

## The ‘All Okinawa’ Movement: Political and Legal Implications of the Okinawan Protest against the US Bases

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*This essay reviews the ‘All Okinawa’ anti-base movement, which has entered a new phase since November 2014. The Abe administration’s coercive measures to proceed with the relocation of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Henoko in Okinawa, have aroused strong opposition. Led by Governor Onaga and the All Okinawa Council, the ‘All Okinawa’ movement has integrated the civic opinions for opposing the construction of a new base at Henoko. Moreover, this movement has pursued the autonomy as a way of exercising the right of self-determination. In addition, it contains an ethnic minority movement that reestablishes the Okinawan identity in relation to Japan.*

### Keywords

‘All Okinawa,’ US Base, Anti-Base Movement, Futenma, Henoko, Autonomy, Identity Politics, Okinawa

## 1. Introduction: The Emergence of ‘All Okinawa’

What is called the ‘Okinawa problem’ today manifests itself in the ‘base problem.’<sup>1</sup> Generated by the occupation of the US armed forces in 1945, the vast military bases in Okinawa have been gradually reduced. However, the political autonomy of the Okinawan people regarding base policy has never been afforded by the US and Japanese governments. With the schoolgirl rape incident in September 1995 as the direct cause, a massive anti-base movement exploded. Accordingly, the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (“SACO”) announced in April 1996 a plan

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<sup>1</sup> R. Eldridge, *The Okinawa “Base Problem” Today*, Nippon.com, Feb. 3, 2012, available at <http://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a00501> (last visited on Sept. 27, 2016).  
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for reducing the US bases, including the full return of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The prospective return of the Futenma base has come to be perceived by the Okinawans as the most important achievement of this movement. Since then, the prolonged struggle to have a replacement facility constructed outside Okinawa has continued for over 20 years.

When the Hatoyama Yukio cabinet pursued the relocation of the Futenma base to a location outside of Okinawa or even Japan in 2009-10, there was a series of debates in Japanese society. Sharply highlighted was how deeply and strongly the US military strategy had influence on the national security system of Japan.<sup>2</sup> The Hatoyama cabinet's efforts to relocate Futenma base, however, not simply end as much ado. Its failure deeply disappointed and angered the Okinawan people, stimulating a new anti-base movement.

Launched in December 2012, the second Abe Shinzo administration has more strongly attempted to relocate the Futenma base to Henoko in Okinawa, which was agreed upon twice at the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee on May 1, 2006 and May 28, 2010, respectively. Owing to the hardline policy which had been forecasted from the inauguration of the Abe administration, many predicted that the supra-partisan anti-base movement in Okinawa would be disintegrated by the political manipulation of the Liberal Democratic Party ("LDP"). However, the movement, called the 'All Okinawa' anti-base movement today, has grown strong enough to resist the Abe cabinet's coercive measures effectively.

Figure 1: Press conference held at the LDP headquarters on Nov. 25, 2013<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> G. McCormack, *Ampo's Troubled 50th: Hatoyama's Abortive Rebellion, Okinawa's Mounting Resistance and the US-Japan Relationship*, 8 ASIA-PACIFIC J., May 31, 2010, available at <http://apjif.org/~Gavan-McCormack/3365/article.html> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016). See also Pilsu Jin, *An Okinawan Angle on the Futenma Problem and US-Japan Security Treaty System of the Fifty Years* 하토야마 내각에 있어 후텐마기지 반환문제와 미일안보체제의 재인식 - 오키나와 주민들의 시점 92 Soc'y & HISTORY 사회와 역사, 169-226 (2011). <available only in Korean>.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Promise of Keeping the Pledge Ended in an Anticlimax* 公約堅持 尻すほみ, OKINAWA TIMES, Nov. 26, 2013. (Reprinted by permission of Okinawa Times).

There is a scene that many Okinawans cannot forget even now. On November 25, 2013, Ishiba Shigeru, the then LDP secretary-general held a press conference at the LDP headquarters after a meeting with five LDP National Diet members elected in Okinawa Prefecture. Here, Ishiba announced that, regarding the issue of relocating the Futenma base, it had been agreed not to exclude all possibilities, including the relocation of the base to Henoko.<sup>4</sup> This press conference became more problematic because of the scene than the content itself. As shown in Figure 1, National Diet members who had been elected for their election pledge to relocate the Futenma base outside Okinawa sat (or seemed to be made to sit) behind Ishiba, occasionally and silently hanging their heads. Ishiba's strict words and actions were sufficient to publicize just how strong the Abe cabinet's will to bring about the relocation of the Futenma base to Henoko might be. Meanwhile, many subsequent materials have revealed the sheer depth of the humiliation and anger felt by the Okinawans.<sup>5</sup> On December 27, 2013, the then Governor of Okinawa Nakaima Hirokazu approved the Japanese government's request for reclaiming the Oura Bay of Henoko, which hitherto had been deferred, appreciating Prime Minister Abe for his promise of a considerable raise in the national budget for Okinawa's economic promotion, and thereby paving the way for construction works at Henoko.<sup>6</sup>

In 2014, four different elections were held in Okinawa. In these elections, all candidates with the relocation of the Futenma base outside Okinawa as an election pledge won. Four of the LDP National Diet members who had sat behind Ishiba lost in the House of Representatives elections held in December 2014. Above all, the victory of Onaga Takeshi, who had presented the slogan 'All Okinawa,' showed that the Okinawan anti-base movement entered a new phase.

<sup>4</sup> See the address of Ishiba Shigeru on the LDP youtube page, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3ms9wIMCrU> (last visited on Sept. 27, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., ETSUKO URASHIMA, THE BATTLE BETWEEN JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND OKINAWA: BETRAYERS ARE NOT FORGIVEN, THE WORLD OF MAITREYA WILL COME SOON: NEWS FROM OKINAWA-NAGO, TOKYO: IMPACT PUBLICATION COMPANY 浦島悦子, "日本政府対沖縄の戦い: 裏切り者を許さない," 『みるく世、やがて: 沖縄・名護からの発信』, 東京: インパクト出版会, 200-3 (2015); Yasushi Hirai & Daiki Nonaka, *The Okinawan Base Mafia which National Defense Policy Generated*, Tokyo: Nanatusmori Corp. 平井康嗣・野中大樹, 『国防政策が生んだ沖縄基地マフィア』, 東京: 七つ森書館 42 (2015); Takeshi Onaga, "Okinawan People do not Forgive the Politicians who Have Betrayed," THE FIGHTING WILL OF THE PEOPLE, 翁長雄志, "県民は裏切った政治家を許さない," 『戦う民意』, 東京: 角川書店 185-8 (2015).

<sup>6</sup> See *The Approval of Henoko Reclamation: The Responsibility of Cooperation over the Policy of Divide and Rule Is Grave* 辺野古埋め立て承認 分断加担の責任重い, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Dec. 27, 2013, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/preentry-217215.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

## 2. Onaga Leadership and the Organization of ‘All Okinawa’

Although Governor Onaga and his supporters did not fully understand ‘All Okinawa’ as a political slogan, it is not incorrect. Onaga was elected as the governor after separating from the LDP of Okinawa. He could get support from a part of conservatives and cooperation from all the progressive groups. In the 2014 Okinawa gubernatorial elections, Onaga achieved a landslide victory over former governor Nakaima. Although the political organization that Governor Onaga could directly mobilize was vulnerable, his supporters constituted a stable majority through solidarity with various political groups. Governor Onaga was a key figure in the LDP of Okinawa, called a ‘Governor maker.’ Moreover, his suprapartisan anti-war and anti-base activities since 2007 have gained him strong trust from progressive forces.<sup>7</sup>

‘All Okinawa’ is a term broadly used by the press and civil activists in Okinawa. Because the ‘All Okinawa’ discourse can recall the famous “*Shimagurumi* Struggle (All Island Struggle)” of the mid-1950s, they seem to prefer using the term. The origin of the ‘All Okinawa’ anti-base movement can be traced back to the period of the Hatoyama cabinet. The relocation of the Futenma base outside Okinawa was reestablished as a goal of the movement beyond political factions through Okinawa prefectural rallies on November 8, 2009 and April 25, 2010. As the term ‘All Okinawa’ started to be used widely, an attitude of suprapartisan cooperation began to be established systematically.

In 2012, the issue of deploying the vertical take-off and landing (“VTOL”) aircraft MV-22 Osprey, known as an ‘accident creator,’ strengthened the cohesion of the ‘All Okinawa’ organization. The Okinawa Prefectural Citizens’ Rally against Osprey Deployment was finally held on September 9, 2012, with 22 organizations involved.<sup>8</sup> On January 28, 2013, the Okinawa prefectural rally delegation submitted to Prime Minister Abe the *Kempakusho*, a petition demanding the following as the collective opinion of the Okinawans: (1) the withdrawal of the MV-22 Osprey in Okinawa; (2) the unconditional closure and return of the Futenma base; and (3) the abandonment

<sup>7</sup> See *Opposition Parties Agree on Setting Mr. Onaga Takeshi as the Sole Candidate of Gubernatorial Elections* 野党、翁長雄志氏に一本化 県知事選候補者, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, July 23, 2014, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/preentry-228935.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> See *The Opposition to the Deployment of Osprey: Anger Is Concentrating* オスプレイ拒否 配備反対 怒り結, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Sept. 9, 2012, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/archives/uploads/img504c153b978e0.pdf> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

of the Henoko base substitution project.<sup>9</sup>

The LDP of Okinawa seceded from the movement due to pressure from the LDP headquarters in November 2013, as indicated above.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the ‘All Okinawa’ group was reorganized then with greater sustainability. On December 14, 2015, 22 organizations build up the All Okinawa Council, in order to oppose the construction of a new base at Henoko. This is the backbone of the ‘All Okinawa’ movement today, which combines the Shimagurumi Council’s moderate civil movement and the existing progressive forces’ radical anti-base movement.<sup>11</sup>

Eventually, the ‘All Okinawa’ movement has proceeded through the connection between Governor Takeshi Onaga’s political leadership and the All Okinawa Council. This political force has been buttressed by citizens’ support as evinced in rallies and elections.

### 3. Goals and Policies

A renowned novelist and activist in Okinawa, Medoruma Shun has expressed the view that: “The nature of the ‘All Okinawa’ movement is ‘one-point’ cooperationism. This ‘one point’ is no new base at Henoko.”<sup>12</sup> Outside this ‘cooperationism’ is the LDP of Okinawa. Claiming that ‘all’ in ‘All Okinawa’ is an exaggerated expression, the Abe cabinet and its proponents have adopted an attitude denying the representativeness of the ‘All Okinawa’ movement.<sup>13</sup>

Governor Onaga’s political slogans may be summarized as follows: (1) opposition to the construction of a new base at Henoko; (2) identity over ideology; and (3) ‘All Okinawa’.<sup>14</sup> Onaga has acknowledged the need for the US-Japan Security Treaty

<sup>9</sup> See *The Kempakusho Including Signatures* 建白書(署名入り), Jan. 28, 2013, available at <http://kenmintaikai2012.ti-da.net/c214989.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> See *The LDP of Okinawa’s Retraction of the Pledge is the Act of Betrayal against the Okinawan People - Resign and Ask People’s Opinion* 県連公約撤回 民意を裏切る行為だ 議員辞職し信を問え, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Nov. 28, 2013, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/editorial/preentry-215905.html> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> See *All Okinawa Council Launches -The Unity for the Opposition to New Bases Construction at Henoko Involves 1300 People* オール沖縄会議発足 辺野古新基地阻止へ結束 1300人氣勢, OKINAWA TIMES 沖縄タイムス, Dec. 15, 2015, available at <http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/21955> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Hirai & Nonaka, *supra* note 5, at 234-5.

<sup>13</sup> See *Mr. Miyazaki and Mr. Suga doubt ‘All Okinawa’, Governor Responds, ‘Okinawan People Has One Wish’* オール沖縄 疑問視 宮崎、菅氏 ‘同調の空気感’ 知事 ‘県民は一つへの思い’, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Feb. 27, 2016, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-228927.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Onaga, *supra* note 5, at 178-93.

and stressed Okinawa's contributions to the security in and around Japan and East Asia.<sup>15</sup> Governor Onaga, however, has come to oppose the Henoko base construction because, in his view, the base policy of the US and Japanese governments has trampled on the Okinawans' dignity, rights, and interests, causing extreme internal conflicts in the political process thus far. Governor Onaga has argued that the Henoko base construction, which is opposed by 70-80 percent of the Okinawan people according to various opinion polls, is a serious violation of democracy, human rights, and local autonomy.<sup>16</sup>

Responding to the reality where all political parties and citizens in Japan except for the minority of 10-20 percent ('All Japan') either favor or are indifferent to the Henoko base construction, Governor Onaga believes that all political parties and citizens in Okinawa ('All Okinawa') must combine their strength and publicize the injustice of the measure.<sup>17</sup> Governor Onaga enumerates various elements constituting the Okinawan identity, such as the Battle of Okinawa (1945), oppression under the US military occupation (1945-72), etc.<sup>18</sup> Onaga has engaged in identity politics, which seeks to transform the Okinawans' cultural homogeneity and particularity into political strength.

The goal of the 'All Okinawa' Council is to realize the three demands in the Kempakusho. Professor Shimabukuro Jun at the University of Ryukyus explains that the spirit embodied by the Kempakusho is to redress human rights violations, such as the right of self-determination. As such unjust human rights violations by the US military forces or a national power would occur not only in Japan but also around the globe, the Shimagurumi Council seeks to lead the civil solidarity for resistance. As stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR") and numerous national constitutions, all people possess the right of self-determination, according to which they can create autonomous political organs to enjoy their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Okinawans' right of self-determination is also based on the ICCPR and the Japanese constitution. The Shimagurumi Council, criticizing human rights violations by the US and Japanese governments, pursues the expansion of autonomy.<sup>19</sup>

The All Okinawa Council encompasses a variety of goals and directions. They

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 107-9.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at. 5-7, 31-6 & 140-5.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 55-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 83-9, 149-55 & 219-27.

<sup>19</sup> Jun Shimabukuro, *What the Shimagurumi Council Aims at, The Society for Thinking over the Battle of Okinawa in Kansai* 島袋純, "島ぐるみ会議のめざすもの, 関西・沖縄戦を考える 会, June 12, 2015, available at <http://okinawasen.main.jp/archives/112> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).

insist that the US bases are not sources of privilege, but obstacles to Okinawa's economic development, environment, and women's rights. Specifically, refreshing and stimulating are the voices of local capitalists who emphasize the economic effect of the development of returned bases and aspects of the tourism industry as a peace industry, as well.<sup>20</sup>

Above all, Okinawa's anti-war/peace/anti-base activist organizations, leftwing political parties, and labor unions have aimed at amending the US-Japan Security Treaty, which is seen as a product of the Cold War, and the ultimate return of the US bases in Okinawa. However, progressive groups have gradually lost popular support since the latter half of the 1990s. While progressive activists have supported local movements against the construction of Takae helipads in Higashi Village and the deployment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces ("JSDF") to the southwestern islands (Sakishima), this has failed to become a main issue for the 'All Okinawa' movement.<sup>21</sup>

Today, the 'All Okinawa' movement is a new anti-base movement in which conservative politicians, intellectuals, capitalists, and citizens fully participate. This movement simultaneously attempts to strengthen its internal cohesion and universal values, such as democracy and human rights. It is also interested more in the Okinawans' exercise of their right of self-determination than in the reduction of the US bases. However, the slogans of this movement do not include more controversial arguments, such as independence of the Ryukyu Islands or "Not only the Senkaku Islands, but also the Okinawa Islands are not inherent territories of Japan."

## 4. Process and Prospects

### A. Judicial Battle

Upon taking his office, Governor Onaga endeavored to convey the Okinawans' wishes to Prime Minister Abe and government authorities. However, he got only negative responses. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide repeated that the government would solemnly (*shukushukuto*) conduct the construction works. The 'intensive negotiations' between the Japanese government and the Okinawa

<sup>20</sup> Hirai & Nonaka, *supra* note 5, at 188-216.

<sup>21</sup> G. McCormack, "All Japan" versus "All Okinawa" - Abe Shinzo's Military-Firstism, 13 ASIA-PACIFIC J., Mar. 23, 2015, available at <http://apjif.org/2015/13/10/Gavan-McCormack/4299.html> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).

Prefecture in August-September 2015 merely served to confirm their differences.<sup>22</sup>

On October 13, 2015, Governor Onaga cancelled the reclamation license of Oura Bay issued by his predecessor. This order would have the effect of stopping the construction of the Henoko base. The Okinawa Defense Bureau instituted the temporary suspension of the effect of this order under the Administrative Appeal Act, which was accepted by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (“MLITT”). In addition, the Abe cabinet entered into ‘proxy execution’ procedures under the Local Autonomy Act and filed a lawsuit demanding the retraction of Governor Onaga’s cancellation order. Objecting to MLITT’s decision, Onaga then requested a review by the Central and Local Government Dispute Management Council and filed a lawsuit. The legal disputes between Okinawa Prefecture and the Japanese government ceased unprecedentedly with the establishment of conciliation on March 4, 2016.<sup>23</sup>

In accordance with the conciliation clause, the construction work at Henoko was stopped. In the course of negotiations for amicable settlement, both parties agreed to ask for new judgments from the Disputes Council and the court concerning whether the Japanese government’s rectification order regarding the Governor’s cancellation order was legitimate.<sup>24</sup>

Opinions are diverse on the gains and losses of the conciliation, as well as prospects of the judicial battle. The Okinawa Prefecture authorities have evaluated the suspension of the construction works as an important achievement. However, some have pointed out that the conciliation clause, which confirms the pledge to abide by the final verdict, is a trap to block the prefecture’s new legal struggles.<sup>25</sup> The conflicts between the two parties will extend to the court’s final verdict, whose decision would be unfavorable to Okinawa Prefecture. The court will take the burden of the difficult task to harmonize national security and Okinawa’s human rights, democracy, and local autonomy.

On June 20, 2016, the Dispute Council recommended to continue negotiations

<sup>22</sup> See Governor Onaga Says after the Henoko Negotiations, ‘for Seventy Years, the More Meetings We Have, the More Distance We Feel’ 翁長知事, ‘70年間、すれ違いですね,’ 辺野古協議終え 一問一答, OKINAWA TIMES, Sept. 7, 2015, available at <http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/18476> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> See *The Conciliation Clause* 和解条項, Okinawa Prefecture, available at <http://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/site/chijjiko/henoko/documents/h280304wakaiseiritu.pdf> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> J. Soble, *Shinzo Abe and Okinawa’s Governor to Resume Talks on U.S. Base*, N. Y. TIMES, Mar. 4, 2016, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/05/world/asia/japan-shinzo-abe-okinawa-futenma.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/05/world/asia/japan-shinzo-abe-okinawa-futenma.html?_r=0) (last visited Sept. 28, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> G. McCormack, ‘Ceasefire’ on Oura Bay: The March 2016 Japan-Okinawa ‘Amicable Agreement’ Introduction and Six Views from within the Okinawan Anti-Base Movement, 14 ASIA-PACIFIC J., Apr. 1, 2016, available at <http://apjif.org/2016/07/McCormack.html> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).



between the two parties while avoiding a judgment on whether the Japanese government's rectification order was legitimate. On July 22, however, the Abe cabinet filed a fresh lawsuit against the Okinawa Prefecture seeking confirmation of the illegality of its no reaction to the government's rectification order. The government declared that it would proceed with litigation and negotiations at the same time.<sup>26</sup> Simultaneously, the construction works at the onshore part of Henoko and the Takae helipads were resumed. In August, the Okinawan press reported that the Japanese government authorities would reduce the national budget for Okinawa's economic promotion in retaliation for the prefecture's refusal to cooperate with the US base policy.<sup>27</sup> Though the Abe cabinet exercised self-restraint not long afterwards, its measures were already deviating from the spirit of conciliation with adverse effects on the trials.

### ***B. Direct Action***

On November 7, 2015, Governor Onaga's wife Mikiko visited the protest camp in front of the US Marine Corps Camp Schwab and made a speech to citizens who had continued sit-in protests: "If my husband can't stop the base construction at Henoko with everything in his power as a governor, we'll come here and stage a sit-in."<sup>28</sup> Direct action by progressive activists and local residents has blocked the construction of Henoko base for a long time.<sup>29</sup> The Henoko site has integrated the Okinawan anti-base movement. Civil activists from many parts of Japan visit the site.

Conversely, the opposition to the construction of the Takae helipads was outside the main focus of the 'All Okinawa' movement because it could be blamed for intentionally delaying the return schedule of half of the US Marines' Northern Training Area, which amounts to 3,987 hectares. Out of the six helipads under construction after 2007, two helipads provided in advance to the US military in January 2015 were used for Osprey flight training. However, the residents of Takae hamlet has steadfastly resisted violent repression, when interest in Takae has

<sup>26</sup> See The daily press conference of the Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, on July 22, 2016, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DM2InEpJeU8> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> See *Open Attack on Provisions, Policy Change of the Government due to Shimajiri's Defeat, but Okinawa Prefecture Keeps its Calm* 露骨な兵糧攻め 政権、島尻氏落選で方針転換 沖縄県は冷静さ保つ, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Aug. 5, 2016, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-329684.html> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> See *United Mind for the Opposition to New Base Construction: Governor Onaga's Wife Participates in Sit-in Protest* 新基地阻止への心一つ 翁長知事の妻、座り込みに参加, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, Nov. 8, 2015, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-168052.html> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> G. McCormack, *Battle Station: Okinawa 2016*, 14 ASIA-PACIFIC J., Jan. 16, 2016, at 6, available at <http://apjif.org/2016/02/1-McCormack.html> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).

increased. Since the construction resumed on July 22, intense conflicts have erupted between local residents and activists endeavoring to stop it, and over 500 riot police from mainland Japan. In addition, on the islands of Yonaguni, Ishigaki, and Miyako, local residents have opposed the deployment of the JSDF, which will escalate military tensions with China.<sup>30</sup>

### *C. Civic Cooperation*

The Shimagurumi Council has endeavored to publicize the problems with the construction of the Henoko base widely and to promote citizens' cooperation. Since August 2014, the Council has not only conducted Henoko bus tours to show the situation at Henoko, but also engaged in petition activities in order to publicize to the US Congress, the UN, and overseas media the 'Henoko problem' and human rights violations in Okinawa. They are requesting 'cooperation.' A delegation then visited San Francisco and Washington, D.C. in November 2015 to inform figures related to the US Congress and civil organizations of the situation at Henoko for support.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Governor Onaga delivered a two-minute speech on the Okinawans' human rights and the right of self-determination at the UN Human Rights Council ("UNHRC") on September 22, 2015.<sup>32</sup> While publicization and petitions regarding the Henoko problem were continuing sporadically before, the Shimagurumi Council has organized them more systematically.

### *D. Crime and Accident*

In Okinawa, the US forces often commit crimes and cause accidents, and daily generate noise and environmental pollution. They are the fundamental causes of the anti-base sentiments in this region. The deployment of the Osprey has incited intense opposition from the Okinawans, more than any other issue, because of their prolonged experience with damage from the US bases.

On May 19, 2016, the press extensively covered the charges of murder and the abandonment of a 20-year old Okinawan woman who was a civilian employee of the

<sup>30</sup> G. McCormack, *Japan's Problematic Prefecture – Okinawa and the US-Japan Relationship*, 14 ASIA-PACIFIC J., Sept. 1, 2016, at 18-20, available at <http://apjif.org/2016/17/McCormack.html> (last visited on Sept. 23, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Hideki Yoshikawa, *All Okinawa Goes to Washington: The Okinawan Appeal to the American Government and People*, 13 ASIA-PACIFIC J., Dec. 7, 2015, available at <http://apjif.org/-Hideki-YOSHIKAWA/4404> (last visited on Sept. 5, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> His speech text is posted at the homepage of Okinawa Prefecture, available at <http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/chijiko/henoko/documents/unoralstatement.pdf> (last visited Sept. 29, 2016).

US military.<sup>33</sup> This murder case was brutal enough to recall the rape of an Okinawa schoolgirl by three US servicemen in 1995. While visiting Hiroshima, President Obama apologized for this incident during the US-Japan summit held on May 26. By June 17, however, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly and all 41 city, town, and village assemblies in the prefecture had adopted resolutions protesting against the incident. In an Okinawa prefectural rally held on June 19, approximately 65,000 Okinawans further resolved radical demands such as the withdrawal of the US Marine Corps from Okinawa and the fundamental revision of the US-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (hereinafter US-Japan SOFA).<sup>34</sup> In an opinion poll conducted during May 30-June 1 by the Okinawan press regarding measures to prevent the recurrence of crimes and accidents involving the US military personnel, meanwhile, 42.9 percent and 27.1 percent of respondents chose the complete withdrawal of the US bases and their reduction, respectively. As for the issue of relocating the Futenma base to Henoko, 83.8 percent of respondents opposed relocation in Okinawa, and this figure was the highest since the inauguration of the Abe administration in 2012.<sup>35</sup>

### *E. Election*

In 2016, there were three important elections. In the Ginowan City mayoral elections held on January 24, the incumbent mayor Sakima Atsushi, who received support from the LDP and the Komeito, was reelected. Prime Minister Abe met with and congratulated the successful candidate. Although Mayor Sakima presented the early closure of the Futenma base within three years as an election pledge, he was unable to mention the relocation of the Futenma base to Henoko at all. In the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly elections held on June 5, those in the ruling party who supported Governor Onaga increased their parliamentary seats from 23 to 27, thereby occupying over half of the total of 48 seats. Though various points of contention arose

<sup>33</sup> J. Soble, *Okinawa Murder Case Heightens Outcry over U.S. Military's Presence*, N.Y. TIMES, June 4, 2016, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/05/world/asia/okinawa-murder-case-heightens-outcry-over-us-militarys-presence.html> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> See *We Are not Slaves of America, Not Only Governor Onaga But Also SEALDs Appears, the Rally Is Deeply Colored in Anti-government and Anti-America* 私たちは米国の奴隷ではない 翁長知事やシールズも登場 反政権 反米 色濃く, SANKEI NEWS 産経ニュース, June 19, 2016, available at <http://www.sankei.com/politics/news/160619/pl1606190043-n1.html> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> See *Over 40% Okinawan People Want the Complete Return of US Bases, 53% Okinawans Demand the Withdrawal of Marines: Okinawa Opinion Poll after the Female Murder Incident* 全基地撤去 4割超 女性遺棄事件で沖縄県調査 海兵隊撤退は 53%, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, June 3, 2016, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-290991.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

in each electoral district, trust in the Onaga prefectural administration was evaluated to have been generally confirmed.<sup>36</sup>

The House of Councillors elections of July 10 had a symbolic meaning. In the contest between Iha Yoichi, who received full support from Governor Onaga and the ‘All Okinawa’ forces, and Shimajiri Aiko, who was the Abe cabinet’s Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs at the time, the former achieved a landslide victory by approximately 100 thousand votes. In the 2010 Okinawa gubernatorial elections, Iha, the sole candidate from the progressive forces, had lost to candidate Nakaima due to Onaga’s strategy of presenting the relocation of the Futenma base outside Okinawa as an election pledge. This time, however, he was able to make a political comeback due to support from the same governor. It is said that Shimajiri’s crushing defeat was the final judgment on the fifth National Diet member seated behind Secretary-General Ishiba.<sup>37</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The US-Japan Security Treaty and the US-Japan SOFA are the international legal grounds for the continued maintenance of the US bases in Okinawa. Since the end of the Cold War, the US forces have stationed in Okinawa through diverse logic. The US and Japanese governments have claimed ‘deterrence’ against potential military threats in East Asia such as North Korea, China or Russia. The plan to reorganize the US Forces Japan (“USFJ”), established in May 2006, is also indispensable for carrying out the “War on Terror” and, in Japanese view, for monitoring the territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

Nonetheless, those reasons do not explain why 74 percent of “US exclusive-use bases” in Japan are concentrated on Okinawa and why the Futenma replacement facility must be constructed at Henoko. The construction of a new base at Henoko is reflecting the strategic will of the US and Japanese governments. According to Article 2, clause 2, of the US-Japan SOFA, at the request of either government, both the US and Japan shall review the existing arrangements and may agree that

<sup>36</sup> See *Okinawa Prefectural Assembly Elections: Voters Trust Governor Onaga, the Ruling Party Constitutes a Stable Majority* 翁長知事に信任 与党27席で安定多数 沖縄県議選, OKINAWA TIMES, June 6, 2016, available at <http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/3685> (last visited on Sept. 29, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> See *Okinawan People Oppose the Retraction of the pledges: Minister Shimajiri’s Defeat* 公約撤回に県民反発 落選の島尻担当相、伊波氏は県政与党の支援奏功 参院選沖縄選挙区, RYUKYU SHIMPO DAILY 琉球新報, July 11, 2016, available at <http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-314478.html> (last visited on Sept. 28, 2016).

provided facilities and areas shall be returned to Japan or be relocated to another place. The Hashimoto Ryutaro cabinet's request for the return of the Futenma base in April 1996, the first of its kind, and the Hatoyama cabinet's request for renegotiations in September 2009 were all based on this clause. However, the US government has only urged the implementation of the agreement as if it has never considered other alternatives, and the Abe cabinet has disregarded its own people's legitimate and critical demands to carry out the promise with the strongest friend. Such an attitude on the part of the US and Japan does harm to democracy and social justice.

The 'All Okinawa' movement is not merely an anti-base movement. In fact, it seeks the recovery of the Okinawans' human rights and dignity. To express the will of "no new base at Henoko (and in Okinawa)," the majority of the Okinawans participated in referenda and finally elected National Diet members and a governor who would represent their wishes. Among them are people who have participated in various rallies and demonstrations to voice their opinions. However, given back were only the declaration that construction would proceed solemnly regardless of the voices of the local residents, and the disappointing press conference of the National Diet members retracting their election pledge. These were also accompanied with active litigations and the deployment of riot police units.

While independence is a minor opinion, most Okinawans fervently wish for higher autonomy. The more they are disappointed with the Japanese government and society, the more strongly Okinawans will pursue an indigenous identity, which in turn will become political strength internally uniting 'All Okinawa.' Such identity politics will continue until the Henoko base project is abandoned. In addition, the culture and historical consciousness building the Okinawan identity will be actively transmitted to later generations.

In Okinawa, there is a custom that, at the close of village festivals or celebratory ceremonies, the participants happily dance together to strengthen their solidarity. It is called *Kachāshī*. On July 10, 2016, at the event held to celebrate Iha's election victory, the winner of the election himself, Governor Onaga and members of 'All Okinawa' danced *Kachāshī* together. This embodied identity has served as a source of strength to reinforce solidarity transcending diverse factions and to endure the struggle against the US and Japanese governments.

Figure 2: *Kachāshī* celebrating Iha Yoichi's Victory in the Election<sup>38</sup>



<sup>38</sup> See Seiken Akamine's Official Blog 赤嶺政賢 公式ブログ, available at <http://jcpakamine.jugem.jp/?eid=2407> (last visited on Oct. 15, 2016). (Reprinted by permission of Seiken Akamine)