December 17, 2021

Mr. Matthew Dalbow
Consulate General
U.S. Consulate General Naha

Denny Tamaki
Governor of Okinawa Prefecture

Re: A water bottle fell from an MV-22 Osprey (Protest)

A water bottle fell from an MV-22 Osprey assigned to 1st Marine Aircraft Wing of III Marine Expeditionary Force onto the premises of a residence in Ginowan City at around 18:45 on November 23, 2021.

There were no reports of injuries from the incident. However, falling objects from aircraft could cause a disaster such as death and loss of property. It is extremely regrettable.

An MV-22 Osprey belonging to 1st Marine Aircraft Wing dropped some parts in August 2021. In addition, other aircraft, which are belonged to the Wing, caused several incidents and accidents as follows: a CH-53E helicopter dropped a Tri-container off the ocean of Tsuken Island in July 2021; a piece of blade tape fell from the Wing’s aircraft onto Uranishi Junior High School in 2017; an object was assumed to fall from a military aircraft onto Midorioka Nursing School in 2017; the drop of the water bottle onto the crowded residential area has grown mistrust and anger of the local residents toward the U.S. Forces.

Moreover, the U.S. Marine conducted flight operations of MV-22 Ospreys on November 24, the next day of the incident, without identifying the causes of the incident and explaining the incident to the Okinawa Prefectural Government and Ginowan City Office. We cannot condone this fact.

Whenever an aviation accident happens, Okinawa Prefectural Government and concerned local municipalities have repeatedly requested to the USFJ take the following actions: to investigate and disclose the causes of accidents; to double down on recurrence prevention measures and a thorough implementation of safety management. Despite the repeated requests, similar incidents occur over and over. We cannot help but feel a strong doubt about the operation by the U.S. Forces.

In addition, the incident occurred at around 18:45 on November 23. However, Okinawa Prefectural Government was notified of this incident at 9:17 on November 24. Despite our repeated petitions to make a swift report when an accident occurs, no improvements are shown on this point.

Therefore, we would like to protest against this incident and strongly demand the following actions:

1. Ask the U.S. Forces to do the following:
   (1) Ground the MV-22 Ospreys until the causes of the incident are properly identified. Investigate this incident exhaustively and disclose the results at the earliest possible date.
   (2) Implement a thorough safety management including prevention measures of a recurrence
   (3) Promptly share information when an incident occurs
   2. Withdraw the deployment of Ospreys
   3. Strive to dose down and remove the dangers of MCAS Futenma and then revert it to Okinawa as earliest as possible.

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Aircraft such as MV-22 Ospreys flew into Naha Port Facility (Protest)

Denny Tamaki
Governor of Okinawa Prefecture

These MV-22 Ospreys assigned to the 1st Aircraft Wing of MCAS Futenma flew into Naha Port Facility around noon on November 19, 2021, and a CH-53 helicopter flew into the facility on November 20, 2021. All the aircraft were shipped to the United States for maintenance purposes. On November 30, 2021, three MV-22 Ospreys, which were unloaded at Naha Port Facility on the other day, took off from the facility.

In the past, MV-22 Ospreys and CH-53 helicopters caused the following major accidents: an MV-22 Osprey crashed off the coast of Abu, Nago City in 2016; another MV-22 Osprey dropped some parts in August 2021; a CH-53 dropped a window off the east coast of Okinawa’s main island in August 2019; another CH-53 dropped a Tri-container off the coast of Tonaki-jima in July 2021. These are the significant accidents that could be disruptive to the lives and property of local residents on Okinawa.

In the meantime, the Government of Japan made comments about the event as follows: the “5 • 15 Memorandum” did not exclude the flight operation of the aircraft at Naha Port Facility so long as the operation was not contrary to the primary objective of the facility. Ospreys were not prohibited from using the facility according to Final Environmental Review of Basing MV-22 Aircraft at MCAS Futenma and Operating in Japan.

However, we cannot accept that the U.S. Forces carry out and institutionalize such an operation, which has never happened before, because it will forcibly increase the burden on Okinawan people who are compelled to live next to the U.S. installations on Okinawa.

Okinawa Prefectural Government and Naha City Office find it regrettable that the U.S. Marine Corps had their MV-22 Ospreys take off at Naha Port Facility, without giving an advance notice. This action made light of Okinawa’s desire to mitigate the burden of U.S. forces.

Furthermore, the Government of Japan did not grasp the information of the flight operation at the facility in advance. We must say it shows the government’s lax safety management.

Therefore, we would like to protest strongly against the event and to demand firmly the following actions;

1. Work on the U.S. Forces to be strictly in accordance with the “5 • 15 Memorandum” and to suspend any flight operations at Naha Port Facility going forward.
2. Work on the U.S. Forces to make a swift sharing of information with the Government of Japan, a responsible body for providing U.S. bases in Japan, when they conduct any operation that may cause significant impact on the Okinawan community.
3. Withhold the deployment of Ospreys from Okinawa.

Okinawa Prefectural Government and Naha City Office
Further Anti-coronavirus Measures by the U.S. Forces on Okinawa (Request)

The coronavirus cases are on the sharp rise in the U.S. military bases on Okinawa after a mass outbreak of the coronavirus occurred among units which came to Camp Hansen from the U.S. mainland in early December last year. Consequently, USFJ have conducted the following efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus: impose pre-travel testing on U.S. military personnel prior to their departure; raise the HPCON level; enforce movement restrictions on U.S. military personnel outside of the facilities and areas of the U.S. installations until January 24, 2022. However, the case counts of U.S. military personnel reached nearly 5,000 at the U.S. bases on Okinawa over the period from December 15, 2021 to January 18, 2022. There are still no signs of containing the spread of the coronavirus. Since Japanese base workers who have come into close contacts with someone infected; some local employees have to interact with U.S. military personnel whose test results have not yet been determined section 1.

1. Ask the U.S. Forces to do the following:
(1) Formally extend the period of the movement restrictions currently imposed on all U.S. military personnel as long as we are asked to do so by the Okinawa Prefecture. In order to prevent a recurrence of the similar case, we believe that it is necessary to extend the similar restrictions on U.S. military personnel prior to their departure, which is not consistent with prevention measures implemented by the Japanese government. In order to prevent a recurrence of the similar case, we believe that it is necessary to extend the similar restrictions on U.S. military personnel prior to their departure, which is not consistent with prevention measures.
(2) Zero in on the anti-virus measures in accordance with Japan’s preventative measures in terms of handling local employees those who come in close contacts and other related infectious cases.
(3) Share information of U.S. personnel within the SOFA-status such as a total number, breakdowns of the number by service and age, sex, village including information of their residence within and outside of the U.S. bases. Furthermore, provide the information in regard to the number of infection with the coronavirus and recuperation of U.S. military personnel who live off-base on Okinawa.
(4) Promptly build a system that enables the U.S. Forces on Okinawa to conduct variant screening tests on their installations. Reinforce the system of testing on base. Promptly and properly share information of the coronavirus situation with the Okinawa Prefectural Government.
(5) Share the information in regard to USFJ’s border controls, the HPCON measures and anti-virus measures such as movement restrictions on U.S. military personnel with the Government of Japan (GOJ) as appropriate. Share such information with related local municipalities through GOJ.

2. Revise the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement radically and apply the Japanese Laws to quarantine on the U.S. military personnel. Therefore, we strongly request USFJ to do the following actions:

- Establish more stringent mitigation measures on the U.S. military personnel, the Civilian component and their dependents on Okinawa until the surge in coronavirus cases is contained. Establish more stringent mitigation measures on the U.S. military personnel, the Civilian component and their dependents on Okinawa until the surge in coronavirus cases is contained.
- Confirm the first case of the Omicron variant from a Japanese local employee working at Camp Hansen. Give the results of the genomic analysis conducted after the first case was detected, the prefecture assume that the Omicron variant from Camp Hansen led to the community transmission on Okinawa.
- The U.S. Forces on Okinawa do not share enough information of basic data on U.S. military personnel, their medical treatment status and their testing system in case the system is affected under the strain. The U.S. Forces on Okinawa do not share enough information of basic data on U.S. military personnel, their medical treatment status and their testing system in case the system is affected under the strain.
- The case counts of U.S. military personnel reached nearly 5,000 at the U.S. bases on Okinawa over the period from December 15, 2021 to January 18, 2022. There are still no signs of containing the spread of the coronavirus. Furthermore, the U.S. Forces on Okinawa do not share enough information of basic data on U.S. military personnel, their medical treatment status and border controls, which are necessary to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, with Okinawa Prefecture and local municipalities.

In conclusion, we believe that it is necessary to review the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement radically and apply Japanese Laws to quarantine on the U.S. military personnel. Therefore, we strongly request USFJ to do the following actions:

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There are also issues regarding the detection of variants and their testing system in case the system is affected under the strain.
The Views of Okinawa Prefectural Government on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF)

The proposed construction site for FRF is globally known for its rich biodiversity and as the home of more than 5,800 creatures, including 262 endangered species such as dugongs.

The construction of the FRF requires large-scale reclamation work, but the seabed of the proposed site in Oura Bay is sloped and composed of both soft and hard foundation. Therefore, even if the construction is completed, the seabed would unlikely settle. According to the Japanese government, the seabed would subside more than 50 years after Marine Corps operations start at FRF. This would pose significant risks to the operation of the facility. Furthermore, experts in geology warn the high possibility that there are active fault lines in the construction area possibly leading to fault lines shock, which could cause earthquakes.

Also, the Japanese government plans to use three vessels that can handle ground reinforcement work up to 70 meters (230 ft) below sea level. On the other hand, there are only three such vessels in Japan and in two of them need technical modifications. If the Japanese government cannot procure operational vessels, it would not be able to proceed with the work. Likewise, if the vessels do not function as expected, the schedule of the reclamation work would be postponed.

The facts mentioned above demonstrate that the construction and operation of FRF are not feasible. The Okinawa Prefectural Government has concerns over the current FRF plan especially because of the possible financial burdens towards the U.S. taxpayers associated with the potentially large cost for maintenance, and significant impacts on U.S. Marines’ safety and operations at FRF. This would pose significant risks to the reliable operation of the facility.

The views of the Okinawa Prefectural Government disapprove of the design change application for FRF submitted by the Government of Japan to change the design of the reclamation work to build the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) in Okinawa, Japan. The FRF has been constructed on the Futenma Replacement Facility Act on Reclamation of Publicly-Owned Water Surface.

February 2, 2022

Honorabie Adam Smith

House Committee on Armed Services

United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Smith,

I hope you are doing well and staying safe during these difficult times. I write today to inform you that on November 25, 2021, as Governor of Okinawa I disapproved of the application submitted by the Government of Japan to change the design of the reclamation work to build the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) in Okinawa, Japan. The FRF has been constructed based on the agreement between Japan and the United States.

I request that the United States Congress fully exert its authority to direct the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office, through the National Defense Authorization Act, to (a) review the feasibility of the FRF construction plan, (b) temporarily halt all construction work at FRF reflecting the disapproval, and (c) coordinate with the Japanese government to swiftly stop the operation of MCAS Futenma and remove the dangers associated with the base. Alternative options to relocate MCAS Futenma outside Okinawa should be discussed through coordination.

The design change application submitted by the Government of Japan in 2020 intended to add land improvement work at FRF to reinforce the soft seabed, which is found at the reclamation site in Oura Bay. The bay mainly consists of soft seabed, covering about 60 percent of the planned reclamation site (about 60 hectares or 153 acres). The soft seabed area includes where outer seawalls and the roadway would be built. The current construction plan does not ensure the necessary ground stability required for building the FRF (see attached Graphics I and II).

While reviewing the design change application carefully and professionally, the Okinawa Prefectural Government asked the Japanese government 452 questions categorized in 39 sections through the four rounds of questioning. We also sought advice from experts in civil engineering and environmental conservation. After rigorous reviews performed in a fair and impartial manner on the adequacy and feasibility of the plan, I made the decision to disapprove of the application with my authority and responsibility as Governor of Okinawa, validated by the Act on Reclamation of Publicly-Owned Water Surface.

I look forward to continued discussion on the future of the FRF.

Sincerely,

Denny Tamaki
Governor of Okinawa

The Okinawa Prefectural Government has presented the application documents to the public and requested input from both domestic and international stakeholders. We received 17,839 responses and all of them expressed negative opinions towards the reclamation work and the design change.

I would greatly appreciate it if members of Congress respect our decision to disapprove of the design change application and recognize the views of the Okinawa Prefectural Government on FRF.

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On another note, about 200,000 people, including U.S. servicemembers, were killed during the Battle of Okinawa in World War II. The Government of Japan indicated that the reclamation work would utilize soil in the area where remains from the battle have not been fully recovered. To respect soldiers killed in battle, their families, and those who experienced the tragedies of war, the Okinawa Prefectural Government strongly objects to such a plan. We hope that the U.S. federal government recognizes this issue.

Given that the construction of FRF would not lead to the quick removal of dangers associated with MCAS Futenma, the Okinawa Prefectural Government will continue to vehemently advocate that the Japanese government temporarily halt the construction and establish a dialogue to democratically identify solutions. We also request the U.S. and Japanese governments take tangible actions to swiftly remove the dangers associated with MCAS Futenma, called “the most dangerous base in the world,” by stepping all operations to the base.

The Japanese government explains that the soft seabed exists up to 90 meters (295 ft) below water near the Oura Bay area where landfill work is planned, so-called soft seabed, whose intensity needs to be increased or that requires measures against settlement due to consolidation, is considered to spread widely. Without land improvement work, the soft seabed would impact the stability or settling of the seawalls and the reclaimed land itself.

In the Oura Bay area, about 200,000 people, including U.S. servicemembers, were killed during the Battle of Okinawa in World War II. The Government of Japan indicated that the reclamation work would utilize soil in the area where remains from the battle have not been fully recovered. To respect soldiers killed in battle, their families, and those who experienced the tragedies of war, the Okinawa Prefectural Government strongly objects to such a plan. We hope that the U.S. federal government recognizes this issue.

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Sec. XXXX Prevention and Mitigation of Spills and Discharges of Aqueous Film-Forming Foam in Okinawa, Japan

(a) Review. No later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commander of the United States Forces Japan shall complete a review of the past actions taken by the commander of the local military installations in Okinawa, Japan. This review is in response to the accidental spills of aqueous film-forming foam (in this section referred to as "AFFF") containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the multiple installations in the United States Forces Japan and the intentional discharge of water containing AFFF at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in August 2021. Such a review shall assess the following:

(1) An overview of each spill and discharge, including the date and time, the cause, the Futenma's response, and any preparations made in advance.

(2) An assessment of whether the contamination and information sharing with local public authorities proceeded promptly after each spill.

(3) An assessment of whether the sites were appropriately cleaned up after each spill.

(4) An assessment of the impacts on local communities and the U.S.-Japan security alliance after each spills and discharges.

(b) Guidance. - Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Commander of the United States Forces Japan shall complete the review under subsection (a), the Commander of the United States Forces Japan completes the review under subsection (a), the Commander shall issue guidance on the prevention and mitigation of spills and discharges of AFFF based on the results of such review that includes, at a minimum, best practices and recommended requirements to ensure the following:

(1) The regular preventative maintenance of fire trucks and fire suppression systems in the installations to mitigate the risk of equipment failure that may result in a spill of AFFF.

(2) The prompt and comprehensive cleanup after spills around the installations.

(3) The prompt and accurate information sharing about the cause and status of spills, immediately after they occur, with the local public authorities in the case of spills.

(4) The advance consultations with and receipt of consent from local public authorities at least seven days before a discharge is intended.

(5) Collaborative post-incident investigation and information sharing with the local public authorities.

(6) The introduction of an effective alternative firefighting foams.
Ms. Joanna Sagami
Director, Japan Liaison Office
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan

We would like to request a comment of the USFJ on the Okinawa Prefectural Government's protest (Ref.82) dated June 13, 2022. We appreciate your cooperation in advance.

New Proposal toward the Realization of a Peaceful and Prosperous Okinawa

May, 2022
Okinawa Prefectural Government

Okinawa Prefecture is approaching the major milestone of the 50th anniversary of its reversion to mainland Japan.

During Second World War 77 years ago, Okinawa became the only fierce battlefield in Japan involving local citizens. It was reduced to ashes and numerous precious lives and cultural assets of the people of Okinawa were lost. On March 26, 1945, the U.S. Forces that landed on Kerama Islands immediately issued the first proclamation of the Navy Military Government Proclamation, which is the Nimitz Proclamation. It removed all administrative rights of the Government of Japan on Nansei islands, and consequently, Okinawa was separated from Japan's administration and was kept under the control of the U.S. Forces for 27 years. After Okinawa was separated from Japan's administration and was kept under the control of the U.S. Forces for 27 years. After Okinawa was separated from Japan and was placed under U.S. policies that prioritized military operations, the people of Okinawa campaigned against the forcible expropriation of lands in the island-wide land struggle or "Shimagurumi Toso". They demanded a guarantee of basic human rights under the Peace Constitution of Japan, and through this long-standing campaign for the reversion to Japan, Okinawa finally accomplished its reversion to mainland Japan on May 15, 1972.

For 27 years, before the reversion to Japan, the vast area of Okinawa’s land including fertile fields and urban areas were expropriated for the construction of U.S. bases. Due to the vicinity of the bases, residential and urban areas in Okinawa were developed disorderly without adequate urban planning. On the other hand, around 1955, mainland Japan entered a high-growth period when it enjoyed remarkable development and rapid improvement of social capital. In this period of rapid economic growth, Japan hosted the Tokyo Olympics and Osaka Expo, and newly opened the Tokaido Shinkansen line and new highways. On the contrary, Okinawa was not able to receive enough support from the national government, which caused a severe delay in the improvement of social and industrial infrastructure such as airports, harbors, roads, as well as educational and medical facilities.

Note: This document has been translated from the Japanese original for reference purposes only. In the event of any discrepancy between this translated document and the Japanese original, the original shall prevail.
In addition to the absolute delay of the industrial structure development, the U.S. government had Okinawa use U.S. dollars. The dollars were earned through the construction of massive military bases and spending by U.S. service members. The U.S. set a favorable exchange rate for exports to Okinawa in order to import various materials such as consumer goods and building materials for the construction in Okinawa. Okinawa consequently developed a vulnerable industrial structure as the economy heavily depended on U.S. bases and imports. As a result, Okinawa failed to develop production sectors such as the agricultural, fishing, and manufacturing industries that would help earn revenue through exports. Okinawa ended up with an uneven industrial structure that is heavily dependent on the service industry.

Okinawa saw numerous incidents and accidents due to the presence of U.S. military bases:  
A) a six-year-old girl was raped and murdered by a U.S. service member;  
B) a U.S. military's fighter jet crashed into Miyamori Elementary School killing 17 people, including 11 school children, and injured 210 people; and  
C) a military trailer that was used in parachute training crashed into the yard of a local residence killing a girl in her fifth year of elementary school.

There were many incidents and accidents involving U.S. military employees including traffic accidents, murders, and sexual assaults, in which the compensation and punishments given were not enough. The loss and damage that originated from U.S. military bases were beyond words; therefore, the people of Okinawa longed for the granting of basic human rights, securing local autonomy, and the reversion of Okinawa in order to exist peacefully without military bases under the peace constitution of Japan. These were the common thoughts that were not realized until 27 years after the war.

The reversion of Okinawa, a long desire of the Okinawan people, was officially agreed upon at the Japan-U.S. summit meeting in November 1969. However, the Agreement between Japan and the United States of America Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands (Okinawa Reversion Agreement), which was concluded in June 1971 between Japan and the United States, allows the U.S. to continuously use military bases in Okinawa even after the reversion. It was nowhere near the “reversion to Japan without military bases” that was the longing of the people of Okinawa.

2. Looking Back on the 50 years after the Reversion to Mainland Japan

After the reversion to Japan, the Government of Japan carried out the development of social capital and various promotion measures according to the Okinawa Promotion Plans for five decades.

The first Okinawa Promotion and Development Plan encouraged the development of Okinawa’s social capital, which was far behind mainland Japan, aiming to achieve goals such as “correct the disparity and catch up with the national standard”, and “build the foundations for its self-reliant development to realize a peaceful, prosperous Okinawa”. The second plan continuously worked on developing the social capital in order to deal with various issues such as chronic water shortages in Okinawa. In addition to the aforementioned goals, the third plan had a new objective to develop Okinawa to be a unique region that contribute widely to the development of Japan’s economy, society, and culture. Thanks to the plans, the government implemented special promotional measures such as the special free trade zone, information and communication industry’s promotion regime, and regional tourism promotion scheme in Okinawa.

Throughout the first to third promotional development plans, Okinawa proceeded with its “catch-up” style promotional development regarding the development of basic social capital in relation to the disparity correction. Okinawan tourist-oriented welfare and the daily conveniences had significantly improved due to the intensive development of industrial bases such as airports, harbors, roads, and social infrastructure such as nursery schools, welfare facilities, and others. The disparity with mainland Japan steadily shrank and the social infrastructure and industrial levels reached national standards. The tourism industry became the leading industry, and the information and communication related industry proceeded ahead, mainly with the development of call centers.

Since 2002, the word “development” has been eliminated from the Okinawa Promotion Plans, and Okinawa proceeded with its “catch-up” style promotional development, but the necessary promotion of

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Before the National Diet of Japan approved the Okinawa Reversion Agreement in November 1971, the Government of the Ryukyu Islands insisted that the requests from the people of Okinawa were not fully reflected in the Okinawa Reversion Agreement, Japan’s outlines of policies in regard to the reversion of Okinawa, and other related bills. Therefore, the Ryukyu government drafted the “Proposal of Steps for the Reversion of Okinawa” and submitted it to the Government of Japan in order to not leave any regrets to the future. This proposal describes the requests and thought of the people of Okinawa.

Prioritizing the welfare of the people of Okinawa, the “Proposal of Steps for the Reversion of Okinawa” was focused on:  
A) the establishment of local autonomy;  
B) support for the maintenance of anti-war and peace principles;  
C) establishment of basic human rights; and  
D) support for citizen-oriented economic development.

These points describe the ideal future of Okinawa.

The “Proposal of Steps for the Reversion of Okinawa” highlights that U.S. military bases in Okinawa were “formed against the principles of democracy, opposing and ignoring the will of Okinawan residents” and that “their presence violates the human rights, affects the lives of people, and threatens the peace of the people of Okinawa. Consequently, it impedes the economic development of Okinawa”. The Proposal clearly states that Okinawa strongly desired to be returned not as “the islands of military bases”, but as “the peace islands with no military bases”.

On the other hand, the Government of Japan made a statement towards the reversion, it stated that, “We will have peaceful Okinawa islands as a new stage for economic and cultural exchange in our country and in other nations in the East Asian and, more broadly, the Pacific. This is the very way to console spirits of those who lost lives on this island. This must be a commitment for our nation as we celebrate the reversion of Okinawa to our country”. We understand that Okinawa and the Japanese government had a shared goal to make Okinawa exist as peaceful islands fifty years ago when Okinawa was returned to Japan.

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The Act on Special Measures Concerning Promotion of Effective and Appropriate Use of the Lands in Okinawa Prefecture Previously Permitted for Use by the Stationed Forces was enforced in April 2012. It establishes special measures in regards to local municipalities’ advance acquisitions of land by use by the U.S. Forces and the expansion of the subway system. These efforts enabled Okinawa to promote the development of reversion areas such as the Juso Minamigaura Golf Course and the West Furusato Housing Area.

On the other hand, we have to say that we are nowhere near the achievement of the shared goal from 50 years ago between Okinawa Prefecture and the Government of Japan, to create a “Peaceful Okinawa”.

Although the land that was exclusively used by the U.S. military in Okinawa has decreased by 33.7% since the revision, its share in Japan has increased from 18.8% to 70.3% as U.S. military installations in mainland Japan have sharply decreased over the past fifty years. As a result, U.S. military bases are still heavily concentrated in Okinawa.

There is a vast range of water areas and air spaces for training around Okinawa’s main island. The size of the water training areas is 5,496,000 hectares, equivalent to 1.3 times the area of Kyushu, whereas the air training spaces is 9,240,000 hectares, equivalent to 1.1 times the area of Hokkaido. Since the revision of Okinawa, the water areas and air spaces have remained with little reduction. The presence of these areas is a major factor in the increase of Okinawa’s burden of U.S. military bases due to repeat training of visiting aircraft.

Furthermore, the U.S. Forces have been taking up key areas in the main island and is hindering our integrated land use, causing difficulties in the development of wide-area road network, urban development plans, and optimal industrial locations in Okinawa that would help promote the development of the entire prefecture. On the other hand, the economic effects will be apparently higher if military land is converted to commercial use, as we learned from the examples of the redeveloped cases of the Naha Shin Toshin, the Oroku Kanagusuku, and the Kowase-Kenbana districts. This clearly highlights that the dramatic progress made by the effective utilizations of former military sites largely contribute to the promotion and development of Okinawa as a whole.

A) a local base worker was shot to death with a rifle by a U.S. service member in 1972;
B) a local woman was run over and killed by a U.S. Forces tank in 1973;
C) a taxi driver was killed by two U.S. service members with a knife in 1983;
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Moreover, the U.S. Forces have been taking up key areas in the main island and is hindering our integrated land use, causing difficulties in the development of wide-area road network, urban development plans, and optimal industrial locations in Okinawa that would help promote the development of the entire prefecture. On the other hand, the economic effects will be apparently higher if military land is converted to commercial use, as we learned from the examples of the redeveloped cases of the Naha Shin Toshin, the Oroku Kanagusuku, and the Kowase-Kenbana districts. This clearly highlights that the dramatic progress made by the effective utilizations of former military sites largely contribute to the promotion and development of Okinawa as a whole.

In order to build a self-sustaining economy, we will work toward the recovery and growth of our industries which affected by the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. We will move forward revitalizing our economy by utilizing Okinawa’s regional characteristics and fostering leading industries that have a competitive advantage, such as the tourism, forestry, fishery and manufacturing industry, we will strengthen our economic structure. It is necessary to create a positive feedback loop, in which capital from outside Okinawa and overseas is invested in our islands, and the local economy as a whole grows steadily. Furthermore, it is important to increase the labor productivity and added value of the entire industry by strengthening the technologies of local companies, which will lead to increased income and the enhanced earning power in their businesses.

After the war, the former Japan National Railway worked on railway restoration and opened new railways in other prefectures. However, in Okinawa prefecture, the restoration of prefectoral railways that were demolished during the war was not conducted. Currently, the majority of land transportation depends on automobile transportation. However, due to social circumstances in Okinawa, such as the existence of numerous U.S. military bases and the division of urban areas by the bases, the development of wide-area road networks have been delayed. As a result, traffic congestion in central and suburban urban areas, where industrial activities and logistics are concentrated, has become a serious issue.

Although Okinawa’s promotion has developed over five decades of master plans and through other measures after the revision, there are still issues remaining to realize self-sustaining development and enrich the lives of Okinawa residents.

Moving on to the US military base issues, the people of Okinawa have been forced to bear an excessive burden even after returning to mainland Japan. There is no end to the incidents and accidents occurring from U.S. military bases:

- a local base worker was shot to death with a rifle by a U.S. service member in 1972;
- a local woman was run over and killed by a U.S. Forces tank in 1973;
- a taxi driver was killed by two U.S. service members with a knife in 1983;
- an elementary school girl was gang raped by three U.S. service members in 1995;
- a U.S. Marines helicopter crashed into Okinawa International University, which is located near MCAS Futenma, in 2004.

Moreover, local residents in the vicinity of MCAS Futenma, Kadima Air Base and other training areas have been suffering due to noise pollution that happens day and night. In addition, hazardous substances such as organic fluorine compounds (PFOS) originating from U.S. bases have caused environmental pollution that has threatened the health and security of the people in Okinawa.

Okinawa Prefecture and its local municipalities have requested the national government to reduce base burdens at every opportunity. In 2013, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly with all 41 municipalities and their local assemblies submitted a joint petition to withdraw the deployment of Osprey in Okinawa and halt the relocation of MCAS Futenma within Okinawa.

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3. Remaining Issues

Okinawa has unique historical, geological and environmental circumstances, and the administrative issues arising from this are different from other prefectures. Therefore, Okinawa faces challenges such as not being able to achieve adequate efforts through uniform nationwide measures. In addition, outer island municipalities are vulnerable to risks such as the un çekilational market size and the difficulty in transporting goods in the event of a disaster due to its disadvantages: remoteness, scattered placements, and narrowness of the islands.

Okinawa’s industrial structure is centered on tertiary industries. The percentage of primary and secondary industries is low due to the rapid development of the tourism, information and communication-related industry and international logistics-related sector that utilize Okinawa’s characteristics. The agriculture and fishery industries are lacking successors, facing an aging population, and the manufacturing industry is achieving lower than its expectations. It carries various social and structural problems, such as lower income reductions and labor productivity, and is also susceptible to economic fluctuations. In addition, Okinawa’s per capita income remains at about 70% of the national average, which has been the lowest in the country since Okinawa’s reversion to Japan. Therefore, we must say that the establishment of self-sustaining economy is still far from complete.

In order to build a self-sustaining economy, we will work toward the recovery and growth of our industries which affected by the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. We will move forward revitalizing our economy by utilizing Okinawa’s regional characteristics and fostering leading industries that have a competitive advantage, such as tourism, forestry, fishery and manufacturing industry, we will strengthen our economic structure. It is necessary to create a positive feedback loop, in which capital from outside Okinawa and overseas is invested in our islands, and the local economy as a whole grows steadily. Furthermore, it is important to increase the labor productivity and added value of the entire industry by strengthening the technologies of local companies, which will lead to increased income and the enhanced earning power in their businesses.

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In recent years, recurring problems with the Japan-U.S. SOFA have been recognized nationwide: noise pollution caused by low-altitude military flights and the COVID-19 outbreak stemming from U.S. military bases. Not only did Okinawa Prefecture request the national government to radically review the Japan-U.S. SOFA many times, but the Public Relations Liaison Council of National Governors and the National Governors’ Association
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Reflected in the changes of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region in recent years, there are more moves to reinforce military postures in Okinawa and debates on sharing nuclear weapons and possessing strike capability against enemy bases. Such ideas are absolutely incompatible with the long-standing peace that the Okinawan people, who lived through the tragic experience of the Battle of Okinawa, possess.

Okinawa Prefecture is concerned that reinforcing deterrence by building up military force in Okinawa could revitalize tensions in the region, which could cause an emotional contingency and escalate into a major military conflict. Okinawa Prefectural maintains that the prefecture must not be a target of any military strike due to U.S. Forces being concentrated on the island.

Russian invasion of Ukraine, which broke out in February 2022, has caused tremendous loss of life among civilians in Ukraine. Beautiful streetscapes, airports, roads and other essential infrastructure were razed to rubble in the country. This war reminds us of the catastrophic scale of battle of Okinawa involving numerous civilians 77 years ago. The fact that the war is currently taking place and the reality of this situation is so deeply shocking that it is beyond words. We cannot help feeling a sense of impending crisis toward the future situation in the Asia-Pacific region surrounding Okinawa.

We want the Government of Japan to share with all the Japanese people that it is not solely a matter of Okinawa, but also an important issue that is closely related to the security of Japan as a whole, the future of Japan, and the lives of each and every citizen.

In order to strive for the stable development of the Asia-Pacific region at present and for the future, we request the government engage in diplomatic efforts based on cooperation with other countries and regions through peaceful dialogue, trade promotion and friendship exchange that do not involve military force.

Reflecting the changes of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region in recent years, Okinawa Prefectural maintains that the prefecture must not be a target of any military strike due to the U.S. Forces being concentrated on the island.

In the survey conducted on the 50th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan, we solicited opinions from the people of Okinawa on what they would like Okinawa to look like in 50 years. We received opinions on all kinds of areas, including the preservation of the natural environment, passing on traditions and culture, creating an environment conducive to raising children, respecting human rights, increasing average income, and calling for a peaceful society.

This overlaps with the five visions of the future that are laid out in the "Okinawa 21st Century Vision," which in 2016, with an eye on future possibilities, depicted what the people of Okinawa should be and what they want their prefecture to be.

Okinawa Prefecture is adjacent to rapidly growing Asia and has the potential to develop as a hub of Asia, where people, goods, capital, and information are concentrated. Okinawa also has "soft power" that attracts people, and this has been nurtured by its unique history and climate. The prefecture is expected to be the base for ocean policy due to the vast ocean area and numerous diverse marine resources.

In order to utilize such potential, to create an ideal peaceful and prosperous Okinawa, it is necessary to develop economic power to lead the Japanese economy while considering environmental sustainability, to promote efforts to play the central role building a foundation for peace through regional diplomacy that contributes to a reduction in tension and confidence building in the Asia-Pacific region.

In order to strive for the stable development of the Asia-Pacific region at present and for the future, we request the government engage in diplomatic efforts based on cooperation with other countries and regions through peaceful dialogue, trade promotion and friendship exchange that do not involve military force.

We request the Government of Japan work aggressively on achieving and realizing a "peaceful and prosperous Okinawa" that reflects the hopes, as mentioned above, of our predecessors at the time of the reversion and the desires of us living today. We hereby make the following proposals to the Government of Japan:

1. Reaffirm the commonsense goal of "creating a peaceful Okinawa" shared between Okinawa Prefecture and the Government of Japan when Okinawa returned to the mainland. Strive to make the whole nation understand the importance of the shared goal and the significance of Okinawa's reversion. Value the following points that were stipulated in the "Proposal of Steps for the Reversion of Okinawa," which was created 50 years ago:
   A) establishment of local autonomy;
   B) support for the maintenance of anti-war and peace principles;
   C) establishment of basic human rights; and
   D) support for citizen-oriented economic development.

2. Respect the spirit of the joint petition submitted by the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, all 41 municipalities, and local assemblies in 2013 that these:
   A) accelerate the further consolidation and reduction of U.S. military bases in Okinawa;
   B) radically revise the Japan-U.S. SOFA;
   C) relocate U.S. military bases to other prefectures or other countries;
   D) reduce Okinawa's U.S. bases burden, which includes incidents and accidents involving U.S. military personnel;
   E) strive to immediately close down MCAS Futenma in order to eliminate dangers as early as possible; and
   F) stop the Henoko base construction.

We request the Government of Japan strive to realize a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa economy and achieve a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa.

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We request the Government of Japan strive to realize a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa economy and achieve a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa.
3. Make ceaseless efforts to pursue the principles of “democracy” and “autonomy” that are guaranteed by the Constitution of Japan while fully respecting the local people’s will through legitimate procedures, and the basic rules that local governments manage their administration at their own discretion and responsibility.

4. In light of the international circumstances surrounding Japan, exert the utmost effort to prevent the negative outcomes caused by excessive tensions driven from deterrence by force in the Asia-Pacific region. Contribute to create peace in the region by reducing tensions and building trust through peace diplomacy and dialogue. Play an active role through these efforts to be a nation that we can take pride in, while taking full advantage of Okinawa’s unique history and diversity.

Denny Tamaki
Governor of Okinawa Prefecture