in December 2009 to serve as the embassy's ambassador. He asserts that "Vietnam continues to extend its strong support to the Palestinian people's just cause and their struggle to achieve their national rights, including the right of self-determination and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This is the unchangeable position of Vietnam toward the question of Palestine."⁸⁷

VIETNAM AND GUAM

"Tip of the Spear": US Militarism in Guam during the US War in Vietnam

Unlike Palestinian liberation fighters, Chamorro leaders did not articulate Third World solidarity with Vietnamese revolutionaries such as Hồ Chí Minh during the 1967–75 period. According to Joseph F. Ada, who later served as governor from 1987 to 1995, Guam was largely "shielded" from the Third World Liberation "movement toward independence and decolonization" by US policies seeking to "mold Guam in an American image" and curtail "our understanding of our rights as people."⁸⁸ Nonetheless, during this period many Chamorros began to critique Guam's colonial status, pointing out that although the 1950 Organic Act granted them US citizenship, they were still denied a voting member of Congress, the right to vote in the presidential election, and, until 1970, the right to elect their own governor. How Guam's unincorporated status should be resolved, however, was open to debate: although some Chamorros began to advocate for free association or Indigenous sovereignty during this period, many self-determination advocates instead expressed interest in greater democratic rights under the US Constitution. Overall, these struggles highlight the acute irony of the United States' claim to fight on behalf of democracy in Vietnam while simultaneously curtailing the democratic rights of Indigenous Chamorros in Guam.

Given its strategic position as the US territory closest geographically to Southeast Asia, Guam was a key site of US military power during the US War in Vietnam. Naval Air Station Agana provided support for carrier-based aircraft during the war, and Naval Hospital Guam treated many wounded US soldiers.⁸⁹ The US military first deployed B-52s to Guam in April 1964, and on 18 June 1964, it launched thirty bombers from Andersen Air Force Base, initiating Operation Arc Light.⁹⁰ Over the next eight years, tons of bombs were unloaded at the US naval base at Apra Harbor, stored in Naval Magazine Guam in Santa Rita, on the southern part of the island, and then driven north to Andersen Air Force Base each day to be loaded onto B-52s headed for Vietnam.⁹¹ US militarism disrupted civilian life: large flatbeds transferring the five-hundred-pound bombs shook the island's roads, and loud B-52s pierced the skyline at all hours.⁹² Moreover, Chamorros served in the US military in disproportionately high numbers. Of these, seventy-seven Guamanians, most of Chamorro descent, died in Vietnam, the highest per capita casualty rate of any state or territory during the war.⁹³

From the US government's standpoint, Guam's entanglement with Vietnam during the 1967–75 period was exemplified by three main events: the Guam Conference of 1967, the Guam Doctrine of 1969, and Operation Linebacker II in 1972. President Lyndon B. Johnson's visit to Guam in March 1967 to discuss Vietnam War policy marked the first time a US sitting president had visited the island. Known as the Guam Conference, following the Honolulu Conference (6–8 February 1966) and the Manila Conference (24–25 October 1966), this meeting came at a critical juncture during the US War in Vietnam. According to American reporter and foreign correspondent George McArthur, 1967 was “the year that will decide the war.”⁹⁴

To understand how Guam figured in the US imperial imagination during the Vietnam War, it is illuminating to trace how the island and its people were represented in the days leading up to and during the Guam Conference. US officials often stressed the importance of Guam's strategic location as a bastion of American democracy amidst hostile communist forces, interpolating not only the US military personnel stationed in Guam but the larger civilian population, including native Chamorros. Emphasizing the “significance of Guam to the defense of the free world,” Rear Admiral H. V. Bird, commander of the naval forces of the Marianas, for example, invoked the “patriotism and loyalty with which all Guamanians are imbued” and insisted that “wars are not only fought on battlefields but also fought by the patient understanding and faith of every citizen in the cause of freedom.”⁹⁵ Likewise, in a cable of welcome to President Johnson, Governor Manuel Guerrero, who had been appointed by President John F. Kennedy in 1963, claimed to speak on behalf of the entire island when he declared that Guam's “citizens are proud of Guam's role as an important military bastion aiding in the battle for freedom in Vietnam,” and that they “are honored you have chosen the island as the site of your conference with the leaders of that struggle.”⁹⁶ Given

Guam's precarious inclusion in the US body politic as an unincorporated territory, and the conferral of US citizenship only recently, following the 1950 Organic Act, Guerrero was anxious to assert Guam's patriotism during this moment of international visibility. Such rhetoric, however, disavowed concurrent critiques of US settler militarism in Guam, which had displaced many Chamorros from their villages in order to construct the US naval and air force bases.

In an open letter addressed to President Johnson entitled "What, You Ask, Is A Guam?" *GDN* editor Joe Murphy emphasizes Guam's military importance to the US war effort, given the island's "strategic value" as "a gigantic communication center," a "mighty fortress of Democracy in the Far East," the "hub of Micronesia," and an island base "so close to the shore of ominous Red China."⁹⁷ He concludes that Guam is "one of the most important pieces of real estate that the U.S. owns by virtue of its strategic location. We may eventually lose our bases in Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines—but you'll never lose them on Guam, because we are a part of the U.S." Shifting between first person and second person pronouns, Murphy marks his insider-outsider status as a white American settler living in the unincorporated territory of Guam: a colonial possession "own[ed]" by the United States. Using Guam's military importance as collateral, he asks President Johnson for "the right to govern ourselves"—with the caveat that it would be "always in the American way, with a strong tie to the U.S."⁹⁸ Murphy's assertion of self-determination raises the question of who is included in such notions of the "self." In assuring continual US tutelage, he denies other, more decolonial visions of self-determination routed through Indigenous sovereignty that were emerging during this period.

Much of the *GDN*'s coverage of the Guam Conference was celebratory. On 20 March 1967, thousands of Guam's residents gathered on the field of Guam International Airport and along the 7.4-mile motorcade route from the airfield to the naval reservation to welcome President Johnson.⁹⁹ Children held hand-stenciled signs reading "LBJ, we're with you all the way in Vietnam," "Guam is with you in Vietnam," and "Bomb Hanoi and important seaport of Vietnam."¹⁰⁰ Such signs evidenced Guamanians' interpolation in US war efforts in Vietnam, highlighting the archipelagic nature of US empire. But they also demonstrated the lasting trauma of Japanese occupation during World War II, which conditioned Chamorros' sense of gratitude toward the US military. According to the *GDN*, "Signs everywhere displayed the loyalty of the Guamanians, and their support of the Vietnam war. There was not one single sign that would evidence displeasure, or show anything but good taste throughout [Johnson's] brief stay"—a marked difference from the continental United States, where the antiwar movement was gaining momentum.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Chamorros who did protest US intervention in Vietnam during this period did so from the continental United States.¹⁰²

To the intense disappointment of those who had waited three hours in the hot sun to catch a glimpse of their nation's leader, however, President Johnson's

motorcade rushed by, indexing the ways in which the United States has often bypassed Guam's political desires even as it takes for granted Guam's patriotism.¹⁰³ Johnson did not stop until he reached Naval Air Station Agana, where he paused to give a speech positioning the US military commanders and diplomatic officials gathered for the Guam Conference as "those who are helping to wage the peaceful campaign against poverty and want in Vietnam."¹⁰⁴ South Vietnamese leaders, in turn, were represented as weary inheritors of a war "thrust upon them by Communist terror"—a characterization that elided the longer history of anticolonial struggle in Vietnam and denied agency to South Vietnam's democratic struggle.¹⁰⁵

In his speech, Johnson highlighted Guam's geographical proximity to Vietnam and its history of Japanese occupation during World War II to explain Guam's significance as the site for this important conference: "America, which lost Guam [during World War II] and then freed it again with blood that now stains this ground, has not forgotten that lesson. And so American boys in Vietnam are once again carrying the American commitment to resist aggression, and to make possible the sacred work of peace among men."¹⁰⁶ Positioning the United States as a savior of racialized peoples, Johnson yoked together the fates of Chamorros in Guam and Vietnamese in Vietnam, insisting that the US failure to protect Chamorros from Japanese occupation during World War II only "strengthens our determination to persevere in Vietnam today."¹⁰⁷ In his narrative, Chamorros were thus implicated in US imperialism in Vietnam.

Reports of the Guam Conference itself are contested. Although President Johnson and President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu insisted that the conference decided no new military plans and instead focused on pacification and South Vietnamese state-building efforts, other sources reveal that Prime Minister Nguyễn Cao Kỳ advocated for increased bombing of communist strongholds in North and South Vietnam and the initiation of air warfare in Laos and Cambodia, despite the 1962 Geneva Accord specifying Laos's neutrality; General Cao Văn Viên, minister of national defense, proposed placing armed forces on the Vietnam-Laos border along Route 9 to inhibit North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam; and US admiral Grant Sharp Jr. and his aides outlined an extension of Operation Rolling Thunder, which would entail an estimated 1,715 civilian casualties.¹⁰⁸ Such proposed military escalations worried state and revolutionary leaders around the world.

In their critiques of the Guam Conference, communist and antiwar newspapers implicated Guam in the US War in Vietnam.¹⁰⁹ The *London Morning Star* criticized the conference's optics: "With maximum publicity the leaders of the most powerful and richest western state have gathered to plan the destruction of one of the poorest countries in the world."¹¹⁰ *Peking People's Daily*, an organ of the Chinese Community Party, asserted that the Guam Conference marked the United States' inevitable failure: "U.S. imperialism has landed itself in the vast ocean of people's war in Vietnam. No matter how desperately it struggles, it cannot escape being submerged."¹¹¹ One East German newspaper, *Neue Deutsch Zeitung*, asserted,

"To the Vietnamese, Guam is a symbol of aggression because B-52 planes take off from there to strike at Vietnam. The Guam Conference is a 'war escalation council.'"¹¹² In effect, this editorial conflated the "Guam Conference" with the entire island of "Guam" and the ideologically specific "Northern Vietnamese forces" with the entire ethnonationalist group of "the Vietnamese." Positing "Guam" and its multiple referents—a military base, yes, but also a Chamorro homeland—as a "symbol of aggression" to the Vietnamese people writ large, this article highlights the structural antagonisms that US militarism erected between self-determination advocates in Guam and anticolonial revolutionaries in Vietnam.

Two years after the Guam Conference, President Nixon presented the Guam Doctrine, precursor to the Nixon Doctrine, which outlined his infamous policy of "Vietnamization." On 25 July 1969, President and First Lady Nixon arrived in Guam en route to Asia as part of Nixon's global goodwill tour. Although Nixon had visited Guam in 1956 as vice president, this was his first visit as president, and thus only Guam's second visit from a sitting president of the United States. In his welcome speech to Nixon, Governor Carlos G. Camacho emphasized Guam's inclusion "in the mainstream of America, although we are thousands of miles removed from the mainland."¹¹³ Like Governor Guerrero before him, he stressed Guam's strategic location "in this remote area of the Pacific" as "the showcase of American democracy to nations in the Far East and Asia, where the spread of Communism is always a threat." Signaling that he understood the ideological importance of Guam for US war efforts in Southeast Asia, he promised that Guam "will do our best, through words and deeds, to project the image of the United States of America as truly the land of the free and the brave."¹¹⁴ The irony, of course, is that Camacho had been appointed by President Nixon rather than democratically elected, exposing the hypocrisy of the United States' Cold War claims to defending democracy in the region.

At 6:30 p.m. on 25 July 1969, at the Top O' the Mar Officers' Club in Asan, Nixon outlined what would become known as the Guam Doctrine in a series of informal remarks to the press. Four months prior to his televised speech outlining the Nixon Doctrine—in which he famously declared, "In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace"—Nixon previewed his Vietnamization strategy in the unincorporated territory of Guam, indexing the island's occluded role in US Cold War policy.¹¹⁵ In this speech, Nixon began by characterizing not only US imperialism in Asia but also settler militarism across the Pacific Islands as inevitable: "Whether we like it or not, geography makes us a Pacific power."¹¹⁶ Framing the Vietnam War as part of a longer genealogy of transpacific wars, including World War II and the Korean War, Nixon identified Guam as a strategic American stronghold in "the heart of Asia"—a region he in turn characterized as "the greatest threat to peace in the world" as well as "the greatest hope for progress in the world."¹¹⁷ Nixon thus positioned Guam and Vietnam in the same Cold War frame, marking the region as one in need of US intervention.

The nature of such intervention, however, needed to change. Adopting a paternalistic tone, Nixon argued that the United States should no longer be mired in Asia's battles, sacrificing American lives for Asia's "internal problems." Instead, the United States would shift military "responsibility" to "the Asian nations themselves"—a policy that suggested greater self-determination, even as it merely altered the nature of US militarism in the region.¹¹⁸ Under Vietnamization, Nixon would withdraw US troops but significantly escalate US bombing campaigns in Southeast Asia, mollifying domestic antiwar protesters who focused on the loss of *American* life while often overlooking the sharp increase in *Southeast Asian* fatalities that such a policy wrought. According to Long T. Bui, Vietnamization functioned as a "subterfuge" that obfuscated "the fact that *most* of the carnage related to the war took place *after* the implementation of this policy."¹¹⁹

Perhaps most insidiously, Nixon co-opted the language of decolonization to justify his Guam Doctrine: "Asians will say in every country we visit that they do not want to be dictated to from the outside, Asia for Asians. And that is what we want, and that is the role we should play. We should assist, but we should not dictate."¹²⁰ This rhetoric supports Simeon Man's argument that during the Cold War, "decolonization was not antithetical to the spread of U.S. global power but intrinsic to it."¹²¹ Nixon claimed to support decolonization in Asia, but only to the extent that such nations joined the "free world" and rejected competing communist or socialist visions of decolonization. If they did not, the United States would call upon Asian allied nations such as South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as the unincorporated territory of Guam, to intervene as proxies of US imperial power.

The effects of Nixon's Vietnamization policy were felt intimately in Guam. In February 1972, thirty B-52s were deployed to Guam to reinforce the fleet already stationed at Utapao Air Base in Thailand.¹²² The following week, President Nixon spent a night in Guam before continuing on to the People's Republic of China for a landmark trip that would renew US-China diplomatic relations. Nixon's visit prompted *PDN* reporter Charles Denight to observe, "Guam and President Nixon's most historical projects seem to join frequently."¹²³ In preparation for Nixon's stopover, Governor Camacho—who after his first term as an appointed governor had been democratically elected in 1970 in Guam's first gubernatorial election—urged Guamanians to "come out in full force" and give Nixon "a rousing welcome," explaining that the president was "on an unprecedented search for world peace and we owe it to ourselves, as Americans and freedom-loving people, to give him our full support."¹²⁴ He concluded his speech by reemphasizing Guam's entanglement with Vietnam: "We have been witnessing the scaling down of US involvement in Vietnam and the gradual pulling out of our servicemen there. To Guamanians of all colors, this has been one of the most rewarding presidential actions, for we have been making huge contributions to this war effort."¹²⁵ The past three Christmases, Camacho had traveled to Vietnam to meet with Chamorro soldiers.¹²⁶ Chamorro musician Johnny Sablan, who accompanied Camacho



FIGURE 3. Governor Carlos G. Camacho shakes hands with local villagers during his visit to Vietnam, December 1969. From the collection of the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center.

to Vietnam during his first visit in 1969, wrote a song commemorating the event entitled “Christmas Odyssey in Vietnam.” Nixon’s visit to China in 1972 sparked hope for Camacho that “next Christmas there will be no need for me to return to that embattled nation.”¹²⁷ In other words, Camacho wished for an end to the Chamorro death toll in Vietnam.

In an open letter to President Nixon written on behalf of the Eleventh Guam Legislature and the people of Guam, Speaker Florencio T. Ramirez took a slightly different tone, combining his welcome of the president with a request for greater self-representation. Five years earlier, in 1967, Joe Murphy, the *GDN*’s white settler editor, had made a similar request. Now, a Chamorro politician boldly put forth the case for a nonvoting delegate in Congress and the ability to vote in US presidential elections. As with Murphy, self-determination in this letter took the form of greater representation under US democracy; however, Ramirez’s comments also prefigured the growing Indigenous rights movement in Guam.

In the letter, Speaker Ramirez critiques settler militarism in Guam, relaying Chamorros’ desire to access their ancestral lands:

As patriots, we readily agreed to turning over whatever land was needed to bring about victory in World War II. Now, as citizens of the U.S. we are well aware of the strategic position the military holds here on Guam and we are pleased to be a part of America’s first line of defense. But we would like to feel that we are welcome on those

non-security recreational lands, such as the beaches and un-spoiled ocean fronts, side by side with our military friends.¹²⁸

Couching his comments in patriotic rhetoric, Ramirez nonetheless insists on “a more equitable re-arrangement of Federal land holdings on this tight little island.”¹²⁹ This critique of settler militarism laid some of the foundation for a more deliberate Indigenous rights framework in the following decades.

In December 1972, Guam would yet again play a key role in the US War in Vietnam. Throughout the year, Nixon had negotiated with Hà Nội for its assurance of South Vietnam’s independence and, by extension, a stronghold of US imperial power in the region. In December, Hà Nội left the negotiation table, prompting Nixon to retaliate with Operation Linebacker II, infamously known as the “Christmas bombing” campaign. From 18 December to 29 December 1972, the United States dispatched 741 B-52 sorties that dropped a total of 15,237 tons of ordnance on eighteen industrial and fourteen military targets.¹³⁰ Another 212 B-52 missions targeted sites in South Vietnam.¹³¹ The first four days of the assault alone “delivered the explosive equivalent of a Hiroshima-sized atomic blast.”¹³²

Many of these B-52s came from Guam: the *PDN* reported that the “runways at Andersen Air Force Base . . . shook with the speeded-up traffic of Stratofortresses.”¹³³ The base population swelled past 15,000, and Andersen Air Force Base hosted more than 150 B-52s.¹³⁴ Overall, 1,624 people were killed in North Vietnam during Operation Linebacker II.¹³⁵ Succumbing to the military assault, North Vietnamese leaders returned to the negotiation table, and on 23 January 1973, Henry Kissinger and Lê Đức Thọ signed the Paris Peace Accords, effectively ending the United States’ direct involvement in the war. The civil war between North and South Vietnam did not abate, however, and on 30 April 1975, Sài Gòn fell to the communist revolutionaries.

What effect did Guam’s entanglement in the US War in Vietnam have on Palestine? Although causalities are hard to trace, archipelagic history pinpoints moments of juxtaposition. On 23 December 1972, during the height of Operation Linebacker II, the *PDN* reported on Israeli prime minister Golda Meir’s response to the Vietnam War. Speaking to students at Bar-Ilan University, Meir—who infamously claimed Palestinians “did not exist”—chided Israeli newspapers for suggesting that US involvement in the Vietnam War somehow favored Israel because it kept the United States from interfering with Israeli settler colonial policies in Palestine in the name of brokering “peace” in the Middle East.¹³⁶ Denouncing the war as a “catastrophe and a tragedy,” Meir insisted that Israel’s “affair is different from that of Vietnam.”¹³⁷ The very fact that Meir felt compelled to disavow any archipelagic connection between Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam, however, evidences latent parallels between US intervention in Vietnam and US support for Zionism in Palestine. In a different valence, Ambassador Salama asserts that one of the reasons the United States stayed out of Vietnam in 1973 was that it was focused on supporting Israel during the Arab-Israel War, also known as the Yom

Kippur War, of October 1973—a decision that inadvertently “helped” the Vietnamese communist revolutionaries “a lot” but had devastating and ongoing repercussions for the Palestinian liberation struggle.¹³⁸ In sum, writers of archipelagic history must attend to the *nuớc* linking colonized spaces, bound together by their entanglements with US imperialism in its multiple forms.

*Cross-Racial Intimacies: Vietnamese-Chamorro Relationships
Forged during War*

US Cold War policy aligned Guam with US military interests during the Vietnam War. However, it did not foreclose other forms of relationality between Chamorro and Vietnamese subjects during the 1967–75 period. Indeed, the archipelagic nature of US imperial power facilitated intimate encounters between Chamorro and Vietnamese soldiers, doctors, and civilians—two Third World populations who otherwise may not have crossed paths. Such quotidian encounters were not reported in newspapers or archived in government documents. This section therefore turns to oral histories I conducted during summer 2018 with ten Chamorro Vietnam War veterans and two of their partners, supplemented by oral histories conducted by other scholars.

All of the Chamorro soldiers I interviewed had either lived through Japanese occupation during World War II or had family members who did; many said this history influenced their desire to give back to the US military that had “liberated” Guam in 1944.¹³⁹ Some interviewees were career soldiers who joined the US military as young men even prior to the Vietnam War; others were drafted. Sergeant Martin Ada Manglona, for example, was drafted into the US Army in January 1962. After being stationed in the Demilitarized Zone in Korea and in Berlin, in 1966 Manglona volunteered to “go to Vietnam to fight for freedom,” motivated by his parents and siblings’ experiences during World War II before the Marianas were “liberated by the Americans.”¹⁴⁰ Juan O. Blaz, a retired sergeant major who served in the army for thirty years, volunteered to go to Vietnam in memory of his cousin James, who had died in battle. Other Chamorros joined the military out of economic necessity.¹⁴¹ Joseph C. San Nicolas, for example, enlisted to escape the fights that broke out among youth with few other opportunities. His uncle, a police officer who worked for the Hagåtña precinct, had warned San Nicolas, “If you don’t join the military, you might be in jail.”¹⁴² Settler militarism in Guam constrained Chamorros’ economic mobility, pushing Indigenous youth into the military and onto the battlefields of Vietnam.

During the Vietnam War, the newly desegregated military facilitated cross-racial friendships as well as racist encounters. During his training in the continental United States, Manglona recalled being mistaken for a Mexican, being called a “wetback,” and, in Alabama, being told to ride at the back of the bus with a Black soldier.¹⁴³ Frank Cruz San Nicolas, who voluntarily joined the army in 1970 after high school graduation and accepted an extended eighteen-month tour

in Vietnam in order to take a longer leave period in Guam, remembers learning about the Black Power Movement while in Vietnam and being caught in the middle of racial tensions among Black and white soldiers.¹⁴⁴ Blaz, meanwhile, did not recall much outright racial discrimination, though he “might have overheard some kind of discrimination” due to his origin from an unincorporated territory: “because I’m, you know, I’m not from the U.S., I’m from Guam.”¹⁴⁵ Some Chamorro veterans were called “gooks” and racialized as the Việt Cộng enemy.¹⁴⁶ Regis Reyes, speaking on behalf of his late father, Vietnam War veteran Cristobal Reyes, attested: “Chamorros looked very similar to ‘the enemy’ so [“gook”] was loosely thrown around toward Chamorros, and they would get in trouble because they would be getting in fights with soldiers they were supposed to be fighting with.”¹⁴⁷ As a result, Chamorros banded together to support one another. Reyes turned the area around his “CONEX” box, which stored military supplies, into a well-known gathering spot known as the “Chamorro Embassy,” which “captured the essence” of Chamorro culture: “That environment was a place for Chamorros to relax, it didn’t matter what rank you were. All Chamorros knew about the place and they would all go there to hang out.”¹⁴⁸

According to John G. Taitano, racism against Chamorros in the military went back decades. Taitano was the fourth generation of his family to serve in the US military. The oldest of nine children, he decided to follow in his father’s footsteps and join the US Navy. As chief steward, in charge of cooking, cleaning, and ordering supplies, his father had faced much racial discrimination. Given his father’s experience, Taitano decided he would “do one step better” and join the US Marine Corps as a corpsman, an enlisted medical specialist.¹⁴⁹ After an accelerated eight weeks of training, Taitano was sent to Vietnam in the late 1960s. After just one year, he had received his third Purple Heart.

While on deployment, Taitano was struck by the similarities between Vietnam and Guam, where he had grown up in the 1950s while his father was stationed at Naval Base Guam: “The resemblance of the fruits, the crabs, the climate, everything, just like I was in Guam.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Frank Cruz San Nicolas said Vietnam’s tropical landscape, warm climate, and food reminded him so much of Guam, he thought that if it was not for the war, he might find himself living there.¹⁵¹ According to Taitano, this parallel in environments “worked real good for me, because I knew a lot of the vegetation and how to, you know, take care of yourself in a hot, humid country. Whereas, the rest of the boys had a lot of proverbial problems in their personal hygiene, their diets, and stuff.”¹⁵² Taitano articulated intimate parallels between lived experiences of the landscape in Guam and Vietnam, noting his body’s ability to adapt as if it, too, were native to this otherwise foreign landscape. It is perhaps this felt familiarity with the landscape that caused Taitano to empathize with it: he described being moved by one outdoor arena that had “a lot of pockmarks of the war” from bullets. Caught in the crossfire, the built environment also bore the scars of military struggle.

Taitano's recognition of parallels between the landscapes of Guam and Vietnam extended to his feelings of cross-cultural affinities between Chamorros and Vietnamese. Despite the structural antagonisms dividing the two populations, the war also fostered moments of perceived filial intimacy that crossed language, culture, and national borders. Taitano said it "wasn't hard to get along with" the Vietnamese, both the ARVN allies and the civilians whom he met during military patrols.¹⁵³ To him, the Vietnamese were similar to "Filipinos, Chamorros, any of the Micronesians. . . . It was always deep seated in my brain that, yeah, there's some resemblance here." He mused, "We could be related."¹⁵⁴

Raymond T. Baza, who served in Army Psychological Operations from 1969 to 1972, expressed a similar sentiment. During his tour, Baza worked with the Indigenous Highlanders (người Thượng), whom the Việt Cộng targeted for their collaboration with the Americans. He witnessed burning villages, hungry children, beaten men, raped women, and chiefs brutalized for refusing to capitulate to the Vietnamese communists. Amid this violence, Baza became "attached to one of the little kids," who "reminded me of my little sister, so I tried to protect her."¹⁵⁵ Articulating a form of trans-Indigenous solidarity, Baza collapsed geographical distances and racial divergences in positing a familial connection between a Chamorro soldier from Guam and a Highlander child in Vietnam. Overall, he observed, "us Chamorros, when we went to South Vietnam, we all share bonds with the Vietnamese because we look alike."¹⁵⁶ These visual similarities led to observations of cultural similarities: "We [Chamorros] are more knowledgeable of surviving, of taking care of our families because we are all family oriented. Just like in Vietnam they are family oriented. That's what brought us to this world to be together."¹⁵⁷ As subjects of an unincorporated territory, Chamorro soldiers existed in a politically limbo space between the United States and Vietnam: an intermediary positionality that facilitated intimate relationships with Vietnamese subjects.

During the Vietnam War, Chamorros worked closely with the Vietnamese. Taitano's Vietnamese patients called him *bác sĩ*, meaning "doctor"; he recalled instances of pulling out decayed teeth, sans anesthetic or formal training in dentistry. Here, Chamorro-Vietnamese intimacy manifested in these moments of intense bodily pain that were nonetheless facilitated by deep cross-racial trust and vulnerability. Joseph San Nicolas also befriended the ARVN soldiers, whom he relied on in the heat of battle: "the ARVN are saving us."¹⁵⁸ Manglona remembered the ARVN as "good soldiers," just in need of more training. On the other hand, he had a lot of respect for the North Vietnamese army, which he described as "excellent fighters" and "hard-core."¹⁵⁹ Blaz echoed the admiration: he "actually enjoyed going up against the North Vietnamese army, because they were properly equipped and they all got uniforms and they traveled hundreds and hundreds of miles from Hanoi."¹⁶⁰ Once the United States decided to pull out of the war, however, Manglona predicted that the communists would take over South Vietnam because the North Vietnamese were better trained. He expressed sorrow and regret for those

who lost their lives—Vietnamese, American, Chamorro—in what at times seemed a needlessly drawn-out conflict: “It was a shame with all the bloodshed over there, and it was just wasted effort as it turned out.”¹⁶¹ Taitano agreed: “It was all for naught. And anybody that says we won the war, we didn’t. And any of the soldiers, my buddies, we didn’t win that. We didn’t do nothing but sacrifice a lot of young boys and a lot of money that could have been used for something else . . . And lives would have been saved.”¹⁶² Although he refrained from expressing antiwar sentiments, acknowledging that as a soldier he just followed orders and did as he was told, Taitano critiqued the US military’s disregard for lives rendered disposable during the Vietnam War.

Chamorros in Vietnam were also exposed to the violence of US militarism. Although the United States targeted the Vietnamese communists, bombs and chemical defoliants did not differentiate enemy combatants from those deemed collateral damage. Joseph San Nicolas shared a story of being seared by Agent Orange: one night, at three o’clock in the morning, the military sprayed Agent Orange to “slow down the Viet Cong,” but then the wind changed direction, and “it took that spray and went over to where we at in our area.” The soldiers were told to cover their heads, but San Nicolas only had time to raise his arm in protection, which was exposed to the defoliant. The “chemical reaction on the skin” burned. He described the horror: “The guys that were not doing cover, oh my god, their eyes! You have to take a towel and put it on their eyes and take it down to wipe ‘em out. Because it eats up.” He pointed to his arm: “You see the elbow here, it’s all eaten up.”¹⁶³ War scarred the body; chemical warfare directed at the Vietnamese communists harmed Chamorro soldiers as well.

But it wasn’t all pain and violence. The Vietnam War also facilitated cross-racial attractions and romances. Taitano mourned the war’s “destruction of beauty.” He recalled, “The most beautiful woman I ever saw in my life was a South Vietnamese soldier,” who was “packing a Browning automatic rifle as tall as her” and “had the attitude of a queen, like Joan of Arc.”¹⁶⁴ Taitano admired the Vietnamese soldier not only for her looks but also for her strength and the way she commanded respect. When one Vietnamese man “started fooling with her,” she “slapped the shit out of him, knocked him out one,” asserting a feminist sense of bodily autonomy.¹⁶⁵ Taitano also remembered a friend who claimed that he was dating Saigon Sally, an evening radio show host and anticommunist antithesis to the infamous Hanoi Hannah. The couple would write letters and call each other on the two-way radio. Bridging racial and national differences, the Vietnam War facilitated moments of not only danger and precarity but also attraction and flirting between Chamorros and Vietnamese.

Some Chamorro soldiers fathered children in Vietnam. Most had to leave their Vietnamese lovers and Amerasian children behind. In contrast, Raymond T. Baza was one of a handful of Chamorros who married a Vietnamese woman, Lee T. Baza, and brought her to Guam. Their story is one of contingency and romance: a

connection forged during the shared vulnerabilities of war, across differences in language, culture, and background. The couple first met in 1969. One day while flying to Đông Hà, Raymond's chopper came under fire, forcing him and his fellow soldiers to leap out in search of safety:

Luckily I didn't get shot, but I landed on the bungee stick, you know the bungee stick was standing up, it was not too deep from the hole, right, it went through my boot! That's why I am now suffering from the tendinitis because the tendons in my foot is so sensitive, because they got cut. It was really horrible. And when the guys were leaving, I said "Oh gosh!" I look around to see where my fellow soldiers, couldn't find them! So I heard some forces coming in, speaking Vietnamese, so I took off my shirt, my jungle fatigue shirt, and I just wear my [black] T-shirt.¹⁶⁶

Raymond was found by an ARVN scouting party that, fortunately, included a nurse named Lee. Motivated by the death of her parents, who had been killed by the Việt Cộng in 1965, Lee had served as an ARVN nurse for eight months before she met Raymond and nursed him back to health. According to Raymond, it was love at first sight:

When I finally woke up, I met this beautiful nurse and I said, "Who are you?" She said, "Không hiểu." I said, "Oh, okay. You don't understand." We communicated by sign language. The colonel that was with the South Vietnamese Army evaluated me that I can already walk on my own and they already tend to my injuries. They decided to take me back to my company, my unit. I said, "I'm not leaving. She's leaving with me." I said, "I want this girl. She saved my life. I'm going to save her life." Like everybody, how do you say this, love at first sight? That was my first love. It snapped me right then.¹⁶⁷

After three weeks, however, Raymond had to leave Lee and return to his US army base.

Raymond and Lee did not meet again until five or six months later in Đà Nẵng. However, that first meeting had left an impression. When Lee saw Raymond again, she said she knew then it was love.¹⁶⁸ He recognized her too, and pulled her hair affectionately and asked her to pack a bag and come away with him. Lee had to go back to serve in the field, but when she returned to Đà Nẵng, Raymond was still there, waiting for her.

Lee and Raymond were married in Sài Gòn in the summer of 1971 by a military chaplain and a Vietnamese priest. After their honeymoon, they left Vietnam in February 1972. On the Pan Am jet to Guam, Lee was the sole Vietnamese woman, surrounded by hundreds of US soldiers. Raymond joked that people asked if Lee were his daughter, because she was very small, "only ninety-eight pounds!"¹⁶⁹ His voice brimmed with love.

Asked about her first impression of Guam, Lee noted its similarities to Vietnam. The jungles surrounding Andersen Air Force Base reminded her of the jungles in Vietnam, and initially this caused fearful tears: a too-soon reminder

of the war violence she had witnessed in Vietnam as a nurse. Not long after their arrival, Raymond was deployed to Germany, and Lee stayed behind in Guam with Raymond's relatives, forming a cross-racial family brought together by the US War in Vietnam. She got a job at Andersen Air Force Base as a nurse, tending to US soldiers brought back from Vietnam.

Today, Chamorro Vietnam War veterans continue to face inequalities engendered by US settler militarism in Guam. They face discrimination not only in access to Veterans Affairs benefits but also in recognition for their sacrifices to the US military.¹⁷⁰ On 11 June 2018, the Thirty-Fourth Guam Legislature passed resolutions to honor six Chamorro Vietnam War veterans who had earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest military award: Staff Sergeant Enrique C. Cruz, Specialist Fourth Class Joseph M. Perez, Sergeant First Class Vicente T. Dydasco, Staff Sergeant Tomas G. Reyes, Sergeant Major Juan O. Blaz, and Command Sergeant Major Martin A. Manglona. It is possible, however, that these men instead deserve the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award, but suffered "prejudicial attitude on the part of commanders to support or process, to deny or downgrade a recommendation for the Medal of Honor because of race, religion, or ethnicity, or documents perceived to be lost or missing."¹⁷¹ Retired marine colonel Joaquin "Danny" Santos, who spoke at the legislative ceremony, has been fighting tirelessly for equal recognition for Chamorro Vietnam War veterans. Thanks to his efforts, the service records of these six Chamorro Vietnam War veterans are now being reviewed by the US Army for possible upgrade to the Medal of Honor, in compliance with the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.¹⁷²

In Guam, Chamorros and Vietnamese continue to interact: in the Vietnamese restaurants run by Vietnamese American families, at the annual T t celebrations hosted by the Vietnamese American community and well-attended by Chamorro Vietnam War veterans, and in the fishing boats at sea. Nicolas D. Francisco, leader of the Purple Heart group, organizes annual trips to Vietnam for veterans, the majority of whom are Chamorro.¹⁷³ Frank Cruz San Nicolas says the trips "reduce some of the emotions": although closure is elusive and forgetting is impossible, returning helps to minimize "the impact of the things that happened."¹⁷⁴ In Vietnam, Chamorro veterans hope to "retrace their steps and pay tribute to the people that are there," replaying old memories and forging new relationships in the aftermath of war.¹⁷⁵

The militarized intimacies produced during the US War in Vietnam, moreover, continue to influence the political horizons imagined in Guam. During the war, few Chamorros drew comparisons between their own colonial status and that of the Vietnamese. Time in the aftermath of war, however, has revealed new "structures of recognition."¹⁷⁶ Since the mid-1990s, for example, Frank Cruz San Nicolas has advocated for Chamorro land rights. During one direct action, he erected a sign stating, "Vietnam veterans fighting for homeland, only an act of God or

Congress can move me.”¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Allan Ramos, who served two tours with the US Marine Corps in Vietnam, pointed out that while resettled Vietnamese refugees in the continental United States have full constitutional rights as US citizens, Chamorros in Guam are still “a possession of the US” fighting for their “liberty and freedom.”¹⁷⁸

I conclude this section with the story of Juan C. Benavente, a Chamorro Vietnam War veteran and one of the key activists currently advocating for Guam’s independence. For Benavente, these two identities are not in opposition: “A lot of my peers who served with me in the military cannot understand the dichotomy that on the one hand there is this warrior, a highly American soldier, right? And then, on the other hand, he is also an advocate for Indigenous rights. . . . But with me, I could balance the two of them.”¹⁷⁹ As for many Chamorro veterans, Benavente’s experience during the Japanese occupation of Guam during World War II influenced his decision to enlist in the US Army in the summer of 1955. As a “professional soldier,” Benavente served in the US military until 1982.¹⁸⁰ This tenure encompassed both his tour in Vietnam, during 1968, and his experience with Operation New Life in 1975, when he served as a high school junior ROTC teacher in Guam.

After his retirement, Benavente took classes at the University of Guam, including a course on Vietnamese history. His tour of duty in Vietnam “came to full circle” when he learned about the Vietnamese anticolonial, anti-imperialist struggle: “So when you look at the Vietnamese history, even as a soldier, okay, and you ask, you know, the fundamental question: What were they fighting for? And you would conclude . . . what they want is self-government.”¹⁸¹ Benavente empathized with the Vietnamese revolutionaries, situating US intervention in Vietnam within a longer history of colonial occupation. Interestingly, his career in the US military both occluded and facilitated this later-in-life critique. During the war itself, Benavente did not question what he calls the “political question” of the war’s morality. Instead, his first duty was to the men who intimately depended on his leadership. However, after taking the Vietnamese history class, Benavente queried the very US state that administered those duties in the first place, drawing parallels between the “fundamental question” of self-determination in Vietnam and the “fundamental question” of self-governance and independence in Guam: “Because we’re being governed from Washington, DC, we have no say on what happens to us. Our citizenship can be taken away as an act of Congress. In 1950, my entire family became citizens of the United States. My grandparents are basically illiterate. But with the snap of a pen, they became citizens of the US.”¹⁸² Chamorros’ sudden change in political status in 1950 was not the result of a democratic election, and this congressional imposition remains the cornerstone of the self-determination movement today. Appealing to international law protecting Indigenous peoples’ rights to self-determination, Chamorro activists like Benavente argue that Chamorros should have the right to hold a plebiscite to determine their political

future. Importantly, it was *because* of his experience as a professional soldier who fought in Vietnam, not *despite* it, that Benavente was able to gain this perspective and help lead the ongoing struggle for Guam's independence.

UNFINISHED REVOLUTIONS: PALESTINE AND GUAM

Via a method of archipelagic history, this chapter has outlined Cold War entanglements, Third World solidarities, and cross-racial intimacies forged between Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam between 1967 and 1975. These archipelagic connections, these currents of *nuóc*, set the grounds for the post-1975 resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in Guam and Israel-Palestine: spaces entangled in the US imperial imagination. Imperialism, however, is co-constitutive with settler colonialism. While this chapter has examined the imperial dimensions of the US War in Vietnam, the following chapter elaborates the war's settler colonial dynamics: how US intervention in Southeast Asia must be understood within a longer genealogy of westward expansion and Indigenous genocide across Turtle Island. Settler colonialism, in turn, has always been countered by Indigenous resistance.

During the 1967–75 period, Palestine and Guam were connected via the central node of Vietnam, interpellated alternatively as a war, a country, a revolution, or a divided people. Although Vietnamese revolutionaries won independence in 1975, the fight for self-determination in Palestine and Guam continues. The archive contains few traces of the ephemeral threads connecting Palestine to Guam directly, either during the 1967–75 period or today. A turn to poetry, however, can gesture toward what Saidiya Hartman calls “critical fabulation.”¹⁸³

In “Between the Pacific and Palestine,” Chamorro poet Craig Santos Perez draws connections between settler colonial violence in Guam and Palestine, rendering visible the archipelagic nature of US military empire as well as a corresponding archipelago of trans-Indigenous resistance. This twenty-six-line poem begins by drawing visual parallels between a scene of Perez and his Kanaka Maoli partner walking with their young daughter along Waikiki Beach and Palestinians marching for the Right of Return in Gaza. This juxtaposition blends into another: Perez and his family building sand castles on the beach while Israel erects illegal settlements across the West Bank. From these parallel images, Perez invokes the first-person plural to articulate shared experiences of Indigenous dispossession, which precipitate a shared struggle:

... Here in the Pacific, we, too, know
the catastrophe that comes when violent nations
imagine our sacred lands as their settler paradise.
Hawai'i, and my ancestral home, Guåhan,
are still occupied by the United States, who gives
Israel billions of dollars in weapons each year,
And who recently relocated its embassy to Jerusalem.¹⁸⁴

These lines pinpoint the role of the United States in facilitating settler colonialism in both Guåhan and Palestine, through militarized occupation and financial and political support. Yet, despite shared experiences of land dispossession, the following lines of the poem acknowledge that “many sovereign Pacific states” actually supported the controversial relocation of the US embassy to the contested territory of Jerusalem, “because they have diplomatic ties with, / and receive aid from, Israel.” Settler colonialism, settler militarism, and racial capitalism threaten to divide contemporaneous Indigenous struggles by pitting colonized peoples against one another in a seeming competition for scarce resources. Perez, however, refuses such divisions, posing questions to prompt recognition of how Chamorro decolonization efforts and Palestinian liberation struggles are indeed entwined:

... How long will we embargo
our empathy? How long will we blockade flotillas
of solidarity between the Pacific and

Palestine?¹⁸⁵

In these final lines, “Palestine” appears distant from “the Pacific,” separated as it is by the line break. However, an exaggerated indentation of the last line also suggests a potential linkage: a spatial juxtaposition of these two locales via an archipelagic praxis. This formal juxtaposition is reinforced by the poem’s invocation of “empathy”: an affective force reminiscent of what Quynh Nhu Le calls “emotional ‘excesses’ that haunt the peripheries of settler racial hegemonies—nascent, yet-to-be-formed, structures of feelings.”¹⁸⁶ A mass movement of solidarity between Chamorro decolonization activists and Palestinian liberation fighters may not yet have been realized, either during the 1967–75 period or today; however, Perez’s poem calls forth the promise of trans-Indigenous resistance. It calls forth “flotillas / of solidarity”: coordinated patterns of boats cutting across water, across *nước*, *hãnóm*, *al-baħr*.