

World Scholars, Artists, Activists Call for Demilitarization of Okinawa

To Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo
To President of the United States, Donald Trump
To Acting Governor of Okinawa, Jahana Kiichiro
To Acting Governor of Okinawa, Tomikawa Moritake

To people of the world

7 September 2018

In January 2014, more than one hundred scholars, peace activists and artists from around the world issued a statement condemning the Japanese and U.S. governments' plans to close MCAS Futenma, which is located in the middle of a congested urban neighbourhood, and build a new base for the US Marine Corps offshore from the coastal village of Henoko in Northern Okinawa. While we applauded shutting the Futenma base, we strongly objected to the idea of relocating it inside Okinawa.

Okinawa has suffered at Japanese and American hands for more than a century. It was incorporated by force into both the pre-modern Japanese state in 1609 and into modern Japan in 1879. In 1945, it was the scene of the final major battle of World War Two, resulting in the deaths of between one-third and one-quarter of its population. It was then severed from the rest of Japan under direct US military rule for another 27 years during which the Pentagon constructed military bases, unfettered by Japanese residual sovereignty or Okinawan sentiment. Reversion to Japan took place in 1972, bases intact. In the continuing post-Cold War era, Okinawa has faced the pressure of state policies designed to reinforce that base system, not only by construction of the Henoko facility but also by the building of "helicopter pads" for the Marine Corps in the Yambaru forest of northern Okinawa and by the accelerating fortification of the chain of "Southwest" (Nansei) islands that stretch from Kagoshima to Taiwan (including Amami, Miyako, Ishigaki, and Yonaguni).

Signatories of our 2014 statement included linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, filmmakers Oliver Stone, Michael Moore and John Junkerman, Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire, historians Norma Field, John Dower, Alexis Dudden and Herbert Bix, former US Army Colonel Ann Wright, authors Naomi Klein and Joy Kogawa, former UN Special Rapporteur for Palestine Richard Falk, and former Defense and State Department official Daniel Ellsberg. The present statement follows on from that of four years ago and from subsequent statements such as those in January and August 2015. It includes many of the original signatories.

We raise our voices again because our concerns were never remedied and are heightened today. In military and strategic terms, Japanese and American experts agree that there is no reason why functions of the projected new base (if indeed there is need for them, which many doubt) had to be in Okinawa. The government insists on Okinawa largely because it thinks it is "politically impossible" to build such a new base elsewhere in Japan.

In 2017-18, the government of Japan built seawalls around Cape Henoko (mobilizing a large force of riot police and the Japan Coast Guard to crush the non-violent opposition). In June

2018, it served notice of intent to commence dropping sand and soil into Oura Bay as part of the plan to fill in and reclaim a 160 hectare site for construction of a major new facility for the US Marine Corps. It would construct a concrete platform rising ten meters above sea level with two 1,800-meter runways and a 272-meter long wharf.

In environmental terms, Oura Bay is one of Japan's most bio-diverse and fertile marine zones, in the highest category for protection (in the Okinawa Prefectural Government's conservation guideline), home to over 5,300 marine species, 262 of them endangered, including coral, sea cucumber, seaweed and seagrass, shrimp, shellfish, fish, turtles, snakes and mammals, and to the specially protected marine mammal, the dugong. The bay is also connected to the ecosystem of the Yambaru forest in northern Okinawa Island, which the Japanese Ministry of the Environment nominated as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site in 2017, along with three other islands of Okinawa and Kagoshima prefectures. That nomination was withdrawn in June 2018 as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the advisory organization on natural heritage issues to UNESCO, recommended that the nomination be "deferred," seeking clarification on how to match the Yambaru forest as a World Heritage site with the presence of the US military's Northern Training Area within it.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted by the Japanese government was also full of flaws. In February 2012, the Okinawa Prefectural Government's Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee identified 150 "concerns about environmental protection" in the government's Environmental Impact Statement submitted to the prefecture two months earlier. Given that report, then Governor Nakaima Hirokazu told Tokyo that it would be "impossible, by the environmental protection measures spelled out in the EIA, to maintain the preservation of people's livelihood and the natural environment." However, Nakaima, who had been elected in 2010 on a pledge to demand relocation of Futenma outside of Okinawa, reversed himself under heavy state pressure while in a Tokyo hospital in December 2013 and granted the highly unpopular reclamation permit. His unexplained shift infuriated many Okinawans who repaid his betrayal by voting him out of office the following November by a massive 100,000 vote margin and placing the government in the hands of Onaga Takeshi, whose core pledge was to do "everything in my power" to stop the Henoko project.

Onaga appointed a "Third Party" Commission of experts to advise him on this matter and its report in July 2015 was equally clear that the necessary environmental conditions for construction had not been met. Documents later released by the US Department of Defense (DOD) in a US federal court case showed the DOD's expert opinion concurred that the EIA was "extremely poorly done" and "does not withstand scientific scrutiny." In August 2015, we urged him to act decisively, and in October, he did "cancel" the reclamation license.

However, after prolonged litigation, the Supreme Court, late in 2016, upheld the national government's claim that the cancellation was illegal. Onaga submitted to that ruling, thus reviving the reclamation permit, and the state resumed site work in April 2017. As those works at Henoko gradually gathered momentum, Onaga even appeared at times to be cooperating with the state's construction design. In late 2017, he gave permission for use of Northern Okinawan ports for transport of construction materials to the Henoko-Oura Bay site and in July 2018 he approved the application by the Okinawa Defense Bureau for permission to remove and transplant endangered coral from the construction site despite strong evidence that transplanting, especially in summer, offered little prospect of success.

He retained, however, the option of issuing a “rescission” or “revocation” (*tekikai*) order, something he repeatedly promised to do when the time was ripe. Eventually, on 27 July 2018, Onaga gave formal notice of his intent to revoke and ordered preliminary steps accordingly. Two weeks later, however, on August 8, he suddenly died. Pending the election of a successor, to take place on 30 September, two Deputy Governors, Jahana Kiichiro and Tomikawa Moritake, took over the functions of Governor. The planned revocation took place on 31 August.

Base construction flies in the face of constitutional principles such as popular sovereignty and the right to regional self-government. Okinawan opposition to the construction of a new base has been constant, reaching at times over 80 per cent in public opinion surveys, and has been repeatedly affirmed in elections (not least that of Onaga himself in 2014). No Okinawan candidate for office has ever been elected on an explicitly pro-base construction platform. The Okinawan parliament has twice, in May 2016 and November 2017, called for withdrawal of the Marine Corps altogether from Okinawa.

It is time to rethink the “fortress” role assigned to Okinawa by successive Japanese governments and U.S. military and strategic planners and to begin to articulate a role for Okinawa, including its “frontier” islands, as the centre of a de-militarized community to be built around the East China Sea. Cancellation of the Henoko project and an end to the militarization of the Nansei Islands would, more than anything, signal a commitment to the construction of such a new order.

We, the undersigned, support the people of Okinawa in their struggle for peace, dignity, human rights and protection of their environment, and we call on the people of Japan to recognize and support the justice of that struggle.

We declare our support for Okinawa prefecture’s revocation of the reclamation license for Henoko/Oura Bay of which former Governor Onaga served formal notice on 27 July and which Acting Governor Jahana carried out on 31 August.

We call on President Trump and Prime Minister Abe to cancel forthwith the planned base construction for the US Marine Corps at Henoko and to open negotiations towards drastically reducing, and eventually eliminating, the US military base presence on Okinawa.

We call on Prime Minister Abe to order a halt to the construction or expansion of Japanese military facilities on Amami, Miyako, Ishigaki and Yonaguni Islands and to initiate debate on ways to transform Okinawa Island and the Nansei Islands into a regional centre for peace and cooperation.

We encourage the candidates for election to the Governorship of Okinawa to make clear their intent to carry out the manifest will of the Okinawan people to close Futenma, stop Henoko and rethink the fortification of Nansei Islands, shifting overall Okinawa policy priority from militarization to peace, the environment, and regional cooperation.

We call upon the people and governments of the world to support the struggle of the people of Okinawa to demilitarize the Okinawan islands and to live in peace.

1. Christine Ahn, Women Cross DMZ
2. Gar Alperovitz, Historian and Political-Economist; Co-Founder, The Democracy Collaborative; Former Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy, University of Maryland
3. Jim Anderson, President, Peace Action New York State
4. Kozy Amemiya, Independent scholar, specialist on Okinawan emigration
5. Colin Archer, Secretary-General, International Peace Bureau (retired)
6. Herbert Bix, Emeritus Professor of History and Sociology, Binghamton University, SUNY
7. Reiner Braun, Co-president International Peace Bureau
8. John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
9. Jacqueline Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation; National Co-convenor, United for Peace and Justice
10. Choi Sung-hee, Coordinator of Gangjeong Village International Team (in opposition to the Jeju Navy Base), Jeju, Korea
11. Avi Chomsky, Professor of History, Salem State University
12. Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
13. Rachel Clark, Independent interpreter/global coordinator
14. Marjorie Cohn, Professor Emerita, Thomas Jefferson School of Law
15. Paul Cravedi, President, Newton Executive Office Center
16. Nick Deane, Marrickville Peace Group, Sydney, Australia
17. Kate Dewes, Ph.D. O.N.Z.M (Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit)
18. Anne M. Dietrich, International Peace Advisor, PUR / CRASPD, Huye, Rwanda
19. Ronald Dore, Japan scholar, UK/Italy
20. John Dower, Professor Emeritus of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
21. Jean Downey, Attorney and writer
22. Alexis Dudden, Professor of History, University of Connecticut
23. Mark Ealey, Translator
24. Lorraine J Elletson, Independent researcher, Spain
25. Daniel Ellsberg, Former State and Defense Department official
26. Cynthia Enloe, Research Professor, Clark University
27. Joseph Essertier, Associate Professor, Nagoya Institute of Technology
28. John Feffer, Co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus (www.fpif.org) at the Institute for Policy Studies
29. Bill Fletcher, Jr., Former president of TransAfrica Forum
30. Carolyn Forché, University Professor, Georgetown University
31. Max Paul Friedman, Professor of History, American University
32. Ian R. Fry, RDA, PhD., Honorary Postdoctoral Associate, University of Divinity, Chair, Victorian Council of Churches Commission on Faiths, Community and Dialogue, Member, the Board of the World Intellectual Forum
33. Corazon Valdez Fabros, Vice President, International Peace Bureau
34. Richard Falk, Professor of International Law Emeritus, Princeton University
35. George Feifer, Author of *The Battle of Okinawa*, *The Blood and the Bomb*
36. Gordon Fellman, Professor of Sociology, Brandeis University
37. Norma Field, Professor Emerita, University of Chicago

38. Takashi Fujitani, Dr. David Chu Chair in Asia-Pacific Studies and Professor of History, University of Toronto
39. Peter Galvin, Co-Founder, Director of Programs, Center for Biological Diversity
40. Joseph Gerson (PhD), President, Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security
41. Bruce K. Gagnon, Coordinator, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
42. Irene Gendzier, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, Boston University
43. Van Gosse, Professor of History, Franklin & Marshall College, Co-Chair, Historians for Peace and Democracy
44. Rob Green, Commander, Royal Navy (retired)
45. Rick Grehan, Creative Director, The Image Mill
46. Stig Gustafsson, President, Swedish Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms
47. Hugh Gusterson, Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs, George Washington University
48. Melvin Hardy, Curator, Hiroshima Children's Drawings, All Souls Church, Unitarian, Washington, DC
49. Laura Hein, Professor of Japanese History, Northwestern University, Chicago
50. Kwon, Heok-Tae, Professor, SungKongHoe University
51. Ellen Hines, Associate Director and Professor of Geography & Environment, Estuary and Ocean Science Center, San Francisco State University
52. Katsuya Hirano, Associate Professor of History, UCLA
53. Hong Yunshin, Lecturer, Hitotsubashi University
54. Glenn D. Hook, Emeritus Professor, University of Sheffield
55. Kate Hudson, General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
56. Mickey Huff, Professor of History, Diablo Valley College; Director, Project Censored
57. Jean E. Jackson, Professor of Anthropology Emeritus, MIT
58. Paul Jobin, Associate Professor, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Paris Diderot
59. Sheila Johnson, Japan Policy Research Institute, Cardiff California; widow of Chalmers Johnson
60. Erin Jones, Independent researcher, Gilbert AZ
61. Paul Joseph, Professor of Sociology, Tufts University
62. John Junkerman, Documentary film director
63. Kyle Kajihiro, Hawai'i Peace and Justice, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
64. Louis Kampf, Professor of Humanities Emeritus, MIT
65. Bruce Kent, Movement for the Abolition of War
66. Assaf Kfoury, Professor of Computer Science, Boston University
67. Nan Kim, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
68. Joy Kogawa, Author of *Obasan*
69. Jeremy Kuzmarov, Professor of History, Tulsa Community College
70. Peter Kuznick, Professor of History and Director, Nuclear Studies Institute, American University
71. John Lamperti, Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus, Dartmouth College
72. Steve Leeper, Founder, Peace Culture Village
73. Jon Letman, Journalist, Hawaii
74. Edward Lozansky, Founder and President, American University in Moscow
75. Catherine Lutz, Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Family Professor of Anthropology and International Studies at Brown University

76. Kyo Maclear, Author and Independent Scholar, Toronto, Canada
77. Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace laureate
78. Kevin Martin, President, Peace Action
79. Gavan McCormack, Emeritus Professor, Australian National University
80. Ray McGovern, Former CIA analyst
81. Zia Mian, Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University
82. Katherine Muzik, Ph.D., Marine Biologist, Okinawa and Hawaii, Research Associate, Bishop Museum
83. Vasuki Nesiah, Associate Professor of Practice, New York University
84. Agneta Norberg, Chair, Swedish Peace Council
85. Caroline Norma, Senior Research Fellow, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
86. Eiichiro Ochiai, Emeritus Professor, Juniata College, PA, USA
87. Satoko Oka Norimatsu, Editor, Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
88. Koohan Paik, International forum on globalization, San Francisco
89. Parker Park, President of Parker Enterprise, and writer/journalist
90. Lindis Percy, Co-founder of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB)
91. John Pilger, Journalist, author, film-maker
92. Margaret Power, Professor of History, Illinois Institute of Technology
93. John Price, History Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria, Canada
94. Steve Rabson, Professor Emeritus of East Asian Studies, Brown University, and Veteran, US Army, Okinawa
95. Hye-Jung Park, Philadelphia Committee for Peace and Justice in Asia
96. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp Distinguished Professor Global studies and Sociology, UC Santa Barbara
97. Terry Provance, Coordinator, Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee
98. J. Narayana Rao, Director, Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (India)
99. Betty A. Reardon, Ed.D., Founding Director Emeritus International Institute of Peace Education
100. Ernie Regehr, Co-founder of Project Ploughshares
101. Lawrence Repeta, Member, Washington State Bar Association (USA)
102. Dennis Riches, Professor, Seijo University
103. Terry Kay Rockefeller, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
104. Francisco Rodríguez-Jiménez, Professor of Global Studies, University of Extremadura and University of Salamanca
105. Paul Rogers, Independent scholar, Bradford, UK
106. Antonio C.S. Rosa, Editor, TRANSCEND Media Service-TMS
107. Kazuyuki Sasaki, Senior lecturer, Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS), Rwanda
108. Mark Selden, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and History, State University of New York at Binghamton
109. Martin Sherwin, University Professor of History, George Mason University
110. Tim Shorrock, Journalist, Washington DC
111. Marie Cruz Soto, Clinical Assistant Professor at New York University and Member of New York Solidarity with Vieques
112. John Steinbach, Co-Chair of the Hiroshima Nagasaki Peace committee of the National Capital Area

113. Oliver Stone, Writer-Director
114. Doug Strable, Educational researcher
115. Frida Stranne, PhD, Peace and Development Studies, Swedish Institute for North American Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden
116. David Swanson, Director, World BEYOND War
117. Yuki Tanaka, Freelance historian and political critic, Melbourne, Australia
118. Grace Eiko Thomson, Former president, National Association of Japanese Canadians, founding director/curator, Japanese Canadian National Museum
119. Wesley Ueunten, Associate Professor of Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University
120. Kenji Urata, Professor Emeritus, Waseda University, Japan, Vice President, IALANA
121. Jo Vallentine, Former Greens Senator, co-convenor of People for Nuclear Disarmament, Western Australia
122. David Vine, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, American University
123. Naoko Wake, Associate Professor of History, Michigan State University
124. Dave Webb, Chair Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (UK), Vice President of the International Peace Bureau and Convenor of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space
125. Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research, Washington, DC
126. The Very Rev. the Hon. Lois Wilson, Former President, World Council of Churches
127. Lucas Wirl, Executive Director, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA)
128. Lawrence Wittner, Professor of History Emeritus, State University of New York/Albany
129. Karel van Wolferen, Author and emeritus professor, University of Amsterdam
130. Ann Wright, US Army Reserve Colonel (Ret) and former US Diplomat
131. Tomomi Yamaguchi, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Montana State University
132. Lisa Yoneyama, Professor, University of Toronto
133. Kil Sang Yoo, Retired ordained clergy of The United Methodist Church in the USA

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