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Diaspora Classification Recommended for Military Pan Amerasians in Paper Presented at 8th International Conference of AAGS in Bangkok, Thailand

BANGKOK, Thailand -- Military Pan Amerasians in East and S.E. Asia should be studied and considered by academic researchers for social scientific classification as Diaspora. The assertion was made in a paper presented by P.C. Kutschera, PhD, Director of the Philippine Amerasian Research Center (PARC), Systems Plus College Foundation (SPCF), Angeles City, the Philippines, at the 8th Annual Conference of the Japan-based *Asia Association Global Studies*, March 23-24, 2013, in Bangkok, Thailand. Last fall he reported that an estimated 200,000-250,000 or more first-and-second generation Filipino Amerasians living in the Philippines today are large enough and qualify as diaspora. In this latest paper, Dr. Kutschera wrote that mixed-race Amerasians in locales such as Japan, Okinawa, South Korea and the U.S. Territory of Guam, where U.S. military personnel and bases are currently garrisoned, "possess many of the same attributes and similarities that would provide Pan Amerasians needed credentials for diasporic categorization." The New York social worker and Philippine-based social science researcher had recommended diasporic status for Filipino Amerasians before academics assembled for the 9th International Conference on the Philippines (ICOPHIL-2012) held at Michigan State University East Lansing, MI Oct. 28-30, 2012. In part, Dr. Kutschera made that call based on a preliminary study claiming there were many more military Amerasians abandoned in the Philippines than originally projected when military bases were withdrawn in 1992. He wrote in the ICOPHIL-2012 paper that Amerasians residing in the Republic of the Philippines today remain socially and culturally close to the U.S., their former colonizer and military ally, in large measure because of American English fluency. **(NOTE: URL link to access full paper is:**

www.AmerasianResearch/pan-american)

Sizeable, but under counted, overlooked or unaccounted for numbers of Pan Amerasians are also dispersed across the Western Pacific Basin in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and other parts of Micronesia. "If you go back to the World War II era you would even have to consider other locales including mainland China, Myanmar (Burma) and Taiwan (Formosa)," he

maintained. Dr. Kutschera's paper cited the book *America's Forgotten Children: The Amerasians* (1980) by John C. Schade, former executive director of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. Schade estimated that between the Spanish American War (1898), and 1980, when he stopped counting, as many as two million (2,000,000) abandoned or stranded Amerasians were born to U.S. military servicemen, government employees or private military contractors; 250,000 of those Amerasians were alive in 1980 Schade reported.

"We simply don't know the complete numbers. What criteria do host governments use to define Amerasians when they are officially counted, or not counted? Were only children and adolescents counted in previous studies? What about the adults, the elderly, the geriatrics? How many were overlooked because of geo-political or other reasons? What do U.S. government official numbers reveal, if anything? Truth to power, there are many, many more questions than answers when it comes to Amerasians," Dr. Kutschera told the AAGS 2013 Thailand conference in a question and answer session following presentation of his latest paper titled, "*Military Pan Amerasians and 21st Century Implications for Diasporic and Global Studies.*"

The paper provided the following country/locale breakdown information:

--**SOUTH KOREA** – According to a Buck Foundation International registry there were nearly 5,000 Korean Amerasians on the south peninsula around the year 2000. Yet the foundation admitted that the actual number may have been as much as four times the registration figure. Schade reported that in 1957, at the end of the Korean War (1950-1953), Pearl S. Buck, the legendary author and Nobel Prize winning Laureate (who actually coined the phrase "Amerasian" in her 1931 novel *East Wind, West Wind*) pegged the number at exceeding 25,000 Korean Amerasian children. Dr. Kutschera maintained that even this figure, from more than a half-century ago, "has remarkable significance today given that it provides great insight into the total number of Amerasians that may have been born and abandoned in South Korea." Like the Philippines, Kutschera and other researchers have maintained that mixed-race Anglo (White), African (Black) and Latino (Hispanic) Amerasians encountered great stigmatization and discrimination, in large measure due to their different physical and phenotypical features and the commonly accepted belief that most Korean or other Asian national mothers of Amerasian children were prostitutes or sex laborers.

--**JAPAN AND OKINAWA** – Though the main islands of Japan held the preponderance of U.S. military bases in the aftermath of World War II for three decades or more – and most of the reputed 200,000 Japanese Amerasian children abandoned and orphaned during the Japanese Occupation years (1945-1951) by U.S. military personnel – most of the focus in contemporary times is on the southern Ryukyu chain island of Okinawa. There, anywhere from two-thirds to three-fourths of U.S. marines, air force and naval personnel are now located. News media and anecdotal accounts indicate levels of stigma and discrimination facing Amerasians in Okinawa

are not much better than South Korea, mainland Japan or the Philippines. Confirming that the practice of U.S. military personnel continuing to impregnate local women and not providing support, the paper cited Okinawan social services agency and children's rights advocate group reports claiming there are about 4,000 Okinawan children abandoned by U.S. military personnel fathers on the island today.

--THAILAND – One of the nearly forgotten or overlooked Pan Amerasian enclaves is Thailand where an estimated 5,000 to 8,000 orphans, most now in their late 30s to early 40s, remain in-country according to Pearl S. Buck Foundation's Bangkok office. Dr. Kutschera's paper cited Schade's book report that there were an estimated 11,000 Amerasians born to Thai national mothers during the Vietnam War (1964-1975) when the U.S. maintained at least a half-dozen air force combat and logistical support bases. In addition, Thailand's capital Bangkok and the seaside resort city of Pattaya, known for its vibrant tenderloin and red light district, is a regular port of call and R&R (rest and relaxation) location for the U.S. Seventh Fleet, marines, air force, army personnel and the ubiquitous corporate defense contractors who support their military operations.

--VIETNAM, CAMBODIA & LAOS – Although 26,000 male and female Vietnamese Amerasians were allowed to immigrate to the U.S. mainland under the Orderly Departure Program, approved through the U.S. Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987, there is no real consensus on how many Amerasians may still remain today in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The renowned *New York Times* correspondent and editor James Reston estimated in a 1970 dispatch there may have been as many as 100,000 Vietnamese Amerasian children and adolescent progeny sired there by U.S. military personnel. U.S. government figures put the number officially at approximately 30,000, and a number of Amerasian advocacy groups believe there are only a few thousand Amerasians remaining in Vietnam today. When asked to comment on Reston's estimate former *Associated Press* and *CNN Cable News Network* war correspondent Peter Arnett, who was the keynote speaker at the AAGS 2013 conference in Thailand, said he "couldn't say it was wrong – it may have been correct. Look, there was a war going on, hundreds of thousands of troops in theater, many native women, and many of the troops were just promiscuous. It could happen." Arnett further noted, "by now, I would imagine, those Amerasians remaining in Vietnam, they've been assimilated and integrated into Vietnamese life and culture. They've probably been absorbed." Few details are known on the status of Amerasians today residing inside Cambodia and Laos.

--TERRITORY OF GUAM – An unknown number of abandoned Filipino Amerasian children and adults are believed to reside in the Territory of Guam, many of them children of current or former Filipina sex laborers who worked in the karaoke bars, strip clubs, juice bars and tenderloin district emporiums operating in the vicinity of Anderson air force base, Apra Harbor

naval base and numerous marine and army installations dotting the heavily fortified southern Micronesian island. There is some anecdotal and news media information but little if any empirical research available regarding conditions facing military Filipino Amerasians on Guam, which after U.S. bases were withdrawn in the Philippines in 1992, transformed into one of the major military support platforms for U.S. Forces in the Western Pacific Basin. There are no extant figures readily available on numbers of military Filipino Amerasians or other mixed-blood Charmorro or Pacific Islander progeny with military personnel fathers.

This is the first of three research papers to be presented by Philippine Amerasian Research Center-Systems Plus College Foundation, Angeles City, Pampanga, Luzon the Philippines and its U.S.-based research collaborative partner, the Amerasian Research Network, Ltd. in Albany, New York. PARC-SPCF College will also be represented at two other international conferences: the 2013 Online Conference on Multidisciplinary Social Sciences sponsored by the Australian International Cultural and Educational Institute (AIECI) in Sydney, AU, 29-31 March 2013 and the International Pursuit of Justice Conference, sponsored by the Institute of Hate Studies and Law School, Gonzaga University, Washington State, U.S.A., 18-20 April 2013.