

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD REDUCING THE BURDEN OF MILITARY BASES ON OKINAWA IN THE NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

March 2021

Bankoku Shinryō Council on U.S. Military Base Issues



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- 25 years since 1996 SACO
- 50th year since Okinawa's reversion to Japan
... 2022
- 70.3% of the land area exclusively used by USFJ
on only 0.6% of the country ... Okinawa

CHAPTER 1

HENOKO PROJECT AND DANGERS FROM FUTENMA

■ Henoko is infeasible option, not “the only solution”

* soft sea floor in the Oura Bay

GOJ estimate . . . 12 years and 930 billion yen

total 206.2 million m³ needed , only 6% completed

* referendum 2019 . . . 72.15% against

* Okinawa main island soil . . . remains of WW II deads

■ Operations at Futenma Have Been on the Rise

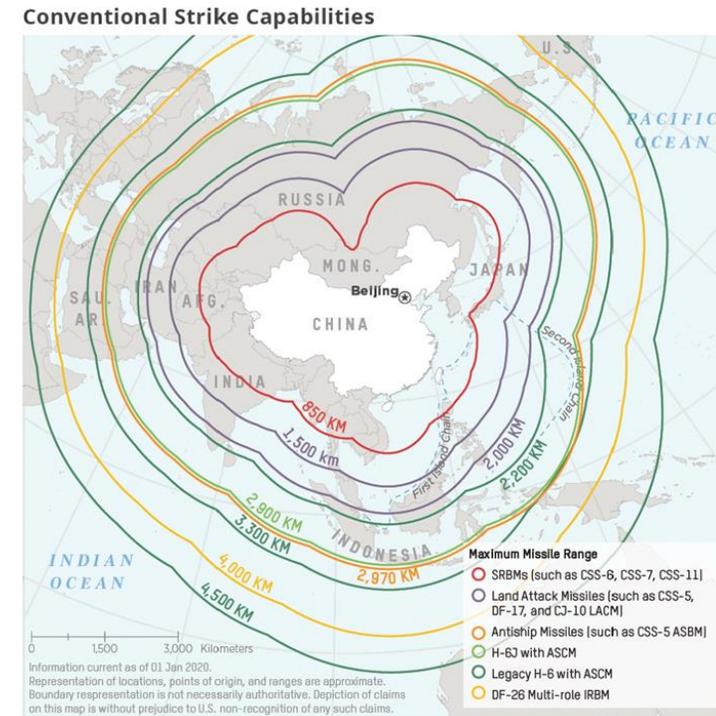
13,581(2017) ⇒ 16,332(2018) ⇒ 16,848(2019)

Chapter 3:
New Operational Concept of
the US military
and Implications for US bases
in Okinawa

Fumiaki Nozoe

Vulnerability of bases in Okinawa

- Chapter 3 offers an overview of the new operational concepts of the US Armed forces, analysis implications of these concepts for Okinawa, and discuss the possibility of a sizable reduction of the burden that Okinawa bears for hosting US military installations.
- US bases in Okinawa are politically vulnerable.
- As China has developed her A2/AD capabilities, US bases in Okinawa are increasingly vulnerable.



New Operational Concept of the US military

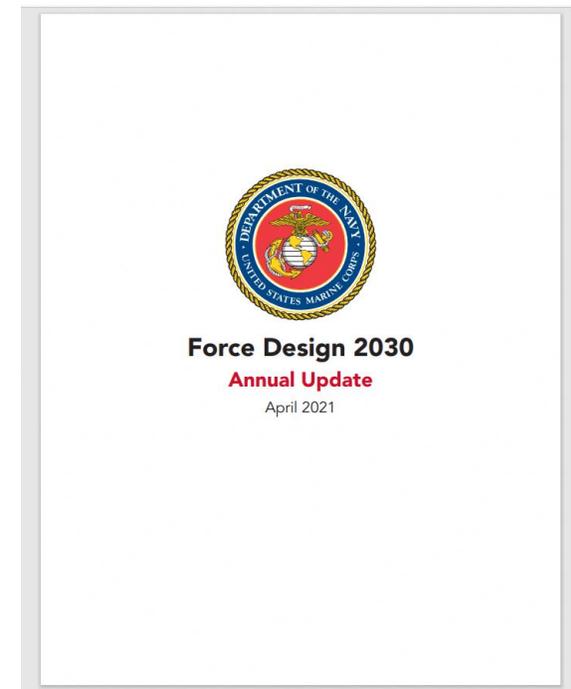
- The United States has been developing new operational concepts to counter China.
- The US Marine Corps has been developing its new operational concept called Expeditionary Advanced Base Operation” (EABO).

“the vulnerability of large, fixed bases”

“constant distributed presence”

- Kurt Cambell:

“Although Washington should maintain its forward presence, it also needs to work with other states to disperse US force across Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. This would reduce American reliance on a small number of vulnerable facilities in East Asia”.



3.. 2.. 1.. JUMP

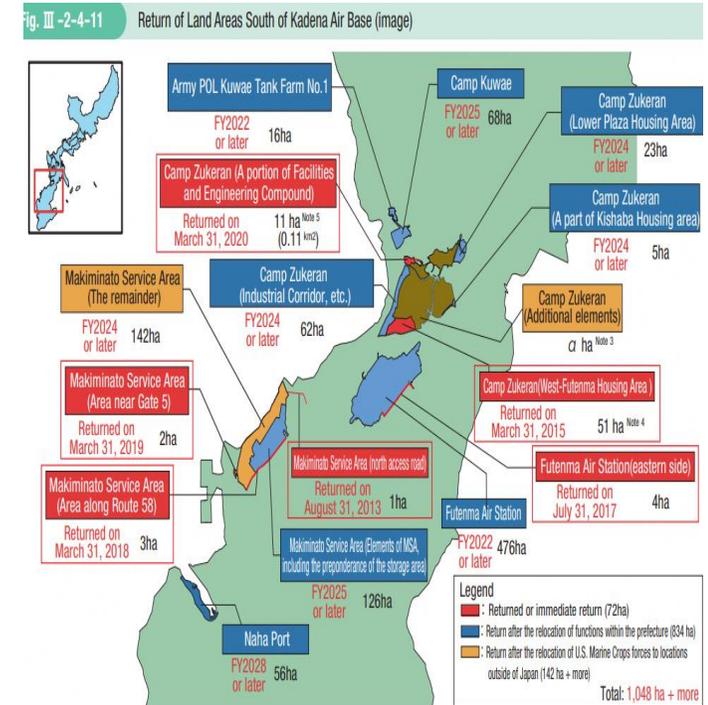
Marines with 1st MAW assist with the 31st MEU's Maritime Raid Force, as they conduct a military free-fall high altitude jump during simulated EABO at **le Shima** Training Facility, March 11, 2019. (U.S. **Marine** Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Dylan Hess)

[ツイートを翻訳](#)



For Reducing the Burden of the Military bases on Okinawa

- Reduction of the burden of military bases on Okinawa should be sought by dispersing the US military force from Okinawa to main islands in Japan and other location across the Asia Pacific region.
- Even if all the land of the bases south of Kadena is returned as agreed in 2006, about 69 % of the land area exclusively used by the US forces in Japan would still be concentrated on Okinawa.
- The Japanese and the US governments and the Okinawa Prefectural Government need to have close dialogue over the future of US bases in Okinawa.



The Role of Diplomacy

Chapter 4

Indo-Pacific Diplomacy and Okinawa
(pp. 32-39)

Purpose of the Chapter

- this chapter discusses the “mental block” that refuses to consider any other alternatives than the reliance on deterrence, and explore ways to alleviate the undue burden on Okinawa by engaging in diplomacy with a broader outlook. Such diplomacy should be conducted on the premise of maintaining the alliance with the United States but could free Japan from the “security dilemma.” (P.32)

25 Years Have Passed, and Now ...

- On April 12, 1996, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and United States Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale made a surprise announcement that they had agreed to return the land of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma within five to seven years. The Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) was tasked to examine Futenma's replacement options and recommended the construction of a sea-based facility which can be removed when no longer necessary, and the Security Consultative Committee (SCC) approved the recommendation in December that year. (p. 33)
- The decision to develop a removable replacement facility suggested that the policymakers were committed to the cause of lessening the burden on Okinawa. (p. 33)
- Despite the fact that the completion of a new base in Henoko looks more unlikely than ever, the Japanese government persists that it is the only solution to the problems arising from Futenma. (p. 33)

Mental Block and Inertia

- The voice from Okinawa, which experienced the cruel ground battle where civilians were caught in the crossfire in the final days of the Second World War, was an integral part of the foundation of Japan's postwar diplomacy. But as the voice of conservatives who wish to think that the war was not the result of Japan's mistaken national policies has grown, the voice of Okinawa has gradually been marginalized in Japanese politics and society. (pp. 34-35)
- As the China threat perception has risen, the discourse on security in Japan has become simplistic. In loudly proclaiming the importance of deterrence, a simplistic strategy of exclusively emphasizing the importance of the US-Japan alliance has come to be recited as if it were a theorem. As a consequence, a “mental block” has set in regarding Okinawa's base burden and the issues regarding the new base at Henoko. (p. 35)

Skewed State of Indo-Pacific Strategy

- Close scrutiny reveals that Japan's vigorous diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region has the traits of middle power diplomacy. An example is the Japan-Australia-India-US Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Quad), held in New York in September 2019 and in Tokyo in October 2020, and set to be regularized. The ministers agreed on "practical cooperation in various areas such as quality infrastructure, maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber security, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, education and human resource development" in addition to the responses to the COVID-19, and reaffirmed the "inclusiveness" of the Indo-Pacific region and ASEAN's centrality as a fundamental principle. (p. 37)
- Many Japanese politicians, experts and most of the general public, however, understand the FOIP and QUAD as part of a Japan-US alliance strategy to counter China. (p. 38)

Promise of Indo-Pacific Diplomacy

- The more adversarial Japan and the US become against China, the more likely Australia and India will shy away, not to mention ASEAN and the Republic of Korea. But promoting Indo-Pacific diplomacy primarily aimed at developing partnerships among middle powers, without reducing the importance of the United States, would offer Japan a new outlook. (p. 39)
- Given China's gross domestic product and military expenditure having surpassed those of all the Indo-Pacific countries combined, including Japan, India, and the Republic of Korea, partnerships among these middle powers would be irrelevant without the US presence as the mainstay of the region. This should lead to the idea of jointly supporting the presence of the United States in the region through partnerships among middle powers. (p. 39)

Conclusion

- The simplistic belief in deterrence relying on the Japan-US alliance to counter the perceived threat of China prevents broader strategic thinking. The result is the hollow promise of reducing the burden on Okinawa. Partnerships among Indo-Pacific middle powers should be so conceptualized as to be instrumental to defuse tensions between the United States and China and to jointly support the US regional presence. That would open a new outlook on the US military base issues on Okinawa and the future of the Japan-US alliance. (p. 39)

The Status of Forces Agreement and Local Governments

Akiko YAMAMOTO

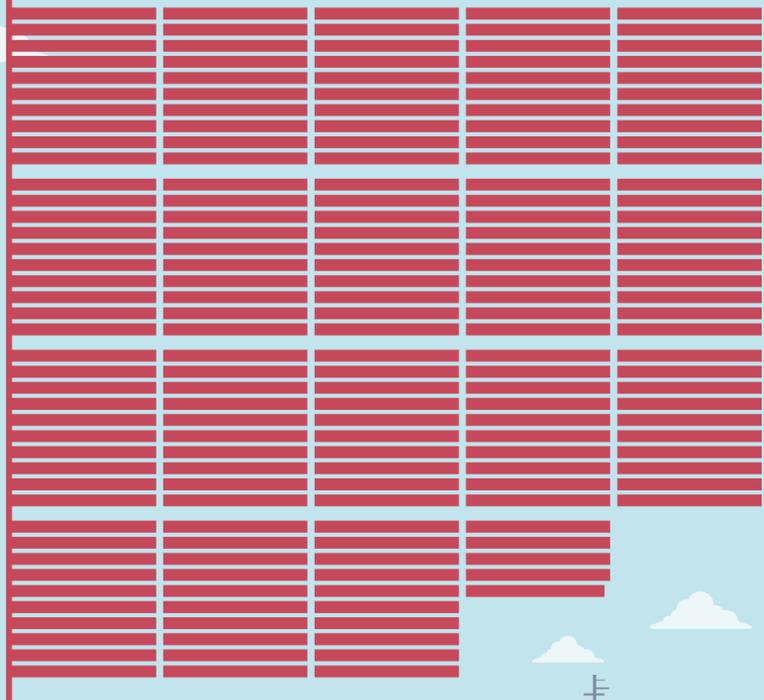


在日米軍基地 都道府県別の面積

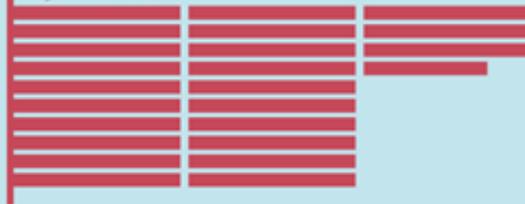


在日米軍施設・区域（専用施設）面積

沖縄県
18,496.1ha



青森県
2,374.3ha



北海道
427.4 ha



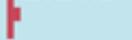
山口県
867.2ha



広島県
353.8ha



京都府
3.5 ha



静岡県
120.5ha



埼玉県
203.5 ha



千葉県
209.5ha



福岡県
2.3ha



長崎県
468.6ha



神奈川県
1,473.1 ha



東京都
1,319.3ha



Increase of US Training over Populated Area in Japan

Emergency landings of US aircraft on Japanese Self-Defense Force bases and civilian airports and low-altitude flights over urban areas, coastal regions, and mountain sides where there are no US or Japanese military installations nearby have increased, causing anxiety and resentment in affected local communities. <https://youtu.be/2zyZBbzV0lw>



SOFA's Disregard of the Safety and Security of Japanese

- SOFA does not have provisions concerning aircraft training.
- Flight paths, flight hours, and low-altitude flights and other dangerous operations over both land and sea are not regulated.
- US military aircraft are allowed priority access to civilian airports and seaports in emergency without fees.
- The US military uses SDF facilities, exempt from relevant Japanese laws and regulations, ministerial orders, and non-binding restrictions that are applied to Japanese forces.



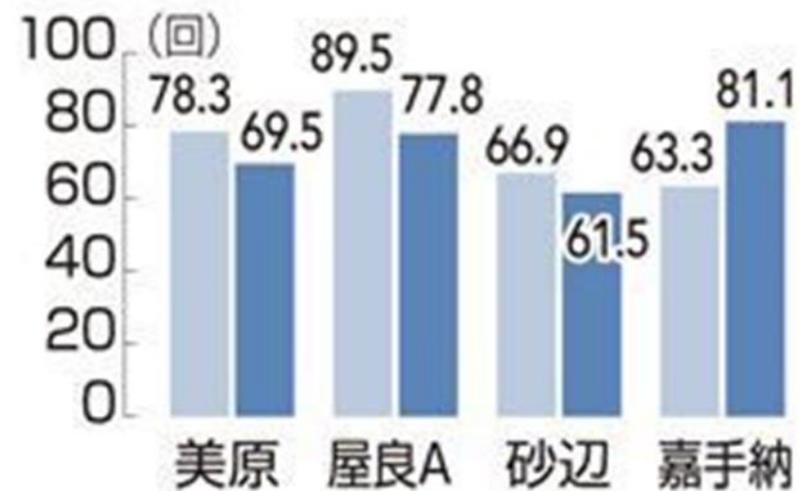
Proposal by Local Governments of a Thorough Review of SOFA

- The Japanese and US governments has promised to “improve the operation” of SOFA since 1995, only to yield no reduction of incidents, accidents, and crimes of US forces in Japan.
- In July 2018, the National Governors’ Association adopted a resolution entitled “Proposals concerning the Burden of United States Military Bases,” which included a thorough review of SOFA and the application of the Civil Aeronautics Law and other relevant Japanese laws and regulations to US Forces.

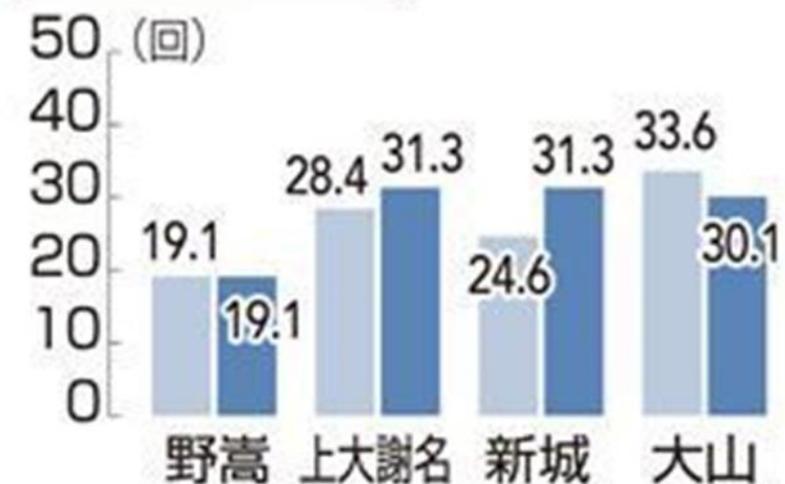
Number of Measured Noise at Night and Morning (Monthly Average)

■ 2017年度 ■ 2018年度

Around Kadena



Around Futenma



Agreement between Local Governments and the Regional Defense Bureaus of MOD

- The second best option that local governments can take to protect their populations is an agreement with the regional defense bureaus of the Ministry of Defense, which provides for principles governing US military training conducted at SDF facilities on Japanese territory (outside of Okinawa).
- Local-level agreements are not binding on US forces because the United States does not acknowledge them, but they can still give local governments a rationale for conveying their concerns to the Japanese government.

