

Resolution of Protest Over the US Forces F/A-18 Fighter/Attack Aircraft Crash Incident

At approximately 11:45 AM on November 12, an F/A-18 fighter/attack aircraft of the US Navy's Carrier Air Wing Five crashed into the sea approximately 290 kilometers east-southeast of Naha City.

With the diamondback squid in season, the waters surrounding the site of the crash see a great number of fishing vessels. This incident could easily have led to tragic results involving the fishermen, and it has caused great anxiety and fear among those in the fishing industry and to the citizens of the Prefecture.

The F/A-18 fighter/attack aircraft has seen repeated accidents including the crash off the coast of Kochi Prefecture in December of 2016; the crash in attempt to land aboard the USS Carl Vinson in April of 2017; and the crash in Florida in March of this year.

Accidents in the vicinity of the US training areas in the waters of Okinawa are endless, as we recently saw the crash of an F-15 fighter aircraft stationed at Kadena Air Base in June of this year.

These repeated crashes and incidents go against the flow of what the Government of Japan has said in mitigating the burden shouldered by Okinawa Prefecture, and we are left to question the nature of aircraft maintenance and inspection conducted by the US Forces.

Up to present, the US Forces' F/A-18 fighter/attack aircraft, the same model of this recent crash, have come to Kadena Air Base and MCAS Futenma to conduct exercises, and last year in Okinawa City, Kadena Town, and Chatan Town, which are surrounding municipalities of Kadena Air Base, the number of complaints were the highest. This clearly shows that the local residents of the area are suffering greatly from the noise of aircraft that are not stationed here.

With the repeated accidents and incidents involving US military aircraft, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly has sternly addressed the safety framework of the US Forces. Despite this, the US Forces continue to resume the aircraft exercises without showing improvements in the situation, and this is absolutely unacceptable and we cannot help but feel strong indignation for such approaches by the US Forces.

The people of our Prefecture cannot be left to live in fear because of the base presence any further, and we strongly urge the US Forces and both governments of Japan and the US to do their utmost to dispel the concerns of the Prefecture's residents.

To that end, we, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, in our duty to protect the lives, safety and the living environment of the people of Okinawa, strongly protest the recent incident and call for the prompt execution of the following five items.

- I. Conduct a thorough investigation into the cause(s) of the accident and promptly disclose the findings to the people of the Prefecture.

- II. Cease flights of all aircraft not stationed within the Prefecture.
- III. Immediately cease the flights of fighter jets until thorough investigation into the cause(s) of the accident is conducted and the findings are disclosed and explained.
- IV. Fundamentally revise the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement. In particular, eliminate the “Act on Special Provisions of the Civil Aeronautics Act upon the enforcement of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement”, and comply with the aviation laws of Japan.
- V. Conduct an assessment survey concerning the impact on the fishing industry in the surrounding waters of the crash.

The above is resolved as stated on this 27th day of November, 2018.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly