

Five Okinawan Views on the Nago Mayoral Election of February 2018: Implications for Japanese Democracy

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Japanese original texts are available at [Peace Philosophy Blog](#)

Introduction

Nago City (Population: 61,000) in northern Okinawa held its election for mayor on 4 February 2018. The incumbent, Inamine Susumu, stalwart of the anti-Henoko base movement bidding for a third term in office (following victory in 2010 and 2014) was defeated 20,389 to 16,921 by Toguchi Taketoyo, backed by the ruling national Liberal-Democratic Party and its Buddhist alliance partner, Komeito. The outcome was not so much a victory of one group from within the city over another, reflecting different political interests or ideology, as a victory of metropolitan, government and ruling party national forces from outside the city at the expense of the city. There had never been a local government election in Japan quite like this.

Mayoral Election for Nago City, Okinawa, 4 February 2018:

Toguchi Taketoyo, endorsed by Liberal-Democratic Party, Komeito, and Japan Restoration Party, 20,389, defeated Inamine Susumu, independent backed by a wide range of opposition parties, 16,931.

Voting Rate, 76.92 per cent

Votes Cast: 37,524 (of which 21,660, 57.72 per cent, were in advance and just 15,864 on polling day).

The reversal was a blow to the anti-base movement. Yet the outcome was not quite the triumph for the Henoko base construction cause that the Abe government has sought to claim. On the very eve of the poll, surveys showed Nago city people maintaining opposition to the Henoko base construction project at a level of 63 per cent, with just 20 per cent in favour (figures scarcely changed since four years earlier when they were 64 and 19 per cent),¹ and in exit polls on the actual day of the vote over 60 per cent, including even one quarter of those who voted for Toguchi, declared their opposition to the Henoko project.²



Mayor elect Toguchi Taketoyo

The election was remarkable in many respects. No national government had ever intervened so intensively to sway a local self-government outcome as had the Abe government for this election, dispatching top figures of government and ruling party to press the Toguchi cause and to promise generous rewards for cooperation. Following a plan attributed to Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide, Toguchi avoided any mention of the Henoko project, refused to debate his opponent, and stressed the economic benefits his close contacts with the national government would bring the city, emphasizing improved waste management and better child and aged care facilities. The candidate and his powerful sponsors in the national government made every effort to convey the impression that the election was a local matter, yet such efforts were belied by the importance and the national status of those sent from Tokyo to plead Toguchi's cause. In other words, fearful that the people would reject its design, both the candidate and the government concealed it. The election was fundamentally anti-democratic.

The election outcome may be seen as the culmination of long sustained efforts by the Japanese state to "conquer" a city that had in every conceivable forum and for decades said "No" to the plan to inflict a huge military installation on it. As Abe Takeshi of the

Okinawa Taimusu put it, "If Japan were a democratic state, the works would certainly have been stopped."³ The new mayor may hang a white flag over the city office, and he may enjoy state largesse for his promise to deliver the city, but the base agenda will still have to be carried forward, likely by force, against a resentful and alienated populace that has resisted the base construction for more than two decades.

The Asia-Pacific Journal presents six short essays on the election, submitted in response to our invitation by the following.

Yamashiro Hiroji. Chair of the Okinawa Peace Action Center, former prefectural official and leader of Camp Schwab Gatefront protest and Takae helipad site construction protest. Arrested and held in solitary confinement for five months in 2016-2017, his case is still before the Naha court.⁴

Urashima Etsuko. Poet, chronicler and central figure in the Okinawan resistance, long resident in Nago City "Districts to the North of Futami," close to Henoko.

Miyagi Yasuhiro. Former Nago City councillor and central figure in the 1997 Nago City plebiscite on the base issue; author, critic, and historian.

Iha Yoichi. Twice in 1990s mayor of Ginowan City (site of Futenma Marine Air Station) and from 2016 member of the House of Councillors of the Japanese Diet, Secretary-General of Okinawa Whirlwind (Okinawa no kaze).

Yoshikawa Hideki, Nago-resident anthropologist teaching at Meio University and the University of the Ryukyus and International director of the Save the Dugong Campaign Center and Director of the Okinawa Environmental Justice Project. Author of several major articles on this site.⁵

Each of the authors addresses the issues from

slightly different angles but all note the significance of the extraordinarily high proportion of advance votes, the crucial involvement of external forces (notably the national government and the ruling coalition Liberal-Democratic Party and Komeito party organizations), the Toguchi's refusal to engage in policy debate, and the significance of the enfranchisement of the 18-20 year age group. Each reflects on the implications of this election outcome for the base construction project on Henoko and for the future of the anti-base movement and democracy in Okinawa and Japan. -- GMcC

1. Yamashiro Hiroji

"The Shock of Defeat"

Nago City's incumbent mayor, Inamine Susumu, opponent of the construction of a new base for the US Marine Corps at Henoko on Oura Bay, was defeated in mayoral election on 4 February 2018 by newcomer Toguchi Taketoyo supported by the Abe Shinzo government. A deep shock now spreads among the people of Nago, and of Okinawa, and among those friends who have supported them from all over Okinawa or elsewhere in Japan, who have been raising their voices to oppose base construction and who had not doubted that Inamine would win a third term.

Confronting the national government firmly from a stance of not allowing any new base to be constructed at Henoko or in the waters of Oura Bay, Mayor Inamine had conducted a city administration based on citizen power and had secured independent financial resources to make up for the US base-hosting subsidies that had been stopped by the national government and to pay for health, welfare and educational services. People's trust in him ran deep and there should have been no reason for him to be defeated. Furthermore, we were determined that, following on from this election, we would

build up momentum by winning re-election of Onaga Takeshi as prefectural governor in November, and then, with our colleagues at the Camp Schwab gate-front protest, we would press the government to abandon the construction of the Henoko base.



Former Mayor Inamine

However, even while we were determined to resolve at least the issue of the new base construction, the LDP Abe government was gearing up for unprecedented all-out warfare. Where Komeito had in previous elections adopted a "free vote" stance, this time the LDP took it formally under its wing. Dispatching ministers and influential politicians from Tokyo, it turned the Nago election into a major national policy electoral battle. The voting rate reached 77 per cent, of which 44 per cent (more than 20,000 votes) were cast in advance, most of them mobilized by organizations or by Soka Gakkai members. Overwhelmed by the

organizational and mobilizing power of such big, powerful forces, this was an election unlike any ever seen in Nago.

What cannot be ignored is that, although objectively speaking US base-related matters - not just construction of a new base at Henoko but repeated acts of violence by US service personnel or civilian employees - should have been the top issue, the LDP candidate went to great lengths to avoid them. He refused to participate in any public debate or discussion, while behind the scenes his campaign strove to hurt Inamine by spreading slanderous allegations and campaigning throughout on readily understandable issues such as free nursery education or free school lunches.

The election was neither open nor fair. I think we could sum it up by saying it was a defeat marked by the use of cowardly tactics to cover its real significance. The November gubernatorial election will presumably follow the same lines. I am very conscious that we must learn from this experience.

Finally, there is no denying that a deep concern over how the electoral defeat of Mayor Inamine will affect the [Camp Schwab] Gate-front struggle, but the struggle against the construction of a new base at Henoko has been through many ups and downs over more than 20 years and the going has never been smooth. I hereby renew my resolve to press ahead boldly, proud of the fact that it is we, the people, who make history.

2. Urashima Etsuko

“The Mountain Cherries Weep”

“Nago The Indomitable Faces a Choice Between Money and Pride”

I recall the banner with this message at the entrance to the city at the time of the Nago

City plebiscite over the construction of a new base conducted on 21 December 1997. The cherry (*higanzakura*) is the symbol of Nago City, and is the earliest in Japan to blossom. The Cherry festival is held every year on the last weekend of January and the term “Nago masa” (Nago the indomitable or the unbowed) conveys the spirit of Nago people. My recollecting the banner of 20 years ago in the midst of the fierce campaign around the Nago mayoral election of 4 February 2018 is because of the extraordinary spectacle repeated at each of the six elections over the past 20 years since then of governments of the day mobilizing and directly intervening in the elections for this small city with less than 50,000 eligible voters. That extraordinary government intervention reached new heights during this most recent election.

When greeting the “5,000th Day of Sit-In” meeting in front of Henoko’s Camp Schwab gate on 26 December 2017, and speaking of his resolve to win a third term as mayor in order to put paid to the base construction project, Mayor Inamine referred to ‘hands of the devil’ that were stretched out on all sides. He did not mean this in a metaphorical sense. Throughout the election, I repeatedly felt fear as if some mysterious dark substance was spreading, mortified that my beloved Nago should be subject to such dirty tricks. From late last year through early this year, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide and LDP Secretary-General Nikai Toshihiro have been visiting Nago and promising direct development funds to the three districts of Henoko, Kushi, and Toyohara directly affected by the base construction plan. Abe government ministers and prominent figures have been visiting Okinawa to support Toguchi, the candidate supported by the LDP and Komeito. For the most part, they made no public appearances but confined themselves strictly to doing the rounds of businesses. It is rumoured that they spent one billion yen [more than \$9 million] out of the Cabinet’s secret slush fund on various

schemes hidden from public view. Naturally the source of such funds was money coming from us taxpayers. The mobilizing and control of businesses, and the circulation of large quantities of propaganda leaflets containing false denigration has become customary, but this time the hands of division reached even to the “Districts to the North of Futami” where I live. Late last year (2017) a “Society to think about the future of the North of Futami District” was set up, taking the position that the base is being built even though the mayor and the Governor are opposed, so let us [give up opposing and] strive for development measures to compensate. It took the form of a civic organization with branches in all ten districts north of Futami, but its office was in the same building as candidate Toguchi’s office and it is clear that it was not a spontaneous civil organization. However, its influence on people living in districts where steady progress on base construction could be seen, right in front of people’s eyes, was not small, and it created rifts and suspicion in close-knit communities where neighbour and family ties are so important.

Candidate Toguchi Taketoyo was a 5th term member of Nago City Assembly of no particular distinction so that there was considerable initial reluctance at LDP headquarters to support his candidacy for mayor. It is also the case that, at first, Inamine supporters were optimistic that he would win easily. From the outset, however, I thought that, whoever the other side’s candidate might be, for the Abe government it would be all-out war. I thought that the struggle would be fierce and I said repeatedly that, in view of the tendency of young people to be indifferent to base matters or to politics in general and the enfranchisement of 18-plus year olds making this different from the election of four years ago, it would be very tough. My sense of crisis deepened as the campaign proceeded. On the other hand, I believed in the common sense of the people of Nago and that, whatever the

outcome, it would be by a thin margin, so I was shocked by the nearly 3,500 margin of the Toguchi victory.

To what is the defeat to be attributed? As the local Okinawan media wrote, there was a certain slackness in the Inamine camp, and too great reliance on the character and popularity of the candidate (Mayor Inamine). Yet this was an election in which the Abe government, having adopted Henoko new base construction as its most urgent task, was “staking the future of Japan” (in Governor Onaga’s words) and so, at whatever cost, it had to defeat Mayor Inamine who was standing in the way of construction. Consequently it launched an all-out assault by force and by money. I think that everyone who engaged seriously in this election became acutely conscious of this.

In a word, it was an election dripping with money and suffused with lies and smears, and the government was clever to an extraordinary degree. It first accelerated works in visible parts of the Henoko site in order to convey the image of “the new base works proceeding steadily towards a point from which there can be no turning back” and had a certain success in planting a mood of defeatism (*akirame*) that no matter how the Governor and the Mayor strove it would be to no avail. The Inamine camp reported the actual situation – that reclamation works were still at the less than 1 per cent mark and could still be stopped, and the Okinawan media reported this correctly. But the message was not adequately conveyed to ordinary citizens.

I had wanted Governor Onaga to issue an order rescinding the Henoko-Oura Bay reclamation permit before the Nago mayoral election. I think the outcome might have been different had he done so; but it did not happen.



Base Construction begins at Henoko, April 2017

Creating a feeling of spreading helplessness, they set about gathering the votes of specialized sectors, with the LDP working on business and workplaces and Komeito on individual residences, each its own speciality. The decision by Komeito, which in the last election had adopted a “free vote” stance, to recommend the Toguchi candidacy was a large factor. Komeito convened a reported 1,000 activists from elsewhere in Okinawa or Japan proper, brought them together in the Soka Gakkai lodge in neighbouring Onna village and day after day dispatched between 100 and 200 rental vehicles to Nago, penetrating to the depths of this far-flung city, “gently,” or at times forcefully, persuading and conveying people there and then to cast their vote in advance. They appeared to know in which houses there were old or invalided people and which households were welfare recipients, and adapted their message accordingly.

With business signed up by the LDP and local residential districts ploughed up by Komeito, and with the Inamine camp also calling for people to cast votes in advance, 21,622 votes (44 per cent of enrolled voters) were cast in advance, more than 6,000 in excess of the 15,522 that were cast on polling day. These figures amply illustrate the peculiarity of this election.

Candidate Toguchi, as condition for Komeito support, adopted as his policy the “transfer of the US Marines [from Okinawa] to outside Okinawa or outside Japan,” to hide his stance of positive acceptance of the new base, so it became difficult for ordinary citizens to see how he differed from Mayor Inamine. In addition, Toguchi attracted the interest of the child caring cohort by calling for free school lunches and child-care (funding to come from the subsidy for base hosting in exchange for acceptance of the bases, although such funds are not supposed to be used for regular administrative expenses). The Toguchi camp conducted a no holds barred campaign. Although Inamine had achieved as he had promised, adding 50.8 billion yen to the city budget without taking government handouts conditional on US base support, refurbishing schools, earthquake proofing them and installing flush toilets, eliminating waiting for daycare facilities, and so on, the Toguchi camp flooded the city with smears about “lost 8 years,” “stagnation” and “suffocation.” I was reminded of the expressions “the lie repeated 100 times becomes truth” and “bad coins drive out good coins.”

Throughout the election campaign, various media and youth and student groups asked for public debate or discussion between the candidates but Toguchi always (on no less than 8 separate occasions) declined. While completely avoiding policy discussion, his leaflets were simple and impressive, conveying appealing messages and reaching to the remotest corners of the city. There was also a “Covert Unit “ that swung into action after regular electoral activities ended at 8 pm. It was rumoured that votes were to be bought there for one hundred thousand yen. The Inamine camp’s public relations section did its best, but tended to be full of explanations of the mayor’s accomplishments.

If an election is defined as a subjective citizen choice based on open policy discussion, then

what happened at Nago is not to be called an election. The electoral system and democracy are both dead. Why must we who are supposed to be sovereign endure being confronted each election by choice between “money and pride,” our human relations crushed? It is so unjust.

The younger the cohort in this election, the more it tended to support Toguchi. Why is it that they did not seem to feel their lives and livelihood to be threatened, despite the brutal murder of a 20-year old Okinawan woman two years ago by a former US Marine and the series of accidents involving US aircraft over the last year that could easily have been catastrophic. Toguchi’s daughter is a third year local high school student who became eligible for the vote for the first time in this election. I hear that her call to “support my dad” spread like wildfire on social media.

Young Inamine supporters who attended Toguchi-style rallies said there was virtually no discussion of policy, just appeals to sentiment like “We’re all friends... Let’s pull together.” Today’s youth tend to be gentle folk who dislike conflict and do not seek public discussion, so messages such as “Mayor Inamine, you have done a good job but must be tired so let us relieve you of the burden [of office]” seem to have spread among them, perfectly matching their sentiments. Remarkably, the LDP’s rising star, Koizumi Shinichiro, twice visited Nago [on 31 January and 3 February], and at the street rally in the vicinity of the Toguchi electoral office near City Hall he could be seen, swamped by young people cell phones in hand who, as soon as the meeting ended, were shepherded off to the polling station to cast early votes.⁶

But I also felt hope in this election, because of the young activists in the Inamine camp. This was a new development. Day after day, young people engaged in earnest discussion till late at night at Inamine campaign headquarters. They were learning from the Inamine City

government’s policies to think, plan, and act for themselves. I think they learned from these discussions how to respond to the other side’s propaganda on the reasons for opposing the bases and how the city government should serve the people of the city. Discussions with young people on the opposite side, and efforts to build upon those discussions to set up public meetings, were rebuffed and came to nothing, but the young people involved grew in the process. For the sake of Nago’s future, it is the responsibility of us adults to cultivate these fresh shoots. I hope that Mr. Inamine can play a central role in the process. It is my profound regret that, even though we enjoyed support from all over Japan, our efforts to support Mr. Inamine, an honest, fair, selfless mayor who worked tirelessly to stop base construction and to do his best for the future of Nago, were insufficient. But we must not be defeated. That the other side won a “victory” by resort to all sorts of mean tricks will sooner or later be exposed to the citizens of the city.

Many elections are lined up for the year ahead, including mayoral elections in towns and villages followed by the Nago City Council election in September and then November’s crucial Okinawa gubernatorial. The Abe government, having won the hotly contested victory over Nago, will now be readying its attack for the gubernatorial, utilizing the same all-or-nothing tactics. It is said that the first loads of sand and fill for reclamation will be dumped into Oura Bay in June. Before the gubernatorial, they will strive to create and disseminate a mood of hopelessness. The anti-base construction movement will be harder and protest is more likely to be met with violence.

However, construction work will not be able to proceed as planned because of the recently discovered geological weakness of the seafloor and the fault lines found there. The reason the base has still not been built and that Oura Bay has not lost its beauty is that, for 20 years, we refused to give up.

We will try to overcome the winter ahead by tactics to delay works on land and sea, raising consciousness of the struggle both inside and outside Japan, and mending and re-setting community and neighborhood bonds. Somehow we must stop the Abe government's attempt to turn the whole of Okinawa into a fortress and to change the constitution to open a path towards war. It is not just an Okinawa problem. What is happening now in Okinawa is likely to be repeated elsewhere in Japan.

This year's "Cherry Blossom Festival" coincided with the mayoral election. Through this election that was really nothing short of war, over the several days from the first announcement of the poll, Nago had a cold spell. Buffeted by rain, the cherry of Nago castle [Nagogusuku] wept and scattered. However, the scattered petals housed new shoots and in a year's time will blossom again in all their splendor.

"Have heart, cherry blossoms scattered before the chill winds

Your time will come to bloom again"⁷

3. Miyagi Yasuhiro

"Twenty Years On - *Plus Ça Change*"

With the victory of Toguchi Taketoyo, Nago City councillor closely connected to the national political parties, LDP and Komeito, over incumbent Mayor Inamine Susumu on 4 February 2018, Nago saw the emergence of a mayor closely tied to the government's line prioritizing new base construction. This author had the experience of contesting the 2002 mayoral election on an anti-base construction platform and being defeated by an incumbent calling for a joint civil-military base construction in league with government. Having since relocated away from Nago, and with no present direct connection with politics,

I maintain my opposition and offer the following comment on the 2018 mayoral election.

The election was distinguished by the fact that advance votes outnumbered those cast on polling day. It may be that there were some infringements of the right to free and secret vote guaranteed by the Constitution and the Public Office Electoral Law. The Toguchi group requested a daily report from individual companies on the number of votes they had secured from individual companies.

According to exit polls conducted both before and on polling day, those in the 18-year old to 50-year old cohort (including 18 to 20-year old first time voters) tended to favour Toguchi, and those in their 60s to 90s Inamine. Surveys showed over 60 per cent of people opposed to new base construction. Candidate Toguchi stood for local development, making no mention of the base issue and using funding sources stemming from cooperation with the central government, while Inamine, for the sake of future generations of Nago children, opposed base construction and vowed to stop it. The exit polls and the election itself point to the majority of voters being opposed to base construction but hoping somehow to secure funds for local development from the central government.

Trends in Nago Mayoral Elections

In 1997, Nago City was designated by government as the replacement site for the Futenma Marine Air Station that had been slated for reversion in the December 1996 Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO)'s final report. Ever since then, Nago City has been buffeted by this base construction problem.

In 1997, a Nago City plebiscite was held in which I as a citizen of Nago was a representative of the anti-base construction group. The opposition won a majority, but this

led to the rise of forces favoring construction on condition of securing development funds from the government. Then mayor, LDP-affiliated Higa Tetsuya, was a core member of that “conditional acceptance” group. Following the plebiscite, Mayor Higa betrayed the city’s decision, announced acceptance of the new base construction plan, and resigned. Let us turn to consider subsequent Nago City elections.

1998. Victory of the Conditional Acceptance Faction

Higa Tetsuya, the resigning pro-base mayor, favoured his deputy, Kishimoto Tateo, as his successor. The base opposition group supported Tamaki Yoshikazu, then a member of the Okinawa prefectural assembly. After a fierce battle in which he declared that the base construction problem had been settled by the plebiscite and the decision by the previous mayor, and that the decision rested now with the prefectural governor, Kishimoto was elected mayor. As representative of the opposition group, I was elected without a vote to the vacant seat on the Nago City Assembly.

In the same year, reformist Governor Ota Masahide was defeated by conservative Inamine Keiichi in the gubernatorial election, and in 1999 Governor Inamine adopted a policy of a Futenma Replacement Facility that would be civil-military and limited to 15 years. Nago mayor Kishimoto declared his acceptance of seven conditions including those set by the Governor. The Government adopted these conditions at cabinet level in its “basic policy” for a Futenma Replacement Facility.

2002. Victory of the Conditional Acceptance Faction

After announcement of the conditional acceptance, a “Northern Districts Development” project opened with a one billion yen budget to be spent over 10 years, and in July 2000 the 26th world leaders’ summit (G8)

was held in Okinawa. After this, Japanese government-related agencies entered discussion with Okinawa representatives, including especially the Governor of Okinawa and the mayor of Nago City, on the joint civil-military plan. A mayoral election was conducted, at which former city councillor Miyagi Yasuhiro (this author) opposed base construction and called for autonomous local development without reliance on base-related income. Incumbent Kishimoto defeated that challenge by a wide margin.

2006. Victory of the Conditional Acceptance Faction

At Japan-US discussions on the Reorganization of US Forces in Japan (*Beigun Saihen*) in 2005-2006, the basic Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) policy of acceptance subject to the conditions demanded by Okinawa was set aside and the idea of a joint civil-military airport abandoned. As well, the basic policy of reclamation stretching out from the existing Camp Schwab site [into Oura Bay], till then refused because of concerns over noise, was accepted by the two governments despite local opposition.

After incumbent mayor Kishimoto took leave to recuperate from illness, his successor, City Assembly head Shimabukuro, expressed strong concern over the effects of noise on the environment under the outline plan agreed between the two governments. With opposition groups split between the conservative Gakiya Munehiro and the progressive Oshiro Yoshitami, Shimabukuro Yoshikazu was elected.

2010. Victory of the Oppositionists

Several months after his election, Shimabukuro agreed to the Japanese government’s plan for two separate (takeoff and landing) runways in a “V” shape, so that flight over settled areas could be avoided. However, the US military explained that such separation would not

necessarily work because flight paths under the “V”-shaped design would vary according to wind conditions, and Shimabukuro was criticized by a wide section of Nago residents for breach of his electoral policy pledge.

After all, the basic plan agreed was not a joint civil-military one but one that can only be described as a huge new military base, exceeding the “Futenma replacement” design in both scale and function. At the national level, the LDP government gave way [August 2009] to a Democratic Party government under Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio who called for Futenma Replacement to be “at least outside Okinawa,” and in Nago City the base opposition group supported Inamine Susumu, former head of the education department in Nago City government. Inamine transcended the conservative-progressive divide and declared he would not allow the construction of any base in the City whether on land or sea. He was victorious over incumbent Shimabukuro, who favoured “conditional acceptance” and extension of the runways into Oura Bay by reclamation.

2014. Victory of the Oppositionists

Failing to find a place to move Futenma, the Democratic Party coalition government returned to the Henoko option, accepted it, but then collapsed in May 2010. Even under the Democratic Party coalition the new base construction plan had been moving forward although in Okinawa even the LDP was opposed. But with the return of LDP-Komeito government at the national level in December 2012, the situation changed. First, national Diet members representing Okinawan constituencies were made to reverse themselves and accept base construction, then LDP Prefectural chapter members of the prefectural Assembly did likewise, and finally, at the end of 2013, Governor Nakaima agreed to allow reclamation of Oura Bay for construction of a new base. During this

process, there was a Nago City mayoral election in which incumbent Inamine Susumu defeated Suematsu Bunshin, a supporter of new base construction, in a straightforward contest.

Acceptance - from Conditional to Unconditional

Thus the “conditional acceptance” group that emerged in Nago City at the time of the plebiscite of Nago citizens, continued to win elections in 1999, 2002, and 2006, but the conditions demanded by Nago citizens were dismissed by the Japanese and Okinawan governments in negotiations in 2005-6 over Reorganization of US Forces in Japan. The situation changed radically, with the FRF becoming what can only be described as Henoko New Base. The anti-base construction forces were victorious in 2010 and 2014. From 2010, the “Agree” group that had relied on “sweetener conditions” to try to make the bitter medicine of military base construction tolerable for local society, set those conditions aside and in 2010 adopted a simple consent posture without conditions. It was defeated both then and in 2014.

Taking into account these developments, how did the Japanese national political parties, LDP and Komeito, fight this latest Nago City election?

4 February 2018

This was a peculiar election in that the number of votes cast in advance exceeded those cast on polling day. This was brought about by the sweeping measures adopted by the LDP over business groups, especially public works-related businesses which helped bring business and corporate people to the early poll stations, and the large-scale mobilization of members of Soka Gakkai, the Buddhist mother organization of Komeito. From the day the election was called till the poll closed, 200 rental vehicles are said to have been mobilized, driving voters

back and forth between private residences and the polling stations.

The newly elected Togushi Taketoyo is undoubtedly a proponent of new Henoko base construction. He even attached his name to a letter seeking support for that stance from the National Conference of Local Self-governing Organs. But, because of the policy agreement with Komeito as he launched his campaign, he clammed up on the question of Henoko new base construction, saying only that he would respect the outcome of the judicial proceedings between state and prefecture. By referring to the “root cause” of Okinawa’s “excessive base burden” and the “transfer of the Okinawa-based Marine Corps to somewhere outside Okinawa and outside Japan,” he won Komeito endorsement, even though Komeito had withheld its endorsement from Suematsu, the LDP candidate, at the time of the 2014 election, allowing members a free vote. Toguchi took no position on the question of whether or not to construct a new base at Henoko, though this was the crucial question of the Nago City election. He set a course for securing the votes of Komeito supporters strongly opposed to Henoko new base construction, a position especially strong among women members. The descent upon Nago of hundreds of people from all over Japan in rental cars already noted occurred in this context. The power brokers of the LDP, including especially Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide, also came to Nago and brought pressure to bear especially on organizations and businesses. Mostly, these several hundreds (by cumulative Dietmember hours) of visits by members of the national Diet were not made public.

The incumbent Inamine camp continued to insist that Henoko new base construction was the most important issue. The mass media duly reported this but Toguchi stuck to his line of avoiding any discussion of Henoko and his campaign staff were under strict instruction that even the first letter “H” of the word

“Henoko” was not to be uttered.

In the discussion of previous Nago City mayoral elections we saw that, while conditional acceptance could prevail over opposition, unconditional acceptance could not. Learning this lesson from the 2014 election, the LDP-Komeito camp eliminated all reference to acceptance. Whether or not that was acceptable is open to question but on 8 February Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga gave a press conference at which he showed his view of the election outcome as an endorsement of Henoko construction, saying, “Elections are all about outcome. Was not the defeated candidate pleading desperately to stop the reclamation?”

Sticking to its election tactic of saying not a word about Henoko Base construction, and referring exclusively to local development and the sense of local stagnation, Toguchi held out the illusion of rosy local development through the introduction of revenue from cooperation with the central government. And, once elected by defeating the opponents of base construction, he will presumably try to resolve the problem of finding the sources of revenue that the voters want by promoting construction of the new base.

How on earth could they get away with winning the election by such tactics? How can this have happened in Nago? I feel a certain sense of futility after battling on this for more than 20 years. But from a different viewpoint the promoters of base construction, in consultation with the national government, despite 20 years battling the profoundly opposed people, were unable to achieve victory and were forced to evade the issue. Since people do not just vote on a single issue in mayoral elections it is understandable that they hold various views, but you cannot have a democracy based on complete avoidance of issues. How can you call it a democracy when an election is called on an important issue yet one side adopts the tactics of completely avoiding it, and is able to get

away with it?

It is clear from opinion polls and exit polls that over 60 per cent of Nago citizens oppose new base construction. It is no exaggeration to say that people's thinking in this election was warped by the general mobilization and resort to "whatever it takes" intervention by government. Yet, looking back, there is also no denying that there were weaknesses in the opposition camp's election campaign.

The Faceless

On the eve of the election, December 2017, which also happened to be the 20th anniversary of the Nago City plebiscite, I was approached by *The Okinawa Times* and, looking back at that popular vote, I talked about the situation today. When I saw the ensuing article I was astonished, because it identified me by name and included my photograph as part of the opposition faction but the pro-base people appeared without either name or photograph. (*Okinawa taimusu*, 21 December). This contrasting treatment constitutes part of the background to the February mayoral election. In the following week, an interview with Higa Tetsuya, mayor of Nago at the time of the Nago City plebiscite, was published (*Okinawa taimusu*, 25 December 2017). Higa said that, because the Public Election Law had no provision for citizen referendum, wining and dining could be used openly. For Higa to say the plebiscite did not reflect the will of the people when his own conditional support camp tried to buy votes in 1997 by extensively entertaining is just too much. Looking at these two newspaper articles, I could feel the "conditional support" camp still trying to extinguish the value of that 1997 citizen vote.

Since more than half the people of Nago had opposed the base project, I thought we could not lose the subsequent mayoral election but we underestimated the popular desire for economic stimulus. Like 1998, when Kishimoto Tateo, the successor to the mayor who had

betrayed that decision and then resigned, announced that the base decision had been settled so far as Nago City was concerned, and that it was up to the Governor of Okinawa, winning the mayoral election, 20 years later, amid ongoing base construction works, although the incumbent mayor Inamine was explicit about stopping any new base, come what may, the "conditional acceptors" took no position save only to wait for the outcome of the judicial contest between state and prefecture, while stressing economic advancement. What resembled 1998 was Nago City's avoidance of any clear stance and its leaving the decision to other organs such as state or prefecture, while what was distinctive about it was that the avoidance by the LDP-Komeito supported candidate throughout the election battle of any debate or discussion. It is generally taken for granted that a challenger candidate will offer trenchant critique of the policies of an incumbent, but on this occasion such criticism was tinged with demagoguery, and incorporated hate speech and lies, very much like an anonymous hate and abuse internet site. The incumbent responded by offering concrete data, but the challenger simply avoided serious debate and got away with it. No matter who the candidate, the electoral machine would simply storm ahead, its sights set on victory at all cost. Nago mayor Toguchi will find it difficult to establish coherence out of the contradictions of his policy.

Destruction of Democracy

While the 2018 Nago mayoral election was being conducted, the government was forging ahead with construction of the Henoko new base, ignoring the will of the people of Okinawa. The fact of this steam-rolling, despite both city mayor Inamine and prefectural governor Onaga (who had been elected by a huge margin declaring he would put a stop to the Henoko base) being committed to stopping it, fed a measure of hopelessness on the part of the people of Nago. There is no denying that

the sense of stalemate in the camp of supporters of Governor Onaga and mayor Inamine had some influence on the electoral outcome, but the determination on the part of Nago City people to oppose the project remains clear. And since that was so, those “conditional supporters” were not allowed to state their policy clearly but could only boast of their direct links to Tokyo, seat of money and power. Throughout the election they kept referring to the sense of being “hemmed in,” making it seem as though the divisions among citizens over the base issue were somehow the fault of the people from Nago, Okinawa, or elsewhere in Japan who resolutely kept up the struggle at the Henoko site. The younger than 50-year old voters, fed up with endless struggle, fell for the strategy of the government and conditional acceptance camp. The incumbent camp was defeated because it had no effective counter-strategy and just kept insisting on the right to local self-government and on stopping base construction.

The result displayed the ferocity and cunning of government money and power. From the point of view of the people opposed to the Henoko new base construction, it was a bitter outcome. But, as already stressed, the elected Toguchi Taketoyo has given no clear statement of position on Henoko new base construction. The government will try to represent the outcome as the defeat of its opponents and as electoral approval for its course of action but it is clear that the newly elected mayor has not been issued a blank check on a question that was not put to the Nago voters. The opposition struggle will continue, and if the new mayor were to agree to the government’s plan for a new base, city government would lapse into chaos.

Inamine’s 8-year term leaves a legacy to be proud of in managing the city’s finances without reliance on “reorganization subsidy” (*saihen kofukin*) or government funds tied to cooperation in base construction. It would be a great pity for the people of Nago and for the

principle of self-government throughout Japan if this work was to be cut short due to electoral defeat. For such local self-government to be crushed by electoral manipulation and government intervention would be for self-government to collapse and democracy be destroyed.

Even though government intervention on the present scale has not been known hitherto, the more than 50 per cent opposition in the 1997 plebiscite was followed in 1998 by election of a conditional support mayor. Nago City today continues to oscillate between opposing base construction and wanting an economic boost. The problem for the opposition camp now is how to appeal to voters in a way that recognizes this.

4. Iha Yoichi

“Protest Will Continue”

In the February 4, 2018 mayoral election in the city of Nago, Okinawa at the southern tip of Japan, where construction work on a new base to be a front-line base of the U.S. Marine Corps has begun, incumbent Inamine Susumu campaigned for a third term in office, but lost. Inamine served as Nago mayor for two terms, a total of eight years, after being elected in 2010 on a platform opposing the construction of the new Henoko base. Many of us who hoped for Inamine’s victory are now concerned about what will happen in the Okinawa gubernatorial election in November of this year.

In the campaign leading up to the mayoral election Inamine Susumu campaigned on a platform opposing the Henoko base relocation, while his opponent, Toguchi Taketomi, who won with the backing of the Abe administration Japan’s ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Komeito Party, did not clearly voice his “acceptance” of the new Henoko base construction during the

campaign. In fact, the Komeito branch in Okinawa takes a stance opposing the Henoko relocation, and Toguchi agreed with their policy that the U.S. Marines in Okinawa should be relocated outside of Okinawa or outside of Japan entirely. However, Toguchi declined to address the “Henoko relocation problem” as a campaign issue and said only that he would “watch the development of the court case” between Okinawa prefecture and the national government. He further pledged to advance free healthcare for children and free school lunches, policies already underway by the Inamine administration, and called for revitalization and economic advancement in Nago. He was backed by the ruling Abe administration and LDP and Komeito parties, which deployed more than 100 Diet members in his support and secured the votes of corporations, businesses and other organizations. In the previous election, Komeito maintained neutrality, but in this election it supported Toguchi, and many of its members and supporters came to Nago from within Okinawa and from other parts of Japan, allegedly making great efforts to secure early ballots prior to election day. It appears that the government’s ruling party also placed emphasis on securing early ballots in backing Toguchi. Many of the early ballots were cast for Toguchi.

Inamine’s loss in Nago may be a victory for the Abe administration in its call for construction of a new base in Henoko, but it will not necessarily entail the loss of new base construction opponent Governor Onaga Takeshi in the Okinawa gubernatorial election this coming November. According to voter polls conducted by the media before and on the day of the mayoral election, 61 per cent of voters expressed opposition to the Henoko base, while only 28 per cent supported the relocation. Governor Onaga Takeshi’s support rating is at 57 per cent, greatly exceeding the 30 per cent who do not support him. Even the winning candidate, Mr. Toguchi, has stated in various media interviews that he does not accept the

Henoko base.

Protest sit-ins in front of the gate to Camp Schwab in Henoko, Nago, where land reclamation work for the new Henoko base construction is ongoing, continued throughout the election and after. The government’s is expected to crack down even harder on its removal of protesters, but there is no doubt that the protests will persist.

The protest movement against the Henoko relocation began at the end of 1996, when the construction of a removable on-sea heliport off the eastern coast of Nago was decided as a condition for the total closure and return of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma, located in a densely populated area in the center of Ginowan. Twenty-one years have now passed, but the government continues to insist that the Henoko relocation is the only solution, and the danger posed by intense flight drills over densely populated Ginowan, allegedly the reason for closing MCAS Futenma, remains unabated. Even according to the most optimistic estimates, the danger will not be relieved until more than 30 years have passed since the agreement to close MCAS Futenma. That 30-year period saw numerous aircraft accidents in Ginowan, including a large U.S. Marine helicopter crashing onto a university building in 2004, and a helicopter window falling onto an elementary school and a helicopter part falling onto a nursery school at the end of 2017. Japan’s aviation laws do not apply to MCAS Futenma or the U.S. military aircraft stationed there, and no safety measures have been taken. Aircraft continue to operate out of Futenma in violation of the safety standards applied to U.S. military airfields in the United States.

Since its inauguration five years ago, the Abe administration has pushed for a stronger U.S.-Japan alliance and used brute force to advance the remilitarization of Okinawa. Since 2016, in northern Okinawa, in addition to pushing

forward with the Henoko base construction, the Abe administration has destroyed natural forests home to rare species, including endangered species and national monuments, in order to build six landing pads for U.S. Marine MV-22 Ospreys. The U.S. Congress requires the U.S. military to protect rare and endangered species even overseas, and in Japan the U.S. military is required under the Japan Environmental Governing Standards (JEGS) to protect the natural environment, but the Japanese government and the U.S. Marines in Okinawa have ignored these duties and destroyed the precious natural environment in order to build military installations. Policies that prioritize U.S. military training are being forced on Okinawa.

In response to the Japanese and U.S. governments' attempts to destroy Okinawa's precious natural environment and the rare and endangered species that reside there in order to build U.S. military bases, a lawsuit known as the "Dugong Lawsuit" is being fought in the San Francisco courts. The Japanese national government and the Okinawa prefectural government are at odds over the conservation of endangered species and rare coral species in the sea around Henoko. It is preposterous that a huge U.S. Marine base should be built on reclaimed land in an ocean home to more than 5,000 species of precious marine life, including endangered species like the dugong, but the Abe administration obtained permission to reclaim land around Henoko from former governor Nakaima Hirokazu by offering "economic advancement policies," and the land reclamation work is now being forcibly carried out. For the past two years, as a member of the House of Councilors, I have worked on The Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense to call for the closure of MCAS Futenma and the cancellation of Henoko base construction, and going forward I hope to work together with members of the U.S. Congress to assure this outcome.

The result of the Nago mayoral election shows that the Inamine camp underestimated the magnitude of efforts being carried out by the Abe administration and the ruling LDP and Komeito parties. However, January saw the victory of Zukeran Chobin, an opponent of the Henoko base construction and apparent underdog, by 65 votes over one of the leading mayoral proponents of the Henoko relocation in Nanjo City in southern Okinawa, showing that if citizens opposing the Henoko base construction join hands and engage in grassroots activism, victory is possible.

In anticipation of the November gubernatorial election, it is critical that Okinawans supporting the All-Okinawa platform learn from the efforts of Nanjo residents and work together with their fellow citizens all across Okinawa. In order to stop the Henoko base construction, which is opposed by more than 70 per cent of Okinawans, I hope we can work together to re-elect Henoko base opponent Governor Onaga Takeshi.

5. Hideki Yoshikawa

The Election and Okinawa's Anti-Base Construction Movement

The Day After

For Nago residents including myself, who have been opposing base construction in Henoko-Oura Bay for a long time, the defeat of incumbent Mayor Inamine Susumu constitutes a painful blow. We lost a great leader who with his administrative power as the Mayor of Nago City had done his best to reflect the voice of the people of Nago against base construction.

What happened on the very next day following the election was indicative of what lies ahead for the people of Nago and Okinawa. The Japanese government announced that it would release to Nago City the *saihen kofukin*, a fund

attached to U.S. military reorganization (e.g. base construction at Henoko-Oura Bay). The fund had been withheld while Inamine was in office. And more than 300 trucks carrying construction materials, the largest number of trucks so far, entered Camp Schwab, the site of base construction. The Japanese government's carrot and stick was back.

Meanwhile, sit-in protest and blocking of construction trucks took place at Camp Schwab, just as before the election. Inamine, now a regular Nago resident, participated in the sit-in as other protesters cheered. Many also visited the Tent Village near Henoko Fishing Port to see up-close the current state of construction. Many are resuming their struggle against base construction with a renewed sense of determination and urgency.

The battle between David and Goliath continues with the window of opportunity for anti-base construction movement gradually closing. However, I remain hopeful about the prospect of the battle for the people of Nago City and Okinawa, for the following reasons.

How is it that we failed to carry Inamine to victory?

In my opinion, Inamine was a great mayor for the past 8 years and he was a great candidate for re-election. He had put Nago city on the right path, gradually pushing the city towards economic independence from the so-called base economy," implementing feet-on-the-ground policies for social welfare. And of course, by refusing throughout his mayorship to give permits for base construction, Inamine played an important role in stopping base construction.

The government in Tokyo, determined to move ahead with base construction, had every reason to make sure that Toguchi would prevail in the election (and he would thereafter follow its orders).

Inamine lost because his election campaign was outmatched by the central government-led Toguchi campaign in almost every aspect. The Toguchi Campaign seemed to be well-organized and well-funded. It seems to have held to the following four-part formula:

1. Avoid discussing the Henoko issue while convincing voters that Nago cannot do much about it.
2. Focus on the local economy and emphasize Toguchi's "connection" to the Tokyo government to get money for the city.
3. Avoid public debate, which would force him to discuss the base issue. Toguchi declined all public debate invitations by local newspapers, university students and others.
4. Get the Komeito party on side. Komeito ran an organized and relentless campaign, sending its members door to door to households and making phone calls to households.

I think many voters were convinced that the people of Nago have no say in the base construction because it is a matter of national security, an issue to be resolved only by the U.S. and Japanese governments. Two other factors appear to have contributed to convince voters. First, although less than one percent of planned land reclamation has been completed, seawall construction work continues. Second, despite its strong anti-base construction rhetoric, the Onaga administration has not been able to halt base construction even for a day.

The election result does not, however, mean that the people of Nago accept the base. According to exit polls conducted by Kyodo News, *Ryukyu Shimpō* and *Okinawa Times* on Feb. 4, 64.6 per cent of voters oppose Henoko construction and only about 25 per cent approve it. In other words, as far as the Henoko base issue is concerned, Mayor Toguchi faces a

hostile local environment.

Throughout the election, Toguchi maintained that he would wait and see the result of the lawsuit involving the Okinawa prefectural government and the Japanese government. There is currently a lawsuit over the coral-crushing permit. When or if Governor Onaga revokes the land reclamation permit, another lawsuit will be filed, this time, by the Japanese government.

The Japanese government is expected to pressure Toguchi to issue permits to speed up construction work even before the ruling on the current lawsuit and before Governor Onaga revokes the land reclamation permit. If Mayor Toguchi acts as a puppet of the Tokyo government, however, it is almost certain that political turmoil and social instability will spread over Nago and Okinawa.

The Anti-Base Construction Movement Moving Forward

As the anti-base construction movement adapts to this new phase, three different battlegrounds loom as important:

the *genba* (action site) of Camp Schwab Gates, Henoko Tent Village and Henoko-Oura Bay;

the floor of the Nago City Assembly, Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, and National Diet;

and the U.S. federal district court in San Francisco.

Each has its own significance, and the challenge for the movement is to orchestrate all three effectively.

Camp Schwab Gates, Henoko Tent Village and Henoko-Oura Bay

With a renewed sense of urgency and determination, many continue to engage in sit-in protest at the front gate of Camp Schwab, the Tent Village at Henoko Port, and at Henoko-Oura Bay. The sit-ins and rallies, woven around the principle of non-violence, are quintessential forms of Okinawa's struggle against the heavy burden of U.S. military bases. They are platforms of Okinawan democracy. Anyone can participate in these protests, irrespective of gender, age, or ethnicity, whether by speeches, song, or dance. The symbolic significance of the battlegrounds and of the protesters have marked the 20 year struggle against the construction of the base. The physical struggle of protesters to block trucks day after day has slowed the pace of base construction even if by inches or by minutes.

Nago City Assembly, Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, and National Diet

With anti-base construction assembly members holding a slight majority, the Nago City assembly needs to be vigilant in checking the performance of new Mayor Toguchi. Especially, it needs to oversee how Mayor Toguchi exercises his mayoral power in granting permits for base construction. The Okinawa prefectural assembly has to create an environment so that Governor Onaga can, before it's too late, revoke (*tekkai*) the land reclamation permit granted by former governor Nakaima Hirokazu. It has to scrutinize the flaws in Nakaima's granting the land reclamation permit, in particular the validity of the Okinawa Defense Bureau's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the basis upon which Nakaima granted the permit. The National Diet should be turned into a most visible battleground although it has never been a kind environment for the anti-base construction diet members elected from Okinawa.

The battles in the city and prefectural assemblies and the National Diet should be

supported by new information which becomes available through the “Dugong case” in the U.S. federal district court.

The U.S. Federal District Court: The Dugong case

With the U.S. Ninth Circuit’s 2017 August ruling in favor of the plaintiffs (the Okinawan protest movement), the Dugong case is back in the federal district court. It is anticipated that through the “discovery process,” the U.S. Department of Defense will attempt to provide the court with materials that favour the plaintiff’s argument: showing that the DoD did not properly take into consideration the impact of base construction and operation on the Okinawa dugong. Of special interest are materials pertaining to how the U.S. DoD reviewed the Okinawa Defense Bureau’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). If there are documents that question the validity of the EIA, as many experts and NGOs have done, that would be significant not only for the U.S. federal court but also for the Nago city assembly, Okinawa prefectural assembly, the National Diet, and the Onaga prefectural administration.

Conclusion

Just before the election, on behalf of Nago City, then-Mayor Inamine sent a letter of request to the U.S. DoD. In the letter, reproduced below, he made three points. First, contrary to the DoD’s evaluation, which the DoD insisted was done in compliance with Section 402 of the National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA), base construction had impacted the dugong in Henoko-Oura Bay; Nago City wants to be consulted by the DoD under the NHPA and wants to conduct an inspection at Camp Schwab in preparation for consultation.

Nago City, Office of the Mayor

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January 31, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis

Secretary of Defense

Washington DC

U.S.A. 20301-3010

Letter of Request for Permission to Conduct Inspection at Henoko-Oura Bay

Dear Secretary Mattis, Lt. Gen.
Martinez, and Lt. Gen. Nicholson:

I write on behalf of the City of Nago to request the U.S. Department of Defense’s cooperation to help the City assess the environmental impacts of construction work for a replacement facility for USMC Futenma Air Base (FRF) at Henoko-Oura Bay in Nago City, Okinawa. I make this request in light of the August 2017 ruling of the U.S. Appeals Court on the “Dugong case” under the U.S. National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA).

Since construction work began in July 2014, various serious environmental changes have been reported although only less than one percent of land reclamation work has been undertaken and the FRF construction is far from completion.

One particular situation deeply

concerns the City of Nago and, I believe, the U.S. DOD. According to survey reports by the Okinawa Defense Bureau, the body which has been undertaking construction work, no dugong has been sighted in Oura Bay since January 2015 although in the past dugongs had been sighted here. Moreover, the individual dugong known as Dugong C, which had been frequently sighted along the coastal areas of northern Okinawa Island including Oura Bay before then, has not been sighted since June 2015. The Bureau has not been able to sight dugongs in Oura Bay and has not been able to locate Dugong C.

This situation is not consistent with the "no adverse effect" predictions made by the Okinawa Defense Bureau's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (2012) and the U.S. DOD Findings (2014). It is however what many experts and organizations/institutions including the City of Nago had predicted, in their comments to the EIA and court testimonies. Meanwhile, in August 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed the San Francisco Federal District Court's decision on the Dugong case and remanded it to the Federal District Court where the case is currently proceeding.

It is my understanding that, to "take into account" under Section 402 NHPA the impact of FRF construction on the dugong, the U.S. DOD needs to consult experts, organizations/institutions, and other stakeholders. It is also my

understanding that, as a stakeholder, the City of Nago should be consulted because FRF construction takes place in the City.

The City of Nago would welcome the opportunity of consultation since the City has never been consulted by the DOD. The City would like to provide it with its own information, assessments, and recommendations regarding the dugong.

To do so, however, the City of Nago needs to understand and evaluate the current state of FRF construction works and the environmental impact such works might have caused to the dugong and its Henoko-Oura Bay habitat.

Thus, as a stakeholder, the City of Nago would like to make the following requests:

1) The U.S. DOD permits the City to conduct an inspection at the construction site, especially at the following two particular locations:


- a. the Oura Bay side of Cape Henoko where the Okinawa Defense Bureau discovered over 70 dugong feeding trails in seagrass beds during its surveys (April to July 2014) and where construction of K-9 seawall is currently under way.
- b. the Henoko side of Cape Henoko where the largest area of seagrass beds in Okinawa is located and

where construction of K-1, N-5, and N-4 seawalls is currently under way.

2) The U.S. DOD provides the City with information it has gathered on the dugong and other dugong related environmental and cultural issues in Okinawa.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,



Susumu Inamine

Mayor of the City of Nago

cc: Mr. John M. Fowler, Executive Director

The U.S. Advisory Council on Historical Preservation

Dr. Peter O. Thomas, Executive Director

The U.S. Marine Mammal Commission

The letter is simple and straightforward, and it presents a reasonable request. How will it be treated and does it signify a new phase? Can new Mayor Toguchi retract it, and if so on what ground? Will the DoD give thought to it or simply ignore it? How about the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission and Advisory Council on Historical Preservation Act, and the U.S. federal court? Will it receive due consideration submitted to the court as evidence? How about Governor Onaga? Will he send a similar letter to the DoD? There are many imponderables.

The letter is one of the legacies of Inamine as Mayor of Nago City. It shows the people of Nago and Okinawa and beyond how we can fight against base construction. Bringing the U.S. government in, let's hold it accountable, Let's make the best use of the U.S. systems for Nago and Okinawa. After all, this base is a U.S. military base.

Yamashiro Hiroji. Chair of the Okinawa Peace Action Center, former prefectural official and leader of Camp Schwab Gatefront protest and Takae helipad site construction protest. Arrested and held in solitary confinement for five months in 2016-2017, his case is still before the Naha court.

Urashima Etsuko. Poet, chronicler and central figure in the Okinawan resistance, long resident in Nago City "Districts to the North of Futami," close to Henoko.

Iha Yoichi. Twice in 1990s mayor of Ginowan City (site of Futenma Marine Air Station) and

from 2016 member of the House of Councillors of the Japanese Diet, Secretary-General of Okinawa Whirlwind (Okinawa no kaze).

Yoshikawa Hideki. Nago-resident anthropologist teaching at Meio University and the University of the Ryukyus, International director of the Save the Dugong Campaign Center and Director of the Okinawa Environmental Justice Project. Author of several major articles on this site.

Miyagi Yasuhiro. Former Nago City councillor and central figure in the 1997 Nago City plebiscite on the base issue; author, critic, and historian.

Gavan McCormack is emeritus professor of Australian National University and an editor of *The Asia-Pacific Journal*. His works on Korea include *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War*, (Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1983), and *Target North Korea: Pushing North Korea to the Brink of Nuclear Catastrophe*, (New York, Nation Books, and Sydney, Random House Australia, 2004). His most recent books are *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States* (co-authored with Satoko Oka Norimatsu, Rowman and Littlefield, 2012) and *Tenkanki no Nihon e – Pax Americana ka Pax Asia ka* (co-authored with John Dower NHK Bukkusu, 2014). His *The State of the Japanese State* is to be published by Paul Norbury (Millennium Books) in April 2018.

Notes

¹ Yamashita Ryuichi et al, “Nago shimin, Henoko ‘hantai’ 63% seron chosa,” *Asahi shimbun*, 30 January 2018.

² “Nezuyoi shin kichi hantai,” *Ryukyu shimpo*, 5 February 2018.

³ Abe Takeshi, “Kisha no shiten – Nago shichosen, haisha wa Nihon no minshushugi,” *Okinawa taimusu*, 5 February 2018.

⁴ Gavan McCormack, “‘There Will Be No Stopping the Okinawan Resistance,’ an Interview with Yamashiro Hiroji,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus*, 1 August 2017.

⁵ Most recently “U.S. Military Base Construction at Henoko-Oura Bay and the Okinawan Governor’s Strategy to Stop It.” 16 January 2018.

⁶ The Koizumi rally on 31 January was reported to have attracted 2,000 people (*Nikkan gendai*, 1 February 2018).

⁷ “Hana chirasu shisumu ni, makiruna yo sakura, tochi kureba matan mo hana ya sachyuru”

⁸ Gavan McCormack, “‘There Will Be No Stopping the Okinawan Resistance,’ an Interview with Yamashiro Hiroji,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus*, 1 August 2017.