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Hatoyama's Confession: The Myth of Deterrence and the Failure to Move a Marine Base Outside Okinawa□□鳩山の告白—抑止力という神話と海兵隊基地県外移転の失敗

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Hatoyama's Confession: The Myth of Deterrence and the Failure to Move a Marine Base Outside Okinawa

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Hatoyama Trumps Mubarak

While most Japanese newspapers led with the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the morning of February 13, it was different in Okinawa. Both Okinawan dailies, *Ryukyu Shimpo* and *Okinawa Taimusu*, ran as their top story, "Deterrence was [just] a Pretext," (*Yokushiryoku wa hoben*).[1] In a joint interview held in Tokyo on January 31 and February 8 with the two Okinawan papers and the Kyodo News Agency, former Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio conceded that he had just given "deterrence" as the factor necessitating retention of the US Marine Corps on Okinawa (and hence the building of a new Okinawa base for them) because he needed a pretext. Nine months after stepping down as Prime Minister, he conceded that this was not true. Since then, Hatoyama has scarcely stopped talking, even giving an interview to a Hong Kong TV station,[2] and in the process he has shed vivid light on Japanese policymaking and the US-Japan-Okinawa relationship. Japan scarcely needs a Wikileaks when it has a Hatoyama.


琉球新報
THE RYUKYU SHIMPO
抑止力は方便
鳩山前首相、普天間で証言
断念理由後付け
官僚抵抗 県外交渉せず
ムバラク政権崩壊
独裁に暮、軍が権力掌握
エジプト

Ryukyu Shimpo on February 13, 2011. The headline reads "Deterrence was [just] a Pretext"

Hatoyama became Prime Minister when the left-of-centre DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) won a landslide victory in the general election of August 30, 2009, defeating the conservative LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) that had ruled post-war Japan almost without a break. He had campaigned on pledges to establish political (rather than bureaucratic) leadership in governance, to build a more equal US-Japan relationship, and secure the return of the Futenma Marine Air station without replacement in the prefecture. Hatoyama had also advanced the view that Japan's security should be achieved without a permanent US troop presence, and envisaged a more harmonious relationship among China, Japan

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and Korea as a foundation for the nation's foreign policy.

Hatoyama's plan directly challenged the agreement between US and the LDP government to close the dangerous airbase in the middle of densely populated Ginowan City and to build a new air base and military port at Henoko, on the pristine Northeastern shore of Okinawa. The plan to "reduce the burden on the people of Okinawa and thereby strengthen the Japan-US alliance," was conceived in the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) agreement in 1996.[3] In 2006, the US and Japan agreed on the "Roadmap" plan,[4] which stipulated that eight thousand Okinawa Marines and their nine thousand family members would be moved to Guam by 2014, and V-shaped runways would be built on Henoko, as a replacement base for Futenma. The plan was hurriedly formalized in February 2009 in the final days of LDP rule.[5] When Hatoyama became Prime Minister in September 2009, the thirteen-year old plan for the new base construction in Henoko had not been implemented, primarily because of determined Okinawan opposition.[6]

Hatoyama's election pledge and the DPJ triumph at the polls buoyed Okinawans, who had experienced more than six decades of a military base regime in which 75 percent of all US military-use land in Japan is located in Okinawa's 0.6 percent of Japan's land. As Prime Minister, however, Hatoyama, failed to break through the thick wall of bureaucratic control of the state or even to negotiate directly with the US. After months of sometimes hopeful, sometimes confusing, and often contradictory proposals for alternative "relocation" plans, Hatoyama finally concluded that there was no viable alternative to the existing plan for a Futenma "replacement" base in Henoko. He thus betrayed Okinawan expectations.

On May 4, 2010, explaining to Okinawans why he had abandoned his pledge, Hatoyama said, "In terms of the role of the Marine Corps in the totality of all US forces in Okinawa, the more I learned, the more I have come to realize their interoperability. I have come to believe that it was the [only] way to maintain deterrence."[7] He offered no explanation, however, of why, after months of efforts to relocate the base outside of Okinawa, he suddenly brought up the concept of "deterrence." Following the US-Japan Joint Statement on May 28 confirming the two countries' intention to build a replacement base in Henoko, Hatoyama resigned on June 4. He had served as Prime Minister for just eight months.

In the interview, Hatoyama belatedly explained his decision to revert to the Henoko plan despite overwhelming Okinawan popular opposition. "Deterrence" had simply been a pretext, the *ex post facto* rationalization for a decision reached after failing to implement his vision for Okinawa and a new Japan-US relationship. As military analysts had long recognized, the Marines functioned not as a "deterrent" against attack on Okinawa or Japan, but as a force used in attacking enemy territory. The role of the Marines was not to protect Okinawan or Japan, but to train for the role they have played in US wars from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. It was in a way no surprise to Okinawans who long suspected that "deterrence" was merely an excuse to justify the new base construction. What was surprising was Hatoyama revealed the details of the Futenma-related negotiations in the days leading up to his resignation, and admitted openly that claims of "deterrence" had been merely a pretext.

Equally notable was that calling for unconditional closure of Futenma without building a replacement base in Okinawa or anywhere else in Japan never seemed to occur to Hatoyama or other Cabinet members. Research indicates that the Marine functions that US plans to move to Guam most likely include Futenma's helicopter units, which

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would make it unnecessary to build a replacement base in Okinawa or anywhere else in Japan.[8] Building a "replacement" base was presuppositional in the whole discussion of Futenma closure, including the mainstream media and the government.

Hatoyama Yukio, interviewed at House of Representatives Members' Office Building, on February 8, 2011 (Photos from Ryukyu Shimpo, February 13 [top photo] and February 16 [bottom photo])[9]

Interview: The Hatoyama revelations

Below is a translation of the interview as published in the Ryukyu Shimpo, February 13, 2011.[10]

> *Q: What did you have in mind when you called for Futenma to be relocated "at least out-of-Okinawa [elsewhere in Japan](kengai)" during the 2009 election?*
>
> ***Hatoyama:*** *"In view of the reality of the excessive burden of the bases on Okinawa and in order to alleviate the suffering of the Okinawan people, the DPJ as a party had decided in its "Okinawa Vision" on "at least out-of-Okinawa". It was not just Hatoyama bringing it up on his own initiative, but I raised the party's core thinking with great expectations. It was not so much*

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that I had a clear view of how to proceed, but I said that out of my sense of responsibility something had to be done.

Q. Why did the idea not prevail within the cabinet and within the party after you became Prime Minister?

Hatoyama: *Amidst the difficulties following assumption of power, many realized it would not be easy and gave up. There was an overwhelming atmosphere within the government that it would be difficult to relocate Futenma outside of the prefecture, let alone outside Japan, based on the thinking within Defence and Foreign Affairs, and on the accumulation of events, and that atmosphere still remains. Such thinking prevailed within the Cabinet, with only myself and a few others wanting to move the base outside of Okinawa.*

Q. Did you expect this to be a big issue?

Hatoyama: *I was not expecting that it would be such a big matter as to become the reason for my resignation as Prime Minister.*

Q. Why did you put a seal on the idea of a US-Japan security treaty without permanent [US] troop presence?

Hatoyama: *I still have that belief. I used to call for it in the old DPJ, but unfortunately, once the DPJ took office, it was not able to win support. On the Futenma problem too, even though I did not use the actual expression "without permanent bases," I wanted to lead things in that direction, so I often spoke of "outside Japan, or at least outside Okinawa."*

Q. Statements by your Cabinet ministers were all inconsistent.

Hatoyama: *Although Okada (Katsuya), then Foreign Minister, said that we had not actually written "Futenma outside of Okinawa" in the party's manifesto, I thought that, since we constituted the core of government and enjoyed overwhelming popular support, we should clearly articulate and implement the party's vision. I wanted Okada to act on that vision.*

Q. Why did you not form the Cabinet in such a way as to be able to realize your vision of a security Treaty "without permanent bases"? Why did you choose Kitazawa (Toshimi) as Defense Minister?

Hatoyama: *Kitazawa was Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, and was supposed to have a stable vision for defense-related matters. Rather than appointing ministers on specific themes, we had lists of candidates, and placed the most suitable person in each position. Defense Minister Kitazawa's challenge was how to transcend the Defense Ministry's ways of thinking and to propose new ways of thinking. He should have put more effort into it.*

Q. Was it the case that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence had cultures resistant to new thinking?

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Hatoyama: *Yes, such a culture was very strong. It seemed as if my ideas were scornfully dismissed. MOFA and MOD, while they should have been thinking through the base transfer issue with me, instead chose to give priority to what had been agreed with the US (a new base in Okinawa). Once, after summoning two senior members of these ministries to my residence and telling them that we would constitute a team to deal with this, stressing the importance of confidentiality, the matter was reported in the following day's papers. I was greatly saddened. I did not know whom to trust. After much effort during the LDP time, the MOFA and MOD had come to a single solution – transfer within Okinawa, and saw no alternative. A determination to push things gradually in such a direction seemed to be at work. In dealing with the Americans, there was nothing for it but to trust them. When we reached the point where anything else was futile, I could go no further and I came to doubt my own strength.*

Q. Did you have any allies?

Hatoyama: *Then Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano was cooperative in exploring possibilities of Tokunoshima Island.*[11] *I had at least one ally.*

Q. Did you not consider appointing a secret mission to negotiate with the US on your behalf?

Hatoyama: *Yes, and I almost had somebody for that purpose, but things were difficult.*

Q. It sounded like something out of the blue when you came up with "deterrence" as a reason to build a replacement base in Okinawa.

Hatoyama: *When Tokunoshima Island (in Kagoshima Prefecture) refused to host an alternative facility, we had no choice but to move it to Henoko, so I had to come up with a rationale to justify it. I didn't think the presence of Marines in Okinawa would work directly as deterrence against war, but without the Marines, the US military would not be able to function fully in terms of interoperability, and that would affect deterrence. As for the deterrent effect of the Marines themselves, you all think they are not a deterrent, and that is also my understanding.* If you say it was a pretext, then it was a pretext. *But I thought I could still use the word "deterrence" in a broader sense.*

Q. Your statement during the meeting with President Obama drew much attention.[12]

Hatoyama: *I said, "Trust me," because I believed that I would be able to work out a plan agreeable both to Okinawans and the US. I used those words, meaning to ask President Obama to trust me as a person. Last July (2010), I received a hand-written letter from President Obama that said, "You were faithful to your words." According to the media, I damaged US-Japan relations, but that is not true, at least it was not true as of July last year. I feel sorry that the current plan is not something that Okinawan people can understand.*

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It is true that trust between the Japanese government and Okinawa was severely damaged, and for that I am really sorry. I regret it very much.

Q. At the end of 2009, had you not already given up on the idea of moving Futenma out of Okinawa?

Hatoyama: *Even when I used the words "trust me," the prospect of moving Futenma to another part of Japan was grim. Already then the understanding had been reached along the lines eventually announced on 28 May. I would be lying if I said that at that time (the end of 2009) I did not think about asking Okinawans to accept the plan to build a replacement base in Henoko as the inevitable option. However, while consulting with Okinawa Governor Nakaima (Hirokazu), I chose to delay the ultimate decision until May 2010, thinking that this plan would betray the Okinawan people and would not survive politically.*

Q. Why May 2010?

Hatoyama: *With the US expectation to settle the issue by the end of 2009, I could not postpone things for a whole year; the maximum would have been half a year. The budget bill would tie us up until March, and there was the circumstance involving SDP (Social Democratic Party).*[13] *Having Futenma relocation as an election issue would have made it impossible to contest the Upper House election. I wanted to go to the US to negotiate directly (with President. Obama) in early May, but we (as a government) did not yet have a coherent alternative plan.*

Q. Did the sinking of the South Korean warship (Cheonan) affect the decision (to go back to the Henoko plan)?

Hatoyama: *The threat of North Korea was real to me then. It was an act of war in a way. That incident certainly worked as a lever to move the whole plan back to Henoko.*

Q. What did you mean when you told us you had a "plan in mind"?[14]

Hatoyama: *I used that phrase because I wanted to find a place for Futenma relocation on Tokunoshima Island. The US military eventually replied that part of the Marines' training could be transferred to Tokunoshima, so the idea of "Tokunoshima" is preserved in the Japan-US agreement (of May 28).*

Q. When did you make the final decision to go back to the Henoko plan?

Hatoyama: *It was when I gave up on Tokunoshima. On April 28, I met with Tokuda Torao, former Diet member (from Tokunoshima) but I could not gain his support. The possibility of Tokunoshima was completely blocked from that point. I thought I would be able to solve the problem if Okinawa, together with the Japanese and US governments, were to form a consultative council and create a platform to discuss the government's ideas. But when I met Governor Nakaima for the*

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second time in May, he told me that he would not able to do it before the gubernatorial election (in November 2010). I gave up then, thinking there was no way to attain Okinawan understanding.

Q. What is your suggestion for future negotiations?

Hatoyama: *Any replacement base should not be made permanent. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano and I had come to an understanding that we must not let the US military use this facility in perpetuity. Okinawa does not consent. In order to gain their understanding, there has to be some way to negotiate, for example to make this base temporary, even if such a condition was not included in the Japan-US agreement. Even if a relocation site was to be a certain distance away from Okinawa, so long as it is part of a single package (with the US military), it would work as a "deterrent."*

Q. What is your overall reflection?

Hatoyama: *Our counterpart should have been the US, not Okinawa. I should have gone there first. I should have been more assertive, presenting my plan as the only possible plan. Mr. Obama himself was probably surrounded by voices that told him the only option was to hew to the status quo (the existing US/Japan agreement). Both Japan and the US lacked political leadership on this issue.*

At Tokunoshima Island, Hatoyama's main option for an "outside Okinawa Prefecture" alternative for Futenma relocation, a mass opposition rally of 15,000 people (out of a population of 26,000), took place on April 18, 2010
(Photo by Jiji News. See Link for details.)

Okinawan Responses

The repercussions of the Hatoyama interview reverberated throughout the nation. The Okinawan papers ran special articles, analyses, and editorials on the issues for days following the first report, followed by the mainland media. They included the following statements.

> *Hatoyama "honestly disclosed that he could not reverse the bureaucrats' way of thinking, and made clear that 'deterrence' had no meaning."*[15] *"If he is really sorry, he should try his best to do what he can to move Futenma outside of Okinawa. Continuing to impose base burdens on Okinawa will be nothing but discrimination."*[16]
>
> (Kunimasa Mie, a leader of "Kamadou-gua," a women's anti-base group in Ginowan).

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Hatoyama's statement "made it clear that 'deterrence' was only an excuse to impose another base on Okinawa just because other prefectures don't want it."[17]

(Ashitomi Hiroshi, leader of the "Helicopter Base Opposition Council," a Nago-based organizer of the eight-year long sit-in on Henoko Beach).

"Now we know the biggest reason for building a base in Henoko was a 'pretext,' and that 'pretext' created the chaotic situation that continues to date. It is unforgiveable that a prime minister of a country makes such an utterance so lightly."[18]

(Inamine Susumu, elected Mayor of Nago in January 2010)

Nago Mayor Inamine Susumu. Photo from Ryukyu Shimpo.

The *Ryukyu Shimpo* in its editorial on February 13 called Hatoyama "an amateur prime minister with no sense of politics" and said that his revelation demanded far more than an apology. It noted that Hatoyama had confessed that the real reason for going back to the Henoko plan was not "deterrence," but a combination of three things – "inability to come to an agreement within his cabinet," "the wall of bureaucracy," and Hatoyama's own "lack of capability." His irresponsibility for his own words, which caused such confusion and distrust of politicians among people of Japan is "a major crime that deserves ten thousand deaths." *Ryukyu Shimpo* further stated that current prime minister Kan Naoto's "crime of inaction without even scrutinizing the rhetoric of the bureaucrats who have been brainwashed by US interests is even heavier." The

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newspaper also noted that Okinawan people mockingly referred to the word "yokushi," (deterrence), as "yukushi," (lies, in Okinawan dialect) because they understood that "deterrence" by the Marines in Okinawa was "yukushi," i.e. a "lie."

The Myth of Deterrence

Security specialists have repeatedly pointed to the fallacy of "Marines as deterrence." Yanagisawa Kyoji, former head of the National Institute of Defense Studies, argues that the core of the Futenma controversy should be how we look at the "deterrence" of US Marines in Okinawa. "The US Marine Corps troops are ready to be deployed anywhere in the world. By the nature of their mission, they are not to stay and defend a specific region."[19] The perceived threats of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles, often cited as objects of "deterrence," cannot be deterred by Marines. What these are deterred by are "US nuclear weapons and the Japanese missile defense system," and, on the Korean Peninsula, "South Korean and US ground troops overwhelm the military balance against the North Korean counterpart."[20] Sato Manabu, professor of Okinawa International University, also dismisses any role for Marines in Okinawa, even in the event of conflict around Taiwan and the island regions in the East China Sea. "The best one can do on the Senkaku islands is to place a flag," he said. "Failure of diplomacy will be followed by deployment of the Coast Guard, then by Maritime SDF (Self Defense Force), so the likelihood of the US deploying ground troops for combat is zero." Even in the unthinkable scenario of a war breaking out in the region, whether the two thousand or so US Marines remaining in Okinawa (following implementation of the U.S. realignment plan to transfer eight thousand Marines to Guam by 2014) would play a role that could be in any sense be understood as deterrence seems doubtful.[21]

US military bases in Okinawa, in red

Journalist Yoshida Kensei further debunks the myth of deterrence and "Okinawa's geopolitical and strategic advantage" that are often cited as reasons to station Marines in Okinawa. Of the US military bases in Okinawa occupying 204 square kilometres, the Marine Corps occupies the largest area, 176.7 square kilometres or an overwhelming 87%. But it has not always been that way. The Battle of Okinawa (late March – late June, 1945) in the final months of WWII was the beginning of the US military colonization of the islands as US Pacific Fleet commander-in-chief Chester Nimitz placed the Okinawan islands under US military control. As US forces took over Japanese military facilities, they interned local residents in concentration camps, expropriated private farms and villages, and built or expanded military bases. When the rest of Japan regained sovereignty in 1951, Okinawa remained under US military control until 1972. The third Marine Division first moved from Camp Pendleton in California to Gifu and Yamanashi prefectures in mainland Japan in 1953, but because of strong opposition from local residents, they were moved to Camp

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Schwab in Okinawa in 1956. This means, according to Yoshida, that "these Marines were moved to Okinawa, not for strategic reasons, but for the political reason that the US could use Okinawan land more freely, since Okinawa was under US military control."[22] Modern wars, according to Yoshida, have almost always begun with aerial and naval attacks, and today's "deterrence" means the latest technologies such as unmanned Global Hawks and stealth bombers. He calls the idea that Marines are in Okinawa for "deterrence" purposes "a totally outdated notion."[23] Military bases are kept in Okinawa, even though the overwhelming majority of Okinawans oppose them, not for deterrence but for training and to be available for movement into combat roles worldwide. In political terms, this was a "realistic solution" for the Japanese government because no other prefecture wants them. The concept of "deterrence" continues to be used as a "plausible rationale"[24] simply to justify the discriminatory imposition on Okinawa.

Marines training in JWTC (Jungle Warfare Training Center), known formerly as Northern Training Area, simulate rescuing an injured soldier. (Photo made available by JWTC on September 23, 2010. Photo from Okinawa Taimusu**)**

Political ambiguity

The shockwave from Hatoyama's interview quickly travelled from Okinawa to Tokyo. Copies of Okinawan newspapers with their eye-popping headline, "Deterrence = Pretext" were in high demand among Diet members. The Tokyo-based media joined in condemning Hatoyama, from the left (*Tokyo Shimbun*: Hatoyama's statement "derision to Okinawans"[25]), to the centre (*Asahi Shimbun*: "an appalling statement"[26]), to the right (*Sankei Shimbun*: "An abusive statement that nullifies the mutual trust of Japan and the US."[27]) Prime Minister Kan and other Cabinet members were challenged by opposition lawmakers to explain whether the current DPJ administration holds the same views as Hatoyama.

They responded:

> *"US military troops as a whole, including Marines in Okinawa, play a big role in the security and stability of our nation and the Asia-Pacific region."* (Prime Minister Kan)
>
> *"I believe, because of the geopolitical position of Okinawa, that the presence of Marines has significant deterrent effect against the instability of the Asia-Pacific region."* (Defense Minister Kitazawa)
>
> *"It is undeniable that the presence of US troops and facilities plays a large role in the stability of this region and the security of Japan. The deterrent effect of the US military in Japan has not changed under this administration from what it was under the Hatoyama*

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> *administration."* (Foreign Minister Maehara Seiji).

Perhaps the most honest response was that of Okada, the Foreign Minister under the Hatoyama administration. It was also the one most in line with Hatoyama's confession, and like Hatoyama's it failed to clarify the meaning of deterrence.

> *"I have always stated that no other place in Japan was able to accept (Futenma relocation) as a whole package, so this is why we have to ask Okinawa, regrettably."*[28]

Defense specialist Yanagisawa Kyoji says that some experts prefer leaving the issue of deterrence ambiguous. That is precisely what the politicians cited here are trying to do, but Yanagisawa warns, "for the regions with the burden of bases, there is no tolerance for such ambiguity."[29]

Two weeks after the interview was first reported, repercussions continue. On February 16, asked for the meaning of his statement, Hatoyama said, "When you focus on the role of the Futenma helicopter units, the Marines themselves, they alone can not necessarily be called 'deterrence.'"[30] While continuing to cast doubt on the deterrent effect of the Marines, he also contradictorily embraces the Henoko relocation plan. In talking with supporters in his constituency in Hokkaido on February 20, he said, "'Hoben (pretext) is a means that leads to truth. The 'truth' [in this case] is the Futenma relocation to Henoko, and as a means to lead to it, I said 'deterrence.'"[31] Perhaps the only thing that is clear is Hatoyama's continuing oscillation, further fuelling confusion and questions about his statements and about Japan's ability to forge independent policies. On February 15, the LDP requested that Hatoyama be summoned to the Diet as an unsworn witness.[32] Okinawa Prefectural Assembly members of the Okinawa Social Mass Party and Yui no Kai are also calling on others to join them in inviting Hatoyama to testify at their special committee on US military base affairs.[33]

The Core Issue is NOT Hatoyama

Hatoyama's interview produced overwhelmingly critical and accusatory responses, from citizens to the government, from Okinawa to Tokyo, from the left-leaning media to the right, and from those who endorsed the new base in Okinawa to those who opposed it. After a few days of nationwide Hatoyama-bashing from all angles, a special commentary by *Ryukyu Shimpo*'s political editor Matsumoto Tsuyoshi on February 18 posed a sober question about what Hatoyama's statement meant and how it should be understood and utilized. It warrants quoting in full.

> *Repercussions of former Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio's statement, "'Deterrence' was a pretext (to justify construction of another US military base in Okinawa)" are spreading in wrong directions, in the shadow of the central government's power struggles, blurring the essence of the controversy, which is the fictitiousness of the concept of "deterrence" itself.*
>
> *Hatoyama, in succumbing to US insistence to build a replacement base for Futenma Air Station within Okinawa, had no convincing reason to provide to the people of Okinawa and Japan, so he came up with the "pretext" of "deterrence." It is only natural that anger and disappointment over Hatoyama's policy failure are exploding again*

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among Okinawans as they learn the truth behind the abrupt collapse of the Hatoyama administration, which had promised to bring political leadership (over bureaucratic control) to policymaking.

On the other hand, many must have heard this news with no surprise. How do we utilize Hatoyama's testimony in our rebuttal against the government's military base policy? Okinawan society faces the challenge of this question.

Ongoing debates in the Diet and the majority of the mainland media based in Tokyo seem to regard Hatoyama's statement as a slip of the tongue or a mere verbal gaffe, reducing the issue to one of Hatoyama's personal qualities. The Futenma problem has again been taken advantage of as a political tool in the midst of power struggles within the Democratic Party of Japan.

Let us reconfirm. The core points of Hatoyama's statement are:

1)"Deterrence," used as a rationale for a new Marine airbase in Okinawa, was simply a fiction;

2) Hatoyama, who aimed to realize his election pledge of relocating Futenma outside of Okinawa, caved in to Cabinet members who could not break with their subservient position to the US, and to bureaucrats, due to lack of strategy and leadership; and

3) The discriminatory structure, under which mainland Japan imposes most of the base-hosting burden on Okinawa has been maintained.

The validity of the Japan-US agreement, which confirmed the two countries' intention to build a "Futenma relocation facility" at Henoko, Nago City, with Prime Minister Kan Naoto following suit, has now collapsed.

The above three core points are directly related to the danger of Japan's governance structure that leans more and more towards militarism. These problems must be relentlessly scrutinized and addressed, but there is hardly any move in such direction. Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano Yukio, who have been questioned in the Diet on Hatoyama's statement that "'deterrence' was a pretext", simply spout the explanations prepared by bureaucrats.

They can only explain "deterrence" by positioning it within the context of "the whole US military presence in Japan, including the Marines in Okinawa." The fact that nobody gives a concrete explanation of how much of the "deterrence" would be lost without the Marines is a reflection of how groundless the "deterrence" theory is. Now we are in the second act of the drama, the atmosphere thick with the malady of bureaucratic control.

Past state leaders typically present their memoirs in the way that best suits them, with their vanity and pride getting in the way. Despite the lightness of his words, there is no doubt about the truthfulness of

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Hatoyama's testimony. It was unprecedented that a former state leader revealed the truth about the forces that surrounded and brought him down after only eight months.

Hatoyama gave surprisingly honest testimony, based on his regret and his sense of apology over his betrayal of Okinawans who had expected him to implement his "Futenma out of Okinawa" pledge. Its content is truthful and real. It is a confession of a former Prime Minister that deserves to be inscribed in the political history of post-war Japan.

Hatoyama's testimony is significant in the sense that it reinforced Okinawans' determination never to be deceived again. We see this as an opportunity to tell the world about the illusion of the Marines' "deterrence," and also to make the Okinawan voice, which opposes a Futenma relocation within Okinawa, even clearer than it already is. Okinawa's wisdom and strategy are called for.

There are differing views about primary responsibility for the Hatoyama administration's debacle. Okinawa Taimusu, the other major Okinawan newspaper, drew critical attention to the responsibility of the mainstream media, pointing out that during Hatoyama's administration, the national media's Washington correspondents kept reporting an "angry US," and blamed Hatoyama for causing the tension between the two countries. "Generally speaking, the 'trinity of collaboration' among the US, bureaucrats, and the mainland media advocating the Henoko relocation plan," led to the crushing of Hatoyama by an "impregnable wall."[34] What the mainland media found problematic was, rather than the content of Hatoyama's statements, his "causing trouble to the Kan administration in the middle of the Diet session," and his "inability to convince Okinawa [to accept Henoko relocation]."[35] Umeda Masaki, author and publisher calls the combination of forces that pressured Hatoyama "a scrum" of four parties, which are "Bei (US), Kan (bureaucrats), Sei (politicians), and Ho (media)"[36]

While some sympathize with Hatoyama, others insist that Hatoyama cannot evade his responsibility simply by blaming the bureaucrats. Yamaguchi Jiro, professor at Hokkaido University, says that since bureaucrats are inherently conservative, Hatoyama should have prepared a thorough strategy to break through the establishment. Gabe Masaaki, professor at the University of the Ryukyus, argues that Hatoyama said he "learned about deterrence," but he "did not learn enough" and just swallowed the explanation that was spoon-fed by bureaucrats.[37]

Okamoto Yukio, former aide to Hashimoto Ryutaro (Photo from Wikipedia)

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So who was Hatoyama "learning" from? Various news reports offer quotes by Hatoyama that were not included in the above interview text, which clarify the events that influenced Hatoyama's surrender. Hatoyama spoke of Okamoto Yukio, a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official who advised LDP prime ministers Hashimoto, Obuchi, Koizumi, and Fukuda. As assistant to Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro from 1996 to 1997, he played a key role in helping shape and promote the new base construction plan in Henoko, regularly wooing local leaders and business interests with bribes from Tokyo in the form of "economic development plans." Hatoyama confided that he was briefed many times by Okamoto about the Henoko plan, particularly on how to make it more environmentally-friendly, explaining how it would allow coral reefs to grow and sea currents to flow beneath the new Marine base.[38] This raises a question of why Hatoyama turned to Okamoto, knowing the key role he played in the past decade and a half in the use of a "carrot and stick" policy to win Northern Okinawan officials to accept subsidies in exchange for hosting military bases.[39] By contrast, Hatoyama's close advisor, Terashima Jitsuro, whom some touted to become foreign minister, had quite different views from Okamoto, supporting and influencing Hatoyama's call to change the current subservient relationship to the US to a more equal and independent one.[40] Asked whether Hatoyama had considered a secret mission from outside the bureaucracy, like Sato Eisaku's use of Wakaizumi Kei to negotiate with Washington for Okinawa reversion to Japan in the late 1960s, he replied that he had considered Sugawa Seiji, a staff member of the Prime Minister's office and an associate of Terashima. "I thought he would assume a role like a secret mission in a way, but it turned out that members of MOD and MOFA were going to accompany him. As a result, he could no longer speak with his own voice." Hatoyama also instructed setting a time limit on the use of a replacement base, but "the administrators (bureaucrats) explained that the US would strongly oppose the idea, and it did not materialize."[41] In these statements Hatoyama showed himself impotent in the face of both the bureaucracy and the US.

On April 25, 2010, nine days before Hatoyama's betrayal became official, 93,000 Okinawans gathered to protest base construction at Henoko.

Significance

Hatoyama's statement, particularly its recognition of the emptiness of the claim of "Marines in Okinawa as 'deterrence,'" needs to be understood in the context of other recent developments in Okinawa and in East Asia. In the face of mounting tensions with China, the Japanese government has announced plans to deploy one to two hundred SDF ground troops on each of three islands south of Okinawa: Yonaguni, Ishigaki, and Miyako.[42] At the same time, steps have been taken to move ahead with the base construction plan. In Okinawa, while the sit-in of over 2,600 days continues on Henoko Beach, the barbed-wire barrier was replaced with a temporary wall bordering Camp Schwab to block protesters from viewing new construction.[43] In the Yanbaru forest of Northern Okinawa, habitat of numerous endangered species, since the end of 2010 the Okinawan branch of Japan's Ministry of Defense has been forcefully proceeding with the US and Japanese governments' plan to

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build six helipads in the Marine Corps jungle training center, adjacent to a residential neighbourhood.[44] It plans to introduce MV-22 Ospreys, despite repeated reports that these aircraft are dangerous and technically unreliable,[45] and over adamant opposition from local residents. The struggle at the construction site in Yanbaru and the supporters' demonstration at the US Embassy in Tokyo for the past month have involved both injuries[46] and arrests.[47]

Nine months after Hatoyama resigned, the Kan government is uncritically following through the May 28, 2010 Japan-US agreement to build a Marine airbase and military port on the environmentally sensitive cape of Henoko. This is the plan that Okinawan voters have overwhelmingly and repeatedly rejected, and to which Hatoyama surrendered after eight months of desultory opposition, under pressure from the US, and from Japanese bureaucrats, politicians, and media. Hatoyama's revelation and confirmation of the groundlessness of the rationale behind the new base plan in Okinawa, and his failure to exert political leadership over the bureaucratic establishment and the US-Japan relationship, pose fundamental questions about Japan's democracy, sovereignty, and governance.

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