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Okinawa's "Darkest Year" 沖縄にとって「いちばん暗い年」

Urashima Etsuko, Gavan McCormack

"The scene is set for bloodshed and possibly the darkest year in Okinawa's modern history,"

Ota Masahide, Governor of Okinawa
1990-1998, Naha, 3 July 2014

As Japan burned in the mid-summer heat of 2014, the long-running "Okinawa problem" entered a critical, perhaps decisive, phase. On the question of whether to build or not to build a major new military base for the US Marine Corps in the waters off Northern Okinawa, Tokyo (backed by Washington) confronts Okinawa. The stakes and the level of commitment are high and there is no sign to be seen of any readiness to compromise or submit.

Like former Governor Ota, it is impossible to contemplate events in Okinawa without deep foreboding.[1] It is, however, also difficult not to feel inspired by the sense of justice, truth, and determination conveyed by the Okinawan civil society forces that now confront the mobilized resources of the Japanese national state.

What follows is, first, an analysis (by Gavan McCormack) of the forces and issues and second, a translation of the most recent short essay by the chronicler of the resistance, local writer, activist and poet, Urashima Etsuko.

The Battle of Okinawa, 2014

Gavan McCormack

Both Okinawan daily newspapers produced special issues on 14 August 2014 with banner headlines declaring the commencement of work on the construction of the long promised new Marine base at Henoko. The national government launched a blitz-like campaign, proceeding with maximum speed and by the mobilization of formidable resources. The fact that it had taken one and a half years of the second Abe Shinzo government to get to this start is testimony to how difficult it is. The first great obstacle was securing the consent of Okinawan Governor, Nakaima Hirokazu, to reclamation of the waters of Oura Bay. That took one full year.


号外 沖縄タイムス
2014年 8月14日
辺野古 新基地着工
防衛局 ブイ設置

"Works commence on new Henoko base," *Okinawa Times*, Special, 14 August 2014

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In 2010, fighting a candidate identified with the demand that Futenma had to be closed and/or moved outside the prefecture, the conservative candidate and sitting Governor, Nakaima Hirokazu declared that to be his position, too. He repeated the call for relocation beyond Okinawa during the subsequent years up until December 2013, saying it would be "hard to implement the [Henoko] plan without the consent of the people," the 'fastest way" to resolve the matter would be to transfer Futenma out of Okinawa, and the Henoko project was "in effect impossible" (*jijitsujo fukano*). It would, he remarked in his comment on the environmental impact study of the site, be "impossible to protect the environment by measures outlined in the assessment" (to which he raised 175 major problems). After almost four years of consistently negative remarks on the Henoko project, in December 2013 suddenly, and without consultation with his Okinawan constituents, he reversed position, agreeing to grant the necessary license.[2] With the simple affirmation that "the government is taking all the measures it can to protect the environment. I have therefore judged that the application meets the standards set out under the Public Water Body Reclamation Act," he switched his stance by 180 degrees.[3]

With the Nakaima "surrender" of December 2013 (as it was widely seen in Okinawa) in hand, Abe and his government proceeded with maximum haste, abandoning earlier promises to pursue earnestly the understanding of the Okinawan people and instead calling for tenders and allocating contracts for the initial phase of the works. [4] In April 2014, he assured President Obama that he was moving ahead "with firm resolve, quickly and decisively" on the long promised but repeatedly delayed project.[5] He did not think to mention that it faced the overwhelming opposition of the Okinawan people.

On 1 July 2014, the Abe government launched site works, beginning clearance within the confines of the existing Camp Schwab base and declaring an exclusion zone covering just over half of Oura Bay (561 hectares) preparatory to undertaking the reclamation. This maritime zone stretched the existing 50 metres exclusion zone around Camp Schwab to over two kilometres from the shoreline. Within that zone, 160 hectares of sea fronting Henoko Bay to the East and Oura Bay to the West were to be reclaimed and a mass of concrete to be imposed upon it, towering 10 metres above the surrounding sea and containing two 1,800 metre runways, a deep-sea 272 metre long dock and a complex of other facilities to be imposed upon it. Steamrollering the Okinawan people's consistently expressed opposition, and without consultation or even prior notice, the Abe government appropriated half of one of Japan's most precious nature zones for the construction of an American super base.



The Oura Bay Maritime Exclusion Zone (dotted red line) and the planned construction site (dark coloured) extending into the sea around the existing Camp Schwab Marine base. Henoko fishing port is marked at bottom left, beneath the "329" sign (*Ryukyu shimpo*)

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The site is one of the most bio-diverse and spectacularly beautiful coastal zones in Japan, hosting a cornucopia of life forms from coral (including the exceedingly rare and important blue coral) through crustaceans, sea cucumbers and sea weeds and hundreds of species of shrimps, snails, fish, tortoise, snake, and mammal, many rare or endangered and strictly protected, not least the dugong, the emblematic (and strictly protected at both national and international levels) resident of these seas.[6] The environmental impact assessment of the base site conducted by the non-governmental Japan Society for the Protection of Nature in a two month survey in mid-2014 found "more than 110" dugong feeding trenches right in the middle of the planned reclamation zone, none of them recorded in the official study conducted by the Department of Defense for the government.[7] The works would be supervised and protected by an armada of 1,260 ships mobilized from all over Japan (including many Okinawan fishing boats) under the national Coastguard. Protesters attempting to enter the zone would be liable to arrest and draconian (criminal) penalties.

The confrontation and the skirmishes that erupted around Henoko in the summer of 2014 constituted the second "Battle of Oura Bay," the first being ten years earlier, in 2004-2005, when the Koizumi Junichiro government's construction vessels daily confronted anti-base civil activists in fishing boats, canoes and kayaks, and were eventually forced to withdraw, abandoning that phase of the project. In his 12 month first term, 2006-2007, Abe had made some gestures towards revisiting the Henoko project, even in May 2007 deploying to Okinawan waters a warship, the 5,700 ton minesweeper *Bungo*, equipped with rapid firing canon and heavy machine guns. On that occasion, he despatched it semi-covertly, unseen, sending divers down under cover of night to the sea floor for a pre-environmental survey (ignoring the legal requirements for environmental assessment).[8] In mid-2014, Abe let it be known that he was contemplating dispatch of the same warship to the same Northern Okinawan waters.[9] This time it seemed the deployment would be overt. Determined not to allow any ambiguous or humiliating (to the state) outcome, he would mobilize all available forces.



Oura Bay, July 2014, as seen by photographers from *Okinawa taimusu*

Okinawan protest has always been resolutely non-violent, but the Abe government of 2014 was intent upon intimidating, excluding, and, if necessary, crushing civil protest by a devastating "shock and awe" campaign. The state itself, with its monopoly of force and rude contempt for Okinawan wishes, came to epitomize violence and lawlessness as it sought by all means to defeat an enemy that was not China or North Korea, but Okinawa.

There is good reason for haste. The term of the present governor, Nakaima Hirokazu, whose consent had taken the first full year of Abe's second government to secure, is about to expire. Fresh gubernatorial elections, to be held on 16 November, offer the first electoral opportunity for the people of Okinawa to pronounce on the Henoko issue since Nakaima's unilateral submission. Every survey

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(most recently in December 2013 and April 2014) indicates that opposition to the Henoko project remains above 70 per cent. The government, therefore, as of the second half of 2014, had two objectives: to ensure the election in November of a Governor who would be at least as malleable and cooperative as Nakaima, and to move the construction project forward, hopefully to the point when it would become irreversible whatever the outcome of the election. Abe appears to have decided that, to defeat his Okinawan opposition, he had to compel submission, and the way to do that was by a show of overwhelming force designed to induce despair.



Coastguard rubber speed boats protecting the laying of a floating barricade by Okinawa Defense Bureau work teams, Henoko, 14 August 2014 (photo: *Okinawa taimusu*)

But while the "full speed ahead" Abe message was clear, so was the determination of the Okinawan opposition. The imperative for it was to roll back the consent to reclamation that Nakaima had signed on 27 December 2013 and that had stirred widespread outrage. The Prefectural Assembly and many city assemblies passed resolutions calling on Nakaima to resign and opinion surveys registered massive dissent. Since Nakaima refused to contemplate resignation, for a time Okinawans considered taking formal steps to "recall" (i.e., sack) him. But the procedural difficulties involved in that process led them to decide instead to arraign the Governor before it for questioning but then to wait for the November election, to unseat him rather than dismiss him now.

It was a decision fraught with heavy consequences, since it allowed Abe and his government an eleven-month window of opportunity to press ahead before the people could have a say at the polls. Nevertheless, the forthcoming 16 November gubernatorial election assumes great significance.

The November Electoral Prospect

The prospect for that November election is opaque and the pattern unprecedented. Three candidates have signified their intention to run. Current governor Nakaima Hirokazu, (aged 74) seeks a third term; the mayor of Naha City, Onaga Takeshi, (aged 63) is to stand on an "all-Okinawa," anti-base platform; and Shimoji Mikio (aged 52) a lower house member of the national Diet from 1996, independent from 2005, till July 2014 representative of the Okinawan "People's New Party" (Sozo), and since then again independent, has also signified his intention to stand.[10]

Nakaima has the benefit of incumbency, the support of the national government, the ruling national party (LDP)'s prefectural organization, and base, construction, and Tokyo-dependent sectors of the economy. However, his political and moral credibility have been undermined by his drastic shift on the key issue. He defended

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his decision by protesting that he had never explicitly said "No" to Henoko, that he still preferred Futenma to be transferred outside Okinawa but now believed that Henoko was "the fastest way," and that the Abe government's actions were "extremely realistic."[11]

Whatever credibility attaches to Nakaima's candidacy in 2014 must depend on his insistence on the promise he had extracted from Prime Minister Abe that, in return for the Henoko base construction, Futenma would be returned within five years. There has been no document to establish any such commitment. US authorities immediately denied any such arrangement was even possible,[12] and ironically, just as Nakaima repeated it in August 2014, a Pentagon submission to Congress was reported according to which the Marine Corps would continue its use of Futenma until "at least 2023" and perhaps till 2029 – in other words, not for five but for 10 or even fifteen years.[13] It seems hard to imagine that Nakaima could overcome these blows to his credibility, but what is clear is that the Abe government will offer unstinting support, financial and organizational, support

Onaga Takeshi has long been a prominent LDP figure and head of the prefectural party organization. He even served Nakaima as his campaign manager in the 2010 election. But he was also the central figure in the "*kempakusho*" movement of January 2013. On that occasion, a 130-person Okinawan delegation, comprising all 38 town and city mayors, all 41 town and village assembly heads, 29 members of the Prefectural Assembly and the Okinawan members of the National Diet, ventured to Tokyo to deliver to the Prime Minister a solemn statement of Okinawan demand: withdrawal of the Marine Corps' MV 22 Osprey VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing) aircraft that had been introduced to the prefecture the previous year over universal protest and closure and withdrawal of Futenma base and abandonment of the Henoko new base construction project. They were granted a perfunctory four minute meeting with Abe, their demands were ignored, and they were abused in the streets of Tokyo as traitors, Chinese agents or simply "rats."[14] Resisting the pressure from the national headquarters of the Liberal-Democratic Party to fall in line and endorse the Henoko design, Onaga became the central figure in an Okinawan rebellion against the national party. Those who defied the pressures from Tokyo and stuck to the "no Futenma transfer within Okinawa" position were formally expelled from the Party and adopted the name "New Wind" (*Shimpu*). They formed a core element in the "all-Okinawa," *kempakusho* movement that revived in the summer of 2014.

In that united front, Onaga's support ranged from the "New Wind" elements of the old LDP across the spectrum to the Japan Communist Party. It included significant Okinawan business interests. An early "support group" meeting drew 1,450 from this sector, headed by the chairman of the Kanehide Group Morimasa Goya and Kariyushi Group CEO Chokei Taira. Goya spoke of the bases as "nothing but an obstacle to development" and insisted that Okinawa needed a leader who transcended left and right. He added that "the government is likely to wield money and power in this election but it cannot extinguish the voices of the people. This is an election that goes to the identity of Okinawa …."[15]

Nevertheless, some doubted that Onaga, or any candidate with close LDP connections, could be trusted. Noting the Onaga camp's changing the words of his campaign statement from "cancelling the license to reclaim [Oura Bay]" to "respect the voices of the Okinawan people who call for cancelation of the license and prevent the construction of any new base at Henoko," many wondered if Onaga might in the end turn out to be simply another "Nakaima."[16]

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As for Shimoji, who had briefly been minister for postal privatisation in the Democratic Party government of 2012, he had not hitherto identified with the anti-base camp and his family is deeply involved in the construction business that stands to benefit greatly from base construction. He had earlier favoured a formula involving transfer of Futenma functions to the existing US Air Force base at Kadena.[17] Now, however, he proposed a prefectural referendum on the issue, to occur within 6 months of his taking office.[18] It was not clear, however, that he would be prepared to order a cessation of ongoing site works during that six months, or that he had the backbone that would be called for were he to choose in office to confront the Abe government.

That means three candidates, all "conservative" and with strong LDP links: one committed to allowing base construction, one to opposing it, and one to conduct of a prefectural referendum.

All three candidates therefore stood to the right of Okinawan society and for the first time in post-reversion Okinawa, there will be no identifiably "progressive" candidate.[19] All three stand for "No More Bases," not "No Bases." That is to say, all support the US-Japan security agreement and the base system in general, while saying that its burdens should be more equally shared. Onaga's "all Okinawa" united front might appear the most "radical," but it is still an essentially minimalist agenda - closure and return of Futenma and cancelation of the Henoko works. Were they to be offered a choice, however, it seems clear that many Okinawans would want to go much further, to demand immediate cessation and cancelation of the Takae helipad construction works, home of the Osprey,[20] and to insist in the longer term on demilitarization of Okinawa and closure and withdrawal of *all* the bases.

One such civic group, many of its members women, adopted the name "New Wave of Hope" and presented four demands of prospective candidates.[21]

1. On Futenma Airport Transfer and on the construction of the new base at Henoko and of the helipads at Takae:

> a. Unyielding opposition to be maintained to construction of any new base at Henoko regardless of how the situation may develop from now on (such as government resort to force).
>
> b. Commitment, once elected and assuming office as Governor, to cancel the "approval of Henoko Bay reclamation" [issued in December 2013 by Governor Nakaima Hirokazu].
>
> c. Immediate halt to works on the construction of helipads at Takae.

2. On Article 9 of the constitution and the right of collective self-defense:

> a. Clear opposition to any revision of Article 9, whether by change of wording or by change of interpretation
>
> b. Clear opposition to any emptying-out of Article 9 by the exercise of a right to collective self-defense

3. On the deployment and reinforcement of the Self-Defense Forces.

Opposition to any deployment or reinforcement of the SDF to Okinawa, above all to the Miyako and Yaeyama Islands.

4. Reduction of US bases and review of the

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Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

> a. To plan for the reduction in size and eventual abolition not just of bases such as Futenma but of Kadena and all the front-line US military forces stationed in Okinawa
>
> b. To review the SOFA, the root of structural discrimination and infringement of human rights against Okinawans.

This might be described as Okinawa's social agenda, expressing the deep-seated aspiration for an Okinawa in which constitutional rights – to peace, a secure livelihood, and human rights were guaranteed and the 69-year subjection to American (and American-Japanese) military purposes ended.

Conclusion

Between 1996 and 2014, non-violent Okinawan resistance at Henoko blocked all attempts at base construction. Through the democratic means open to them – resolutions of village, town, and prefectural representative bodies – Okinawans had made their opposition clear, culminating in the January 2013 *Kempakusho* and in the Nago City elections of January 2014 in which the anti-base Inamine Susumu was re-elected by a substantial margin despite a massive Tokyo campaign to unseat him. Governor Nakaima's submission notwithstanding, therefore, base construction could only proceed by overruling the opposition of the Okinawan people, which meant in particular the opposition of Nago City and its mayor.



Anti-base canoeists vs the Japanese state's Coastguard ship on Oura Bay

Photo: Medoruma Shun, "Uminari no shima kara," 15 August 2014

If the construction project proceeds, it will rival in scale Kansai International Airport in Osaka Bay, take a decade or more to complete, cost an astronomical sum (to be paid for by Japan), cause irretrievable harm to a precious nature reserve (not least by driving away the notoriously delicate dugong), and have the effect, in the name of national defense, of exposing Okinawa to front-line target role in any future military clash in the region.

The complex situation surrounding the commencements of base construction works on Oura Bay on 13 August 2014 may be resumed by the following ten propositions: The complex situation surrounding the commencements of base construction works on Oura Bay on 13 August 2014 may be resumed by the following ten propositions:

> 1) The Okinawan people today unite as never before in saying "No!" to the Henoko project even as the Abe government unites more determinedly than any previous government in insisting on it. By mobilizing the Coastguard and planning the deployment of the Maritime Self Defense Force,

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against Okinawan civil society, Abe treats Okinawa as an enemy state to be subdued by force.

2) The project rests in environmental terms on an environmental impact study that was not independent and that experts in that field agreed was unscientific and probably in breach of the rules set out by the relevant law. [22]

3) Whether a Marine Corps presence in Okinawa is necessary for Japan's defence is disputed by many Japanese and Americanexperts. The Marine Corps itself has chosen to disperse its forces across the region, moving many from Okinawa to Guam, Hawaii, and Darwin. As the immediate past Minister of Defense Morimoto Satoshi, put it, the imperative for the Japanese presence to be in Okinawa, rather than anywhere else in Japan, is political, not military or strategic.[23]

4) The rush to create an exclusion zone over half of the Bay and to establish a martial law-like regime surrounding the works is driven by fear that the forthcoming (16 November) gubernatorial election might return a candidate who would withdraw the consent given by Nakaima in December 2013. In other words, the Prime Minister is intent on thwarting the Okinawan democratic will.

5) The Okinawan anti-base movement from 2010 entered a new, phase – one of prefecture-wide resistance. The previously existing dividing line *between* conservative and progressive was transcended by consensus *across* those lines on the basis of the *Kenpakusho* principle: return the existing Futenma base and cease from construction of any substitute within the prefecture. How politically viable that could still be remains to be seen.

6) There is at least a strong possibility that Okinawa on 1 November 2014 will choose a new governor who is either clearly opposed to construction or committed to conducting a plebiscite on the issue. Either outcome would plunge the prefecture into fresh confrontation with the national government in Tokyo. Increasingly, words such as "colonial," "autocratic," "brutal," and "barbarous" attach to reference to the Abe government in the Okinawan media. Trust has never been at such a low ebb. What previous governors have referred to as the "magma" of Okinawan anger and resentment could erupt any time.

7) While the US government, and especially the Marine Corps, declare strong support for the Abe government's actions, the prospect in future, if construction goes ahead, is for deepening confrontation between the Marine Corps and the Okinawan civil society that surrounds it. This confrontation has the potential of opening a new phase of struggle in Okinawa to get rid of *all* the bases, i.e. of jeopardizing the very security relationship between the US and Japan it is supposed to be reinforcing.

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8) Anger at perceived discrimination and deafness to Okinawan protest prompts Okinawans to rethink their position in the Japanese state. Independence is not an immediate option, but a consensus is discernible in which the history of Okinawan incorporation within the modern Japanese state, by violence (1879),[24] followed by discrimination and oppression culminating in the catastrophic wave of death and destruction that swept over the island in 1945, abandonment then for 27 years followed by (from 1972) subjection to a regime of permanent US military privilege in defiance of Okinawan sentiment, stirs a sense of grievance, discrimination and exploitation and leads to discussions of all options. One of them is independence, a first step towards which could be an appeal for relief to the United Nations in the name of the Ryukyu people.

9) The dugong, and other creatures of Oura Bay, may yet have a say in the outcome. A San Francisco court currently reconsiders whether the Pentagon might not have breached its obligation under US law to protect the endangered dugong by accepting unfounded Japanese assurances that construction would have minimal impact on it.[25]



10) At issue is not simply the future of Oura Bay but Japanese democracy (for democracy can be neither built nor defended by a system that rides roughshod over its people, denying them rights including the right of self-determination), the US-Japan relationship, and the peace and security of East Asia.

Author:

Gavan McCormack is emeritus professor of Australian National University, editor of The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus, author of many books and articles, including at this site (see index). His most recent books are: *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United* States (with Satoko Oka Norimatsu), Rowman and Littlefield, 2012, Japanese and Korean editions from Horitsu Bunkasha and Changbi in 2013 and 2014 respectively) and *Tenkanki no Nihon e – 'pakkusu amerikana' ka 'pakkusu ajia' ka* (with John W. Dower), NHK Bukkusu, 2014 (in Japanese).

"All-Okinawa Conference" Formed at Meeting of Over 2,000 People

Urashima Etsuko

A mass meeting was held In the Great Hall of

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Ginowan City Hall on July 27 to set up an "All-Okinawa Conference to Implement the *Kempakusho* and to build a New Future." Under a conference banner that read, "Stop the Enforced Henoko Works - Okinawa United in Resolve," people gathered from all over Okinawa (including several busloads from Nago). They shared a sense of crisis as the level of tension rises in the confrontation between the government and the Okinawa Defense Bureau on the one hand, striving to enforce a boring survey of the ocean floor as first step in construction of the Henoko base, and local residents and citizens trying to stop them on the other. 2,075 people filled the hall, which had a capacity of only 1,200, and spilled out beyond the lobby and into the surrounding streets, where they either stood in the scorching sun or else went home.

Sentiments ran high in the hall. Lined up along the platform were 10 of the 11 joint representatives[26] and 5 representatives of various groups from within the Prefectural Assembly and the LDP "New Wind" group from the Naha City Assembly. All made statements of their resolve from their varying viewpoints

Goya Morimasa of the Kanehide Group, which is heavily involved in food, retail, construction, and resort hotel management, spoke of his resolve "as someone from the business sector" to "involve his organization in the effort to protect Uchinanchu [Okinawan] dignity and the right to a peaceful life."

Taira Chokei of the Kariyushi hotel chain group declared "Tourism is a peace industry. The Okinawan situation has been greatly changing but the opinions of Okinawans have not been taken into consideration. Let us change Japan from Okinawa."

Takazato Suzuyo, who has long been involved in the movement for human rights and against base and military-related violence against women, said "At this gathering of people from all over Okinawa let us affirm our determination to really stop Henoko!"

Tomoyori Shinsuke, who spoke of his past experience of setting up the Union of Base workers and of having struggled under the slogan of "Try sacking us, and we will demand return of the bases," said "We must never allow any new base to be constructed" and "Let us make every effort for implementation of the Kempakusho!"

Miyagi Tokujitsu, who served for 20 years (five terms) as mayor of Kadena City, said, "The question is how to involve those people who have not been able to participate today. So long as we explain earnestly the import of the *Kempakusho*, there can be no doubt that Okinawan sentiment will unite."

Former Deputy Governor Yoshimoto Masanori said, "If the country wants to discriminate against Okinawa, let us choose independence."

Representatives of the political parties and groups delivered messages such as

> "Let us take back Okinawan human rights, self-government, land, sea, and sky,"
>
> "*Kempakusho* is the concentrated expression of the sentiment of the Okinawa people. What the Government most fears is "All Okinawa' unity."
>
> "What the government is doing today is no different from the confiscation of land [for US bases] by bayonet and bulldozer 60 years ago."
>
> "Stop the Henoko works at once."
>
> "Let us win the November election and by doing so shake up Washington as well as Tokyo!"

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Kinjo Toru, member of the LDP's New Wind group and of the Naha City Assembly that had adopted unanimously a resolution of protest against Governor Nakaima's issuing the license for Oura Bay reclamation, pointed to the contradiction involved in the LDP's Prefectural chapter breaking its pledge to see Futenma transferred only "outside Okinawa" and expelling from the party the New Wind group members who stuck to that pledge. He drew laughter by remarking that

> "the reasons for our expulsion were the request to Mayor Onaga to stand as candidate for Governor and our participation in today's 'All-Okinawa' conference. .. Let us all join in stopping Henoko construction!"

The Conference resolution adopted unanimously by the meeting ended with the words:

> "We reject any future for Okinawa that would continue to be dominated by the bases. It is our duty to pass on to our children an Okinawan future full of hope and we have every right to build freely and with our own hands a truly Okinawan caring society. We call upon all the people of Okinawa to unite again on an "all Okinawa" basis to demand implementation of the 2013 Okinawan *Kempakusho* and cessation of the works being imposed by force upon Henoko."

Finally, Tamaki Yoshikazu, Naha City representative on the Prefectural Assembly and General Secretary of the meeting, said,

> "On so many occasions, ever since the rape of the Okinawan child by US sailors in 1995, we have had mass meeting after mass meeting but we have not accomplished even the slightest improvement in the situation. The Osprey flies around in our skies as if there had been no protest at all and at Henoko base construction moves ahead. So we have come to a shared understanding that an ongoing prefectural movement based on participation as individuals is needed to address the problems on a permanent basis, instead of the ad hoc committee set up each time as has been our custom to now.

He referred to the course of events making it necessary to make known throughout Japan the Okinawan sentiment contained in the *Kempakusho*, amounting to a "Heisei Okinawa uprising." What is called for from now on, he suggested, is

> "to stir national opinion to stop Henoko, to communicate properly the Okinawan situation through mass communications and mass media, and to appeal to international society including the United Nations Human Rights Committee. To do that we must set up special committees and we should aim initially at a membership of ten thousand."

Nago mayor Inamine Susumu also participated in the meeting and was given a huge welcome when introduced by the chair. Naha City mayor, Onaga Takeshi, who is thought certain to be a candidate for election to Governor against Nakaima, was not present – presumably out of a concern that the meeting might be

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misunderstood as an electoral meeting – but when he was shown in a pre-conference video speaking to the All-Okinawa meeting against the Osprey the loud applause showed that expectations of him were high.

It seems likely that in the week ahead the government intends to use force to set up buoys at sea to demarcate the Bay so as to exclude the activities by citizens protesting against the boring survey. The situation is extremely urgent.

Urashima Etsuko,

28 July 2014

Author:

Urashima Etsuko is an independent journalist, participant, historian and chronicler of the Okinawan (especially Henoko and Oura Bay) citizen and resident social movements over the past twenty years, and an acclaimed poet. She is author of a series of books (in Japanese) on Okinawan matters, and contributor of a regular column to the Japanese monthly journal *Impaction*. This essay appears in Japanese in the August issue. For earlier Urashima essays, translated at this site, consult the index.

Translator:

Gavan McCormack

Notes

[1] Ota remark in conversation with McCormack, Naha, 3 July 2014. For details, see essays at this site and, for the "story" up to 2012, Gavan McCormack and Satoko Oka Norimatsu, *Resistant Islands – Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2012.

[2] An editorial in the *Ryukyu shimpo* wrote that Nakaima's decision essentially "approve[d] the US and Japanese governments turning Okinawa into a military fortress. This is an act of sacrilege not only towards the Okinawans alive now, but also to those who died in the war, and to the generations yet to come. It is a crime of historic proportions.... He must resign," quoted in Gavan McCormack, "Bitter soup for Okinawans – The Governor's year-end betrayal," The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus, 6 January 2014

[3] "Bitter soup," ibid.

[4] Including those for works at sites such as Henoko fishing port, administratively under the jurisdiction of Nago City, which adamantly refuses to allow Henoko construction. "Henoko keiyaku hikokai, sai-nyusatsu shi koji chudan seyo," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 11 August 2014.

[5] *"Tsuyoi ishi o motte soki katsu chakujitsu ni"*, ("Henoko keiyaku hikokai, sai-nyusatsu shi koji chudan seyo," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 11 August 2014.)

[6] On recent moves for the protection of the dugong, see: Yoshikawa Hideki, "Urgent Situation at Okinawa's Henoko and Oura Bay: Base Construction Started on Camp Schwab," The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus, 8 July 2014. See also Centre for Biological Diversity (Tucson Az), "Lawyers seek to halt construction of US military airstrip in Japan that would destroy habitat of endangered Okinawa dugongs," Press Release, 31 July 2014, and for a youtube report by this author from Oura Bay, dated 2 July 2014.

[7] "Jugon shokuseki, asesu no chaban o shomei shita," editorial, *Ryukyu shimpo*, 11 July 2014.

[8] Sailing from Yokosuka for Okinawa on 11 May 2007, conducting a sea-floor survey and quietly withdrawing. (Gavan McCormack, "Fitting Okinawa into Japan, the beautiful country," Japan Focus, 30 May 2007.)

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[9] "Henoko ni kaiji kan 'Bungo' seifu kussaku shien de kento," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 7 August 2014.

[10] "Three candidates to run in the gubernatorial election," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 24 July 2014.

[11] Gavan McCormack, "Chiji 'Futenma wa kaiketsu hoko, Henoko isetsu, yonin no shisei kyocho" *Ryukyu shimpo*, edit., 2 August 2014. The *Okinawa taimusu* conveniently lists Nakaima's position over time, exposing its inconsistencies: "'Chiji hatsugen no hensen', hiroku kensho shi senkyo de toe," editorial, *Okinawa taimusu*, 3 August 2014.

[12] McCormack, "Bitter soup," op..cit.

[13] Heianna Sumiyo, "Futenma 23-nen made shiyo, Bei bunsho," *Okinawa taimusu*, 2 August 2014.

[14] See my "Bitter soup," also, "Kuroshima Minako, no seiji jihyo – "Sei to kichi' ni miru sabetsu to haijo no kozo," *Shukan kinyobi*, 1 August 2014, p. 16.

[15] From "umetate shonin o tekkai suru" to "shonin tekkai o nozomu kenmin no koe o soncho shi, Henoko shin kichi wa tsukurasenai." ("Onaga-shi e asu shutsuba yosei 'hokaku' koeta rida' keizai yushi," *Okinawa taimusu*, 7 August 2014.)

[16] "Yato, Onaga Takeshi ni ipponka, shin chijisen kohosha," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 23 July 2014.

[17] "Kenchijisen, kokuji made 3 ka getsu, 3 shi, taisei kochiku isogu," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 30 July 2014.

[18] "Shimoji shi ga kenchiji shutsuba hyomei, 'Henoko de kenmin tohyo," *Ryukyu shimpo*, 1 August 2014.

[19] Takara Tetsumi, a constitutional law professor at University of the Ryukyu's, initially bruited as the progressive camp candidate, withdrew in recognition that Onaga's support was "overwhelmingly strong."

[20] On Takae, see McCormack and Norimatsu, *Resistant Islands*, passim.

[21] "Okinawa kenchiji senkyo kohosha ni atatte no yobo," Article 9 Message Project Okinawa (representative: Shiroma Eriko), 11 July 2014. Further details in "Okinawan gubernatorial candidate must be someone who will cancel Henoko reclamation approval," Peace Philosophy, 12 July 2014.

[22] See the chapter on environment in *Resistant Islands*, cited above, and the various articles posted at The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus by Sakurai Kunitoshi, former president of Okinawa University and a prominent specialist on environmental assessment law.

[23] Sakurai Kunitoshi, "If the Law is Observed, There Can be No Reclamation: A Mayoral Opinion Endorsed by Citizens of Nago and Okinawans," The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus, 25 November 2013.

[24] The extinction of the Ryukyu Kingdom, then an internationally recognized state that had negotiated treaties with leading Western nations in the 1850s by unilateral and force-based ("punishment") Japanese act in 1879 was almost certainly a breach of international law. ("Treaties show that Japan's annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom was an unjustified act," editorial, *Ryukyu shimpo*, 12 July, 2014).

[25] Yoshikawa Hideki, "Urgent Situation at Okinawa's Henoko and Oura Bay: Base Construction Started on Camp Schwab," The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus, 8 July 2014.

[26] Oshiro Kiyoko, Oshiro Norio, Goya Morimasa, Taira Chokei, Takazato Suzuyo, Tomoyori Shinsuke, Nakazato Torinobu, Miyagi Tokujitsu, Yui Masako, Yoshimoto Masanori. Miyazato Seigen was absent.

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