

Resolution of Protest Over the US Forces MV-22 Osprey Part Dropping Incident

At approximately 9:00 AM on February 9, an aircraft part from an MV-22 Osprey deployed to the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma was found near Odomari Beach on Ikei Island in Uruma City. The semicircular part, approximately 70 centimeters in height, 100 centimeters in width, and 13 kilograms in weight, was discovered by an employee working on the Beach.

The Beach where the aircraft part was found, is a popular tourist site, and also located nearby is a Mozuku seaweed farm, which is approaching the peak season. For these reasons, the local residents have voiced their indignations and concerns, as one mistake can lead to a grave incident involving those in the fishery industry as well as tourists. Furthermore, one cannot help but harbor suspicions that there were intentions to mask the incident as there were no notifications from the US Forces on the fact that an aircraft part was lost.

In the last year or so, we, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, have rigidly pointed out the current state of the safety management system of the US Forces regarding the series of aircraft incidents, which is absolutely abnormal. There have been crashes, crash landings, and emergency landings at civilian airports and other locations by the MV-22 Osprey and the large transport CH-53E helicopter, as well as aircraft part droppings, including this recent incident. Despite this, the stance of the US Forces in repeatedly engaging in drills and exercises without showing any signs of improvements, displays little attention and consideration toward the people of the Prefecture, and this is absolutely unacceptable. Such actions have heightened the voices of the people for the withdrawal of the US Marine Corps from Okinawa. Okinawa is not an American colony. The US Forces must take seriously the requests and demands from the Okinawa Prefectural Government, and the resolutions adopted by the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly.

There cannot be any further fear brought upon the people of the Prefecture with incidents that occur only because the military bases exist here. The US Forces and both governments of Japan and the United States of America must look at the current situation in which there have been no signs of improvement, and face these issues with a sense of urgency and do everything they can to address the concerns of the people of Okinawa Prefecture.

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 against the Osprey part dropping incident, and call for the prompt execution of the following six items:

1. Conduct a thorough investigation into the cause and circumstances of the incident, and promptly disclose the findings to the people of the Prefecture, and at the same time, take specific steps for preventive measures.
2. Cease all flights and drills of US Forces aircraft based at MCAS Futenma above nursery schools, school, hospitals, and residences.
3. Immediately cease operations at MCAS Futenma.

4. 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.

5. Relocate the US Marine Corps on Okinawa to outside of Japan/Okinawa Prefecture at the earliest stage possible.

6. Both governments of Japan and the United States, as parties concerned, to take responsibility in addressing and working towards improving the current situation regarding incidents and accidents related to the US Forces.

The above is resolved as stated on this 21st day of February, 2018.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly