

VIDEO 4: KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND Q&A

DR. BILL BROOKS: Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention, please? I'd like to now introduce our guest speaker, Senator Jim Webb, senior senator from Virginia, my state. But Senator Jim Webb is also very familiar, very well known in Okinawa. He's visited it at least three times as a senator; he has also visited the island when he was Secretary of the Navy, and then as a marine he was actually stationed there for a while. So very, very familiar with Okinawan issues, and also because of his 2011 game-changing report with Senator Levin raising major questions about the feasibility and cost of realignment plans involving Okinawa.

When I read Senator Webb's biography earlier I was astonished that the incredible broad and rich experiences he has had in the military, government and civilian sectors. As a combat marine in Vietnam, an attorney, a senior Defense Department Official, Emmy Award winning journalist, film maker and author of nine books, Senator Webb has maintained a lifelong commitment towards protecting American national security interests, promoting economic fairness and social justice here at home, and increasing the accountability of government.

In 2007, following his run for political office when he became Senator, he brought those passions with him to the United States Senate. And one of the incredible achievements for Senator Webb was on his first day in office he introduced a comprehensive 21st Century GI Bill for those who have been serving in our military since 9/11. And sixteen months later, the Bill was passed.

In addition to these individual endeavors over his life Senator Webb has remained an active voice on military, economic and foreign affairs through his membership on the armed services, foreign relations, joint economic and veterans' affairs committees. With long overseas experience that predates his time in the Senate, particularly in Asia, Senator Webb now serves as the chairman of the subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs on the Foreign Relations Committee. He also serves as the chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee.

He has a law degree from Georgetown University, 1975, and in 1987 he became the first Naval Academy graduate in history to serve in the military and then become the Secretary of the Navy. I hear that Senator Webb will not seek reelection, and I'm very saddened by that because I'd love to vote for him. But I am sure that he will again continue to be in the forefront of American national security affairs in the future.

Senator Webb, thank you for coming to our conference, and we welcome you and we are looking forward to hearing your message this morning.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be with you today. I think I'm the final act before this conference ends. But I would like to express my appreciation to Governor Nakaima for having invited me to come and participate today. And I would like to begin by expressing my own personal regret over the recent incidents that occurred in Okinawa. I have been connected to the people of Japan and the people of Okinawa for a very long time, since 1969 when I was a Marine on Okinawa on my way into Vietnam. I've been back as a journalist, as a government official, as a novelist, as a guest of the government. And it was one of the great moments when I was Secretary of the Navy to have returned the Gokoku-ji Bell back to the people of Okinawa, which had either been given or taken in 1853 by Commodore Matthew Perry on his first visit to Okinawa.

The people of Okinawa suffered greatly during World War II, it was probably the most grievous campaign that the American military was involved in, and the highest level of casualties in that were by far the civilian people of Okinawa. They have been very accommodating and gracious to the United States Military. I remember the period between 1945 and 1972 when Okinawa was under United States administration. It was commonly referred to at that time by American Military planners as an American aircraft carrier. The dollar was the currency and there was a lot of social turmoil when I was going through Okinawa during the Vietnam War. It was a transit point for the American Military, the American Marine Corps into and out of Vietnam. Since reversion to Japan the people of Okinawa have been, I think, very patient and very positive in their treatment of the American Military as it has remained on Okinawa.

And what I would like to do today is just to take about ten, fifteen minutes and explain my own view about the United States' presence in that part of the world; why it is important; how Okinawa fits into that, and what we need to do to work on, in my perspective, in terms to create – in an effort to create greater harmony, and hopefully a continuing relationship between Japan, the United States, and also with the Okinawan people.

I constantly remind my colleagues in the Senate that if you look at a map of Northeast Asia, the Korean Peninsula is the only place in the world where the strategic and geographic interests of three great powers intersect; Russia, China and Japan. The last hundred years have shown what can happen in the cycle of power when one of these countries begins to assert its interests beyond the measures of stability in the region. We saw what happened, quite frankly, when Japan did this in the early 1930's beginning in 1931. Since World War II we've watched the first Korean Cold War, Soviet Union, Russia, expand into this region. While I was at the Pentagon in the 1980's on any given day there were twenty-five Soviet combatant ships in Cameron Bay, Vietnam, the first time that Russia/Soviet Union had ever had what they called warm-water ports in the Pacific. Their largest naval forces were in the Pacific. They had Bear reconnaissance aircraft and Backfire Bombers operating in what we call the Western Pacific. We have seen since the demise of the Soviet Union, as with the rise of China, similar issues. I have spoken and written about the Senkaku Islands for many years, at least fifteen years in terms of written articles. We saw what happened beginning in April 2010 when that issue reached the forefront. We've seen recently in the South China Sea where China has created a political prefecture, Sansha prefecture, claiming now sovereignty over two million square kilometers of ocean area with hundreds and hundreds of small islands in that area, all the way down nearly to the Strait of Malacca that, in the mass, the size of area is larger than the land mass of Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam combined.

These are issues in which I believe the United States has become the greatest stabilizing force in the region as these power cycles have ebbed and flowed over the decades. Since World War II, the United States has served as the vital and irreplaceable guarantor of stability in the region. As a part of that, the United States-Japan security relationship, and also our economic relationship and our political similarities have been a key to our being able to provide stability in the region. American bases have served as an essential element of the approach toward regional security. And as you follow this logic, from our perspective, and I think from most of those in Japan, the bases in Okinawa have been the strongest component of the United States-Japan joint security relationship. With the emerging importance in the last couple of years of these conflicts over sovereignty, Senkakus and the South China Sea, the bases in Okinawa have validated their importance. And not only that, something else I've been writing about for many, many years, we need to understand that

if we do not act in a strong manner, we could see the kind of imbalances that have caused serious problems in this region again and again. I've made a point of saying that I don't see anywhere ever that the Chinese government has officially recognized Japanese sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands. That's one of the reasons I started talking about the Senkaku issue about fifteen years ago. So we face all of these challenges and the benefits that they bring, with a realization that the people on Okinawa have borne the burden of the American Military presence, far more than any other location in Japan, now for more than sixty years. And I believe there have been benefits to this relationship, but we also have to recognize that there have been costs. And we need to continually examine how we can continue this relationship and still be sensitive to the wellbeing of the people in Okinawa.

The Japanese and American Governments have worked very hard over the past sixteen years to reduce these burdens, potentially through relocation of bases inside Okinawa and also out of Okinawa to places like Guam. I would point out that I worked as a military planner in the Pacific in – it's hard to believe now when I say this – in 1973 and 1974, and I first recommended a relocation of some of the bases on Okinawa to Guam in 1974 in the report that I wrote as a military planner for the Government of Guam.

I've heard that this issue was raised earlier today. I'm going to say again that we have this discussion now fifteen years. I got my first briefing on Okinawa about the base relocations inside Okinawa about fifteen years ago. And I believe strongly we've reached a point where this debate is going to have to end. And we need to resolve how we're going to do this so we can move forward in a way that is timely; is cost effective and at the same time recognizes the need for harmony with the people of Okinawa. I also believe that, if it's done properly a readjustment of our bases on Okinawa, and from Okinawa, will provide continuing economic benefit to the people of Okinawa. It will benefit the American-Japanese security relationship; will contribute to the stability of East Asia, and would rebound to the continuing economic growth and political emergence of the region.

So, let me just lay out four things notionally that I believe we should be looking at here. The first is we need to resolve the basing issues on Guam, and if they're not going to be Guam, wherever they're going to be. I believe that we should be relocating portions on Guam – we've all been working very hard since I've been in the Senate to do this. And a good bit of the reason that we have not been able to move in a timely way, I will say, has been because in the Department of Defense, the United States Department of Defense, the issue of whether you move military bases around is viewed as – in Okinawa and Guam – is viewed as an unsolvable hot potato. There are a lot of turf fights that go on in the Pentagon as to – among the different services, about what the basing system should look like. And it's just very difficult to get a decision. We found that out with Secretary Gates, we're experiencing that with Secretary Panetta. For every possible solution there are probably twenty recommendations and see what happens in Okinawa when those situations occur as well. Another problem on Guam is the Environmental Protection Agency requiring detailed environmental impact statements that have slowed this process down, and could slow it down another three to five years, from what we're hearing. I just don't think that that sort of rule making is what we need in terms of timing for something like this. I don't see why these environmental statements should drag out as long as they have, and I think that the – I believe that the people in the American Government need to understand the frustrations that have been experienced in Japan and in Okinawa as this issue has dragged out.

The second thing that we should be looking at is resolving the Futenma issue. I know there had been a lot of discussion today on that point. We made a recommendation – I made a recommendation in 2010; Senator Levin returned with me to Guam, Okinawa and Tokyo. A year later, we put it into writing. It's one recommendation; there are three or four or more recommendations. We need to find one that can be implemented in a timely way, and as I said, with the least burden possible on the people of Okinawa. I have my ideas and there are other people here who have ideas, we need to get it done.

And then in the long term, I think we need to work to get; we need to work on these issues of local crime with respect to the American Military and its presence on Okinawa in a way that shows respect and alleviates the concerns of the Okinawan people. The incidents are not large, but the impact is huge. One of the things that could be done and I think that the American Military could make this more visible, is to explain to American Military people what happens when you go to a Japanese prison. I've been told that I was the first American journalist ever allowed to report from inside the Japanese prison system, and I did that in 1983 and 1984. Actually one of the prisons that I visited was a prison in Okinawa. And let me say very clearly; you do not want to go to jail in a Japanese prison. Think twice.

Along the same lines, I'm hearing over the last week that basically the American commanders have put our military on a lockdown on Okinawa, they have put a curfew on all the American military – you stay on your base after eleven o'clock and you can't go back until five o'clock. I actually think that's backwards. I think that's totally the wrong way to approach this. I believe that the more interaction that the American military can have with the people of Okinawa, the higher the respect will go; the more the understanding on both sides will take place. You can't have both sides thinking that the barbarians are on the other side of the gate here. And I just think it's a great opportunity for the American military when they can live and operate in a place like Okinawa to get out and fully experience the depth and the history of the culture.

And when I make that point – I was thinking this morning about an article that I wrote in 2001 when I was sent to Okinawa by Parade Magazine. The question on the article was should we leave Okinawa, and this was 11 years ago. And I was able to travel on the island and interview the thinkers, the academic leaders and some of the business leaders about what do you think about this relationship; what do you think about how the Americans and the people of Okinawa interact. And generally it was very positive. I think that the polls at that time with respect to the Americans were well above 70 percent positive views of the Americans. And there was a term that was used when I was interviewing one of the people that I talked to – I'm going to murder this, I speak Vietnamese but I don't speak Japanese except for a little bit – it was called Chanpuru Bunka It meant stir-fried culture. The people of Okinawa, probably more than any other place in Japan, have been a welcoming culture to people from other lands for more than five hundred years. They had a relationship with the Chinese for five hundred years, trading relationship. If you look at the Shuri Castle, we remember that during the warlord period the people of Okinawa were welcoming Chinese warlords, Japanese warlords, there was a separate wing to pay tribute to both in case they showed up both at the same time. But this is a welcoming culture. I think it still is a welcoming culture. And I hope that we can work – as we work to resolve these issues we can understand the vital importance that Okinawa plays in terms of the strategic relationship between the United States and Japan and how important that relationship is to the stability of East and Southeast Asia. So, in that

respect I know we have issues to resolve, but I believe we should step forward and resolve them in a way that understands the importance of what we are doing.

And with that, I'd be happy to take a couple questions.

AUDIENCE: Senator Webb, thank you, Michael O'Hanlon from Brookings. I was wondering how you saw the Guam relocation plan intersecting with budget pressure; in other words, there's a fairly substantial cost associated with it. Do you believe that – especially if President Obama wins the reelection and the defense budget goes down as now scheduled, that there will be pressure on the American side to rethink the current plan simply for budgetary reasons?

SENATOR WEBB: There is a lot of pressure – there was a lot of pressure in the last budget cycle to hold off on expenditures because of the lack of clarity. I think it would be a huge mistake to bypass what we can bring to Guam from Okinawa in terms of the strategic relevance in the region. And that's actually how I became interested in Guam and the Marianas forty years ago when I was looking at bases in the Western Pacific at the end of the Vietnam War and trying to determine how best we could meet our responsibilities in the region with the reduced force. And Guam is a major player. It is 210 square miles. One third of the island is either in military bases or military retention areas. It is underutilized right now. Apra Harbor is a large and well-developed harbor that actually housed an entire fleet of naval vessels in World War II. There is an ammunition storage area on the spine of Guam, it's 8,000 acres. Anderson Air Force Base is grossly underutilized right now, this is one of the reasons that I recommended you could pull some of the Air Force components on Kadena and move them to Anderson. I have seen Anderson Air Force Base during the Vietnam War when it was operating at full capacity. I would say it's not even operating at 25 percent capacity. I think a lot of the cost elements are over stated. And we should also remember that the Japanese Government has offered to pay part of the relocation costs. I want to mention the environmental impact statements, I cannot imagine why in an area where we already have bases and where they've already done one round of environmental impact statements, and we should have to wait for the time period that we do. So I think my view is yes, there are people who are looking for places to cut the budget, but I think also the fact that this issue has dragged out for so long and you're still looking at a timeline on this, is probably the better reason that they have held back.

AUDIENCE: Peter Ennis from Dispatch Japan. Senator, now that the Ospreys have been deployed to Futenma, I wonder where you think the impetus might come from to break the bureaucratic impasse that's resulted in staying open for this long?

SENATOR WEBB: Let me give you two separate answers on that. First of all, I've seen – I read the concerns that the people on Okinawa have about the Osprey. I believe it's a safe aircraft and it is a quiet aircraft when you compare it to the helicopters that it is replacing. And I personally believe that – my recommendation – and I know a there were a lot of recommendations here – my initial recommendation with respect to Kadena was to strip down a lot of the Air Force operations to bases in Japan, move some to Anderson Air Force Base, and take the Futenma operations and put them in Kadena. You also have a 6,000 acre ammunition storage area in Kadena that could be examined in terms of reducing the size if you're looking for ways to give land back to the people in Okinawa. So, number one, you know, the situation with the V-22, I think people will and should become more relaxed. The second question about how long Futenma should continue, I'm a little concerned, and actually this is a little bit toward what Mike was asking about budgeting – I'm concerned about budget requests that will extend the structures on Futenma for another ten years. I've seen that and

I'm concerned if we do that we might end up sliding into a semi-permanent situation on Futenma when we need a decision in a timely way to shut it down and do something else.

AUDIENCE: Thanks, Senator. I'm Shaun Tandon. I'm a journalist with the AFP News Agency. Getting back to the sexual assault case, the alleged sexual assault case, you mentioned, perhaps half jokingly, to tell the service people about the Japanese prison system. What do you think the U.S. Military can do, if anything, to prevent such incidents from happening? Is there any set up in place to prevent things like this or is there more that the U.S. military could do?

SENATOR WEBB: Well, no system is completely fail-safe. And I believe that the level of – you know, the number of incidents, as I said, have been greatly reduced from time periods that some of us remember, but when they happen, there's just – there's no excuse for them. They have an incredible human impact on people who are very gentle and people with a long cultural history. I think we've done a lot, and the military has done a lot, but there's a couple things you can make very clear, I think the people who were involved in this incident, as I have read it, were temporarily assigned, and I can't – I shouldn't in any way speculate as to what happened – all we're saying is we regret it and we don't want to see these things happen.

AUDIENCE: Senator Webb, my name is Victor Okim with U.S. -Japan Research. I'm curious your idea about people to people programs in Okinawa – to develop to the extent two countries or Okinawa-US relations will be improved. Are you talking about military to military relations or are you talking military and the civilians of Okinawa relations or do you think more interestingly as you may suggest, in terms of commercial activities, trade, educational, cultural exchanges – what aspect would you recommend under such circumstances that stands as it is now. I'm curious. I know of your interest in Okinawa.

SENATOR WEBB: Well, I would say all three that you've recommended would be healthy. One of the observations that I would make now compared to when I was in Okinawa before – and I've visited Okinawa many, many times all through the years – is that our military – a lot of our military now has become more removed from basic human everyday interaction. In fact, we were getting a tour of Kadena Air Force Base a couple of years ago and the officer who was driving us around showed us, you know, there's the Shakey's Pizza Parlor, there's the McDonalds, you know, he actually said, our people on Kadena could spend three years here and never have to leave the base. And I just think that's a great – almost a tragedy, you know, that you're living on a place with so much history and so much culture and with people who I've always found are so friendly, there should be more – and there used to be. Like back in the 1980s, you know, one of my best friends was stationed in Okinawa for three years and I was out there twice when he was living there. He was actually living out in the town. Every day interacting, buying things at the local stores, et cetera, et cetera. I think it's healthy for – my own personal view, people may disagree – I think it's healthy for all of the elements to have that and come to understand each other face to face, human to human, and these other issues tend to go down.

AUDIENCE: My name is Kanehira. I work for Japanese TV Tokyo broadcasting. First of all, thank you so much for joining our program several months ago. At that time the communication line was completely out of control, but you did perfect. And your comment drew us a very, very positive reaction from the Japanese viewers. My question is Governor of Okinawa is urging the Government of Japan and the U.S. to initiate a consultation concerning fundamental revision of the SOFA, the Status of Forces Agreement. Why are the U.S. leaders reluctant to review the SOFA. Some

Japanese experts pointed out that the SOFA between our two countries is much more unequal compared with the SOFA that the U.S. concluded with Iraq?

SENATOR WEBB: First, thank you for your comment about my earlier appearance. With respect to the SOFAs, you made a comment about Iraq, and let me clarify for the record for anyone who's been watching the presidential debates, presidential candidate Romney has been reminding President Obama that we never concluded a SOFA in Iraq. These SOFAs are shaped country by country, and I believe that the issue that held up the agreement – any agreement on a SOFA in Iraq was that the government of Iraq wanted to be able to have criminal jurisdiction over American military in Iraq. And I believe, rightly so, in that situation that the government in Iraq has not advanced to the point that we would want to trust their criminal jurisdiction on an American military person in Iraq. And over that issue we divided the government – the government in Japan is different, the criminal justice system of Japan is different, it's much fairer – although as I said, you don't want to go to jail in a Japanese prison. So I can't – I don't think it would be proper for me to speculate as to what the current situation is between the Department of Defense and the Japanese Government over renegotiating a SOFA. I don't know the answer to that, but I do know that, as you can tell, that there is no hesitation from the American Government to turning over American military people to the Japanese criminal justice system when they are accused of having committed a crime outside of American bases. That's a total respect for the Japanese criminal justice system in that regard.

AUDIENCE: I am Mieko Maeshiro from Okinawa living in the United States. I have two questions. I have been told – I would like to know how true it is – there are more rape incidents in Okinawa, and these incidents are under reported. I don't know how true it is. And another question is, this is my understanding that Guam location was not materialized because people in Guam did not want an expanded base. Those two questions, thank you.

SENATOR WEBB: Because the people in Guam did not want the American bases?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

SENATOR WEBB: First of all, with respect to your question about sexual assaults, I really don't have an answer for that. We can certainly ask the American Military for an answer.

With respect to Guam my view is that the people of Guam want the military bases. We've had many discussions. In any of these situations there are concerns that local populations raise. And even in the United States when bases come to the certain areas you have sometimes a division of opinion. I will give you a personal story, my mother was from East Arkansas, a very rural area, and she grew up very poor. In the 1970's she called me and she said, "I just went home." And she said the good news is all the roads are paved; the bad news is there's a missile at the end of every road. So there is always a trade off, but the people of Guam are very proud of their political relationship with the United States. They're an American Territory and they serve proudly in the military. I think in the Vietnam War more than a hundred Guamanian soldiers and Marines died on the battlefield. So we get a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. We also have discussions with people who are worried about historical areas. For instance, there was a gun range that was – a shooting range that was going to be put in an area that had great historical significance and these sorts of things. But my view is that the people of Guam are wondering why it's taking so long. And similarly there's a lot of people in Okinawa who are wondering why it's taking so long.

Thank you very much. It's good to be with you.

DR. BROOKS: You're not dismissed yet. In closing remarks, the Senator and the Governor will shake hands with folks as they leave. And I would also like to remind everyone to leave the interpretation device on the table and not in your pocket as you leave. This has been an extremely stimulating morning discussion and I have learned a lot, but it shouldn't be just a conference where we all sit back, take notes and then forget about it. This should be a call to action. And I hope that some of the proposals and comments, the Senator's comments, strike home and force people to think about these issues and not just put them off until a further day. There is no further day, this should be done now. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen, and enjoy the rest of your meal, and thank you for coming.