



Peace and Justice
Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
December 19, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Peace and Justice Commission
 Submitted by: Alex Mabanta, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission
 Subject: Opposition to the US Military Helipad Construction and Training
 Operations in Takae, Okinawa

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution in opposition to the U.S. military helipad construction and training operations in Takae, Okinawa.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In January 2017, the Japanese government officially nominated the northern part of Okinawa Island (or Yanbaru forest), along with Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, and Iriomote Island for The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Natural Heritage status. The nominated area is just next to the U.S. military's northern training area. Environmental non-government organizations (NGO) and local groups have expressed concern regarding the presence of military training at the northern training area in the Yanbaru forest that jeopardize the forest's bid for World Natural Heritage status while the U.S. military and government remain silent regarding the nomination of the Yanbaru forest.

M/S/C (Bohn/Watson) Adopt a Resolution in opposition to the U.S. military helipad construction and training operations in Takae, Okinawa

Ayes: Rodriguez, C; Maran, R; Agrawal, T; Mabanta, A Watson, Bohn, Erickson

Noes: None

Abstain: None

BACKGROUND

Since 1957, when the U.S. military took over 7,800 hectares (19,274 acres) of the Yanbaru forest in Northern Okinawa Island, Okinawa, Japan and converted into its northern training area with "helipads" within it, the U.S. military has been conducting "jungle warfare training" and low-flying aircraft training, causing mountain fires, aircraft crashes, and dumping of toxic materials.

The area where the helipads' construction is taking place is considered one of the most biodiversity rich areas in Japan, providing home for numerous endangered and endemic species. Environmental NGOs and local groups have requested of the U.S. military and the U.S. government, which is a signatory state to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, that in accordance with Article 11.3 of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and with Section 135 of the Operation Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, they:

- “conduct an assessment regarding the impact of allowing the construction of landing zones (helipads) and the conduct of aircraft and other types of training in the Yanbaru World Natural Heritage inscription process,
- cease issuing entrance permits to the Okinawa Defense Bureau for purposes of further facility construction and suspend its aircraft and other types of training while conducting this assessment, and
- involve relevant U.S. government agencies, including the Advisory Council on Historical Preservation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, in the assessment process.”

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No environmental impact.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

On September 15, 2015, the Berkeley City Council passed a resolution supporting the people of Okinawa in their opposition to the U.S. marine base under construction at Henoko, Okinawa. As a result of the Council action, a 27-member delegation of Okinawan elected officials, business and community leaders came to Berkeley to thank the Berkeley City Council for their action. The Peace and Justice Commission recommends the City Council of Berkeley adopt a similar position against the construction of U.S. military helipads and training operations in Takae, Okinawa as it took against the construction of the U.S. marine base at Henoko, Okinawa.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content and recommendations of the commission's report.

CONTACT PERSON

Shallon Allen, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-981-7071

Alex Mabanta, Chair, Peace and Justice Commission, 408-832-6769

Diana Bohn, Commissioner, Peace and Justice Commission 510-525-5497

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

OPPOSITION TO THE US MILITARY HELIPAD CONSTRUCTION AND TRAINING OPERATIONS IN TAKAE, OKINAWA

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070); and

WHEREAS, the United States Government under President Donald Trump “operates without political appointees in charge of the Asia bureaus and the Department of State is abysmally understaffed, leaving the US government unprepared to execute foreign policy,”ⁱ and Pacific communities hosting U.S. bases including Okinawa, Japan see themselves as “targets” in possible military confrontation;ⁱⁱ and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2015, the Berkeley City Council passed a Resolution supporting the people of Okinawa in their opposition to the U.S. Marine Base under construction at Henoko, Okinawa;ⁱⁱⁱ and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Council action, a 27-member delegation of Okinawan elected officials, business and community leaders came to Berkeley to thank the Berkeley City Council for their action;^{iv} and

WHEREAS, since 1957, when the U.S. military took over 7,800 hectares (19,274 acres) of the Yanbaru forest in Northern Okinawa Island, Okinawa, Japan and converted into its “Northern Training Area” (NTA) with “helipads” within it, the U.S. military has been conducting its “jungle warfare training” and low-flying aircraft training, causing mountain fires, aircraft crashes, dumping of toxic materials;^v and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed to return approximately 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres) of the NTA on the conditions that six new “helipads” (landing zones) be constructed in the remaining NTA adjacent to the Takae district, Higashi village;^{vi} and

WHEREAS, the area where helipads construction is taking place is considered as one of the most biodiversity rich areas in Japan, providing home for numerous endangered and endemic species including Japan’ “Natural Monuments” Pryer’s Woodpecker (*Sapheopipo noguchi*) and Okinawa Rail;^{vii}

WHEREAS, the U.S. military acknowledges that “[t]his transfer of lands places the same amount of training on a smaller land base, which may create the possibility of increased adverse effects. It is important that training areas be monitored, rotated, and rested to ensure realistic training environments as well as to protect flora and fauna”^{viii}; and

WHEREAS, the Okinawa Defense Bureau carried out construction of helipads amidst strong protest from local communities, Environmental NGOs, Okinawa Prefectural

Assembly,^{ix} and the flight training of U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey aircraft using the newly constructed helipads has been causing unbearable noise pollution, already forcing one family to “evacuate” from the Takae district to a near-by village;^x and

WHEREAS, at the National Conference of Veterans for Peace, a resolution, introduced by the Veterans for Peace Ryukyu-Okinawa Chapter, entitled, “Emergency Resolution Opposing Arbitrary Resumption of Helipad Construction at Takae, Okinawa”, passed unanimously on August 15, 2016;^{xi} and

WHEREAS, that Resolution stated, “ as former members of the US military feel shame and outrage that the US military is complicit in this blatantly discriminatory treatment of the Okinawan people; Now therefore, be it resolved that Veterans for Peace condemns the renewed helipad construction at Takae, and urges the US Government, and in particular the US military, to communicate to the Japanese government that the US wants no part of this shameful, anti-democratic and discriminatory action, that it does not want new bases at such a price, and that it wishes Japan to abandon the plan to construct new US bases at Henoko and Takae”;^{xii} and

WHEREAS, approximately 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres) of the NTA were returned to Okinawa in December 2016^{xiii} while Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga refused to attend the land return ceremony hosted by the Japanese and U.S. governments in protest to the December 13 crash of a U.S. Marine Corps’ MV-22 Osprey off the eastern coast of Nago City, Okinawa;^{xiv} and

WHEREAS, in January, 2017, the Japanese government officially nominated the “Northern Part of Okinawa Island” (or Yanbaru forest), along with Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, and Iriomote Island for UNESCO’s World Natural Heritage status, and the nominated area is just next to the U.S. military’s NTA;^{xv} and

WHEREAS, environmental NGOs and local groups have expressed concern that the presence of and military training at NTA next to the World Natural Heritage nominated area in the Yanbaru forest jeopardize the forest’s bid for World Natural Heritage status while the U.S. military and U.S. government remain silent regarding the nomination of the Yanbaru forest for World Natural Heritage;^{xvi} and

WHEREAS, the environmental NGOs and local groups have requested the U.S. military and the U.S. government, which is a signatory state to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, that in accordance to Article 11.3 of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention^{xvii} and to Section 135 of the Operation Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,^{xviii} they “conduct an assessment regarding the impact of allowing the construction of landing zones (helipads) and the conduct of aircraft and other types of training in the Yanbaru World Natural Heritage inscription process, cease issuing entrance permits to the Okinawa Defense Bureau for purposes of further facility construction and suspend its aircraft and other types of training while conducting this assessment, and involve relevant U.S. government agencies, including the Advisory

Council on Historical Preservation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, in the assessment process”.^{xix}

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it join Okinawa citizens in opposing the Takae helipad construction and training operation and support the Okinawa Chapter of Veterans for Peace Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council support the environmental NGOs and local groups’ requests to the U.S. military and U.S. government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the Clerk to send copies of this resolution to the Okinawa Chapter of Veterans for Peace, to the representative of the environmental NGOs and local groups, and to Representative Barbara Lee, and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, as well as to U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

ⁱ “Whither Trump’s Asia”, Sheila A Smith, *EAST ASIA FORUM*, September 4, 2017, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/09/04/whither-trumps-asia-policy/>

ⁱⁱ “Why US Bases Make Okinawa, Guam Nuclear ‘Targets’”, Jon Letman, *ALJAZEERA*, September 7, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/09/bases-okinawa-guam-nuclear-targets-170906121731012.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2015/09_Sep/City_Council__09-15-2015_-

^{iv} “*Shimagurumi hobi genchi shi ga houdo bakurei shi rentai ketsugi wo hyoka* [All Okinawa Council highly values the Berkeley resolution]”, Sumiyo Heiana, *The Okinawa Times*, November 26, 2015, <http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/21279>

See also “Urgent Statement Regarding Nullification of Reclamation Permit by Okinawa’s Governor Takeshi Onaga”, Hiroshi Ashitomi, *Counter Punch*, October 14, 2015, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/10/14/urgent-statement-regarding-nullification-of-reclamation-permit-by-okinawas-governor-takeshi-onaga/>

It reads that “[r]esolutions urging that Okinawa’s right of self-determination be respected, expressing support for the Okinawan people, and opposing the construction of the new base at Henoko and Oura Bay, have been adopted by the city council of Berkeley in the U.S., and in Japan by the city and town councils of Suita, Amagasaki, Iwakura, Musashino, and Hakuba. We strongly urge people all over the world to press their local government councils to adopt similar resolutions. In this way we can promote the return of the right of self-determination to the hands of the citizens, and a democracy that truly serves the needs of the people.”

^v *Okinawa no beigun kichi* [US military bases in Okinawa] (2012), Military Base Affairs Division, Executive Office of the Governor, Okinawa Prefectural Government. See also “Facts About TAKAE>Accidents in and Around NTA”, *Project Disagree*, <http://www.projectdisagree.org/2016/09/facts-about-takaeaccidents-in-and.html>

^{vi} The SACO Final Report December 2, 1996, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/96saco1.html>

^{vii} *Integrated Natural Resources and Cultural Resources Management Plan* (2014), Marine Corps Base, Camp Smedley D. Butler, MCIPAC Installations, Okinawa, Japan.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} “Okinawan Protests Erupt as U.S. Helipads Construction Resumes”, Akaoko Mie, *The Japan Times*, July 22, 2016, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/07/22/national/politics-diplomacy/central-government-sues-okinawa-futenma-relocation/#.WcAA8UpJYy4>

See also “Okinawa Assembly Adopts Statement Demanding Cancellation of US Helipad Construction in Takae”, *Japan-Press Weekly*, July 22-26, 2016, <http://www.japanpress.co.jp/modules/news/index.php?id=9783>

^x “*Okinawa Dini no Henoko kara hajimaru Senso Takae de Naniga Okite irunoka*” [War Stars at Another Henoko: What is Happening at Takae], *Shukan Josei*, August 16, 2016,

<http://www.jprime.jp/articles/print/7870>

^{xi} “2016-20: Emergency Resolution Opposing Arbitrary Resumption of Helipad Construction at Takae, Okinawa”, Veterans For Peace, August 15, 2016. <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/who-we-are/governance/vfp-resolutions/2016-passed-resolutions/2016-20-emergency-resolution-opposing-arbitrary-resumption-helipad-construction-takae-okinawa/>. See also “U.S. Veterans For Peace Group Passes Resolutions Calling for Abandonment of Base Construction at Henoko and Takae”, Sakae Toiyama, *Ryukyu Shimpo*, August 15, 2016, <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2016/08/23/25627/http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2016/08/23/25627/>

^{xii} “2016-20: Emergency Resolution Opposing Arbitrary Resumption of Helipad Construction at Takae, Okinawa”, Veterans For Peace, August 15, 2016, <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/who-we-are/governance/vfp-resolutions/2016-passed-resolutions/2016-20-emergency-resolution-opposing-arbitrary-resumption-helipad-construction-takae-okinawa/>

^{xiii} “U.S. Forces Japan Returns 9,852 Acres of Okinawa Land”, Cpl. Janessa Pon, *Marines*, December 22, 2016, <http://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/1036517/us-forces-japan-returns-9852-acres-of-okinawan-land/>

^{xiv} “Editorial: Osprey Crash-US Marine Corps Has No Choice But to Leave and Land Return Ceremony Should Be Cancelled”, *Ryukyu Shimpo*, December 18, 2016, <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2016/12/18/26159/>

^{xv} *Nomination of Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the Northern Part of Okinawa Island and Iriomote Island for Inscription on the World Heritage List*, (2017) the Japanese Ministry of the Environment, <http://kyushu.env.go.jp/naha/ehonbun.pdf>

^{xvi} “U.S. Military Must Not Jeopardize Okinawan Forest’s Bid for World Heritage Status”, Hideki Yoshikawa, *The Japan Times*, February 1, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2017/02/01/voices/u-s-military-must-not-jeopardize-okinawan-forests-bid-world-heritage-status/#.WcARikpJYy5>. See also “World Heritage Listing Eyed for Okinawa Forest Close to U.S. Base”, Takao Nogami, *The Asahi Shimbun*, January 12, 2017, <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201701120006.html>

^{xvii} Article 11.3 of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention stipulates that “[t]he inclusion of a property in the World Heritage List requires the consent of the state concerned. The inclusion of a property situated in a territory, sovereignty or jurisdiction over which is claimed by more than one State, shall in no way prejudice the rights of the parties to the dispute.” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

^{xviii} Section 135 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention stipulates that “wherever possible, trans-boundary nominations should be prepared and submitted by States Parties jointly in conformity with Article 11.3 of the Convention. It is highly recommended that the States Parties concerned establish a joint management committee or similar body to oversee the management of the whole of a trans-boundary property.” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

^{xix} “U.S. Military Must Not Jeopardize Okinawan Forest’s Bid for World Heritage Status”, Hideki Yoshikawa, *The Japan Times*, February 1, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2017/02/01/voices/u-s-military-must-not-jeopardize-okinawan-forests-bid-world-heritage-status/#.WcARikpJYy5>