

Ref. No.660
October 22, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
The United States of America

Re: Promotion of Resolutions for the U.S. Military Base Issues on Okinawa

First, I would like to express my sincere respect for your continuous efforts for the resolution of the issues involving both Japan and the U.S.

I regard the Japan-U.S. alliance as vital, and it is my understanding that the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangement has contributed to the peace and stability of Japan, and the East Asian region.

As you already know, there have been tensions in the East Asian region in recent years. I believe that, based on peace-oriented diplomacy, Japan should strengthen its partnership with the U.S. to deal with situations that may emerge in the areas surrounding Okinawa.

Meanwhile, reduction and realignment of the U.S. Forces bases on Okinawa is a pressing issue for the following reasons:

First of all, Okinawa hosts approximately 74 % of the facilities and areas designated for the exclusive use of the U.S. Forces in Japan. The concentration of those facilities in densely populated areas of Okinawa Island, coupled with the vast water areas exclusively used for U.S. Forces training, present major obstacles in the regional and economic development of the island.

Second, Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG) compiled the “ Okinawa 21st Vision” last year, a basic plan to establish Okinawa, located in southwestern edge of Japan, as a hub of international exchange by taking advantage of its geographical location and diverse cultures. Under this Vision, we are planning to implement various projects over the next 10 years starting this year. In order to carry out those projects aimed at industrial promotion, upgrade of road and other social infrastructure, and

improvement of Okinawans' living conditions, it is indispensable to reduce and consolidate U.S. Forces bases on Okinawa. This requires the Government of Japan and the U.S. to give further consideration to this particular matter.

Last, but not least, the sense of security and trust of Okinawan residents should be the precondition for the presence of the U.S. Forces on Okinawa. The U.S. Military and its servicemembers should be fully aware of this precondition in operating the bases and before taking actions. Thus, U.S. Military-related incidents, accidents and criminal offenses should never be tolerated.

For the reasons mentioned above, I would like to ask for your exceptional efforts to be extended to the following items:

1. Acceleration of the relocation and return of MCAS Futenma

As MCAS Futenma is located in the heart of an urban area, residents live with constant noise and potential aircraft accidents. Thus, the relocation and return of the facility at the earliest possible date is necessary.

I believe that the Henoko Plan, which is opposed by the City Assembly of Nago where Henoko is located, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, and all 41 municipality leaders within Okinawa, would be virtually infeasible. In order to implement Futenma relocation plan, a relocation site outside of Okinawa Prefecture, but within Japan is the most logical way to speedily move forward. Therefore, Okinawa Prefectural Government wants MCAS Futenma moved off Okinawa.

2. Review of the plan to deploy MV-22 Ospreys to MCAS Futenma

We understand that the MV-22 Ospreys are deployed to replace aircraft already based at MCAS Futenma. However, residents of Okinawa are concerned over the deployment of the aircraft due to the fatal accidents in its developmental stages and its impact on the environment. The explanations provided by the Governments of Japan and the U.S. regarding these concerns are insufficient. Taking the current situation into account, it is deeply regrettable that the Governments of Japan and the U.S. are moving

ahead with the deployment of this aircraft. We call on the Governments of Japan and the U.S. to cancel the Osprey deployment plan.

3. Promotion of the return of installations and areas south of Kadena Air Base

In its joint statement in April this year, the Governments of Japan and the U.S. announced that a decision has been made to delink the return of the facilities and areas south of Kadena Air Base from the progress on the Futenma Relocation Facility, and to develop a consolidation plan by the end of this year. We believe that this agreement will be beneficial to the development of Okinawa and want it to be implemented without fail.

4. Mitigation of aircraft noise in the surrounding areas of Kadena Air Base and Futenma

The noise emitted from aircraft take offs and landings at Kadena Air Base and MCAS Futenma , both of which are located adjacent to residential areas, inflict grave impact upon the living environments of the local residents. We urge the Government of the U.S. and the U.S. Forces to make continuous efforts toward mitigation of the aircraft noise through strict enforcement of the Aircraft Noise Abatement Counter Measures.

5. Fundamental revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement

In order to resolve the various challenges that stem from the U.S. Forces bases, it is insufficient to simply improve the application of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), given that discretion is being left to the U.S. authorities. Therefore, OPG believes that SOFA requires fundamental revision. We urge the Governments of Japan and the U.S. to initiate consultations concerning the fundamental revision of SOFA as soon as possible.

Hirokazu Nakaima
Governor
Okinawa Prefecture

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The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
The United States of America

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