

# Okinawa: U.S. defense chief urges Japan to submit U.S. base relocation report

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NUSA DUA, Indonesia (Kyodo) — U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on Sunday urged the Japanese government to promptly submit to the Okinawa prefectural government an environmental impact assessment report required to relocate a key U.S. Marine base within the prefecture.

Panetta, who is visiting the Indonesian resort island of Bali, told reporters that he would like Japan to “move forward” on submitting the report and stressed the importance of implementing the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps’ Futenma Air Station to the Henoko district in Nago from a densely populated area of Ginowan.

It is the first time that a U.S. senior official has publicly requested that the Japanese government submit the report at an early date, though the U.S. government has informally asked Japan to do so by year-end.

Panetta will make a three-day visit to Japan from Monday and is scheduled to hold meetings with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba and Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa.

The issue of relocating the Futenma base within Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of U.S. forces in Japan, has been deadlocked amid strong local opposition despite repeated pledges by Tokyo and Washington to implement the plan.

**Kyodo Press**, October 24, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/24/20111024p2g00m0dm004000c.html>

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## Okinawa: Foreign minister seeks Nago mayor’s acceptance of base relocation

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba on Wednesday urged the mayor of Nago in Okinawa Prefecture to accept a government plan to relocate a key U.S. Marine base to the city, but the mayor remained adamant about his opposition to the plan. Gemba visited Nago after the government offered to submit to Okinawa by year-end an environmental assessment report for the relocation plan, which may signal that the central government wants to move ahead with the

relocation when it has yet to persuade the local governments in Okinawa to accept the plan.

Gemba sought to gain the understanding of Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the Henoko district in Nago from a densely populated area of Ginowan.

During their meeting at the city hall, Gemba said, "We will move forward with the Japan-U.S. agreement and make full efforts to ease Okinawa's base-hosting burden." He added, "We must avoid Futenma remaining as it is."

During top security talks in Washington in June, Japan and the United States reaffirmed the deal on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, including the Futenma base relocation within Okinawa. The local community and officials, however, are calling for the base to be relocated outside the prefecture, which has long hosted the bulk of U.S. bases in Japan.

Inamine, a staunch critic of the base relocation to Henoko, called for the bilateral accord to be scrapped and told Gemba during their talks, "I am committed to stick to my promise to the public that there will be no new base in Henoko."

After their meeting, he told reporters, "There is absolutely no room for negotiation with the (central) government."

Inamine also voiced his opposition to the plan during his talks with Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa on Monday. Ichikawa visited Okinawa ahead of Gemba in efforts to break the stalemate over the relocation plan and told local leaders that the central government is preparing to submit the environmental assessment report on the base relocation.

The government of Yoshihiko Noda is trying to move forward with the relocation amid pressure from Washington to achieve concrete progress on the matter.

**Kyodo Press**, October 19, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/19/20111019p2g00m0dm074000c.html>

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## **Okinawa: Residents seek quiet night as trial on Kadena base starts**

NAHA (Kyodo) — Residents near the U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture appealed for "quiet nights" during the first hearing Thursday over a suit in which roughly 22,000 of them are seeking a nighttime flight ban and a combined 44.6 billion yen in damages from the state for health reasons.

One of the seven plaintiffs who testified at the Okinawa branch of the Naha District Court, Himeka Matayoshi, 17, a sophomore of Kadena Senior High School, said students were unable to focus on their studies, with aircraft noise disrupting lessons three to four times per hour.

The state, for its part, demanded the suit be rejected.

The suit is the third in a series of legal battles over aircraft noise at Kadena base. In the first, filed in 1982, some 900 residents took part, while some 5,500 took part in the second, which was filed in

2000.

In both cases, the government was ordered to pay damages, but the plaintiffs' demands for a night flight ban were rejected.

Toshio Ikemiyagi, who heads the lawyers representing the plaintiffs, told reporters that his team will argue the central government has a responsibility to contain aircraft noise.

The Kadena base is one of the largest U.S. military facilities in East Asia.

**Kyodo Press**, October 20, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/20/20111020p2g00m0dm065000c.html>

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## **Okinawa: Japan hopes to win Okinawa's nod 1<sup>st</sup> for US base relocation**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japanese Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa has conveyed to U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta his intention to gain acceptance from Okinawa for the planned relocation of a U.S. Marine base within the island prefecture, before submitting to the local government an environmental assessment report key to moving the plan forward, sources close to bilateral ties said Saturday.

In relaying the idea to his U.S. counterpart in their talks in Tokyo on Oct. 25, Ichikawa did not go as far as to say the key report would be withheld unless the central government could gain acceptance from the prefectural government.

But it can still be taken to mean that without acceptance from Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima, who strongly calls for the base's relocation outside of the prefecture, there is a possibility the central government may not submit such a report.

It shows the central government is caught in a conundrum, sandwiched between the governor and the U.S. government, which has called on Tokyo to submit the report by year-end.

The Japanese government plans to present the report to the prefectural government by the end of the year to push forward the stalled relocation of the Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station within the main Okinawa island as agreed to between Japan and the United States.

The submission of the report is a necessary step toward moving the Futenma base to a coastal area from the current densely populated location through partial land reclamation which falls under the governor's jurisdiction.

In the talks with Panetta, Ichikawa said, "We want to obtain acceptance from Okinawa by December. To do that, we will make maximum efforts," according to the sources.

Defense Ministry officials said earlier that in the meeting, Ichikawa referred to Tokyo's plan to submit the assessment report by the end of the year, but did not disclose his remark about Okinawa first accepting the relocation plan.

**Kyodo Press**, November 6, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/06/20111106p2g00m0dm041000c.html>

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## **Okinawa: Defense minister fails to make progress on Futenma issue**

NAHA (Kyodo) — Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa on Saturday failed to bridge the gap between the state and the Okinawa prefectural government over the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station within the prefecture.

During a meeting in Naha, Okinawa, Ichikawa asked Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima to accept the plan to transfer the Futenma base to the Henoko district in Nago from a densely populated area of Ginowan. Nakaima told him, however, that it would "simplify matters if the base was moved outside the prefecture."

The relocation has faced strong opposition from the local community in Okinawa, which has long hosted the bulk of U.S. forces in Japan.

The central government hopes to present to the local government by the year-end an environmental impact assessment report, a required step to push forward the stalled move.

Ichikawa told reporters after the meeting, however, that he has "not specified a date" for submitting the report. "I will work for it under the consent of the Okinawa people," he said, suggesting the government may postpone submission.

Tatsuo Kawabata, state minister in charge of Okinawa affairs, and Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba are also arranging trips to Okinawa to persuade the local community to accept the relocation plan while presenting pump-priming measures for the prefecture.

**Kyodo Press**, November 13, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/13/20111113p2g00m0dm010000c.html>

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## **Okinawa: Okinawa assembly opposes environment report on base relocation**

NAHA (Kyodo) — The Okinawa Prefecture assembly unanimously adopted a petition Monday calling on the state not to present to the local government an environmental assessment report integral to the relocation of a U.S. Marine base within the southern island prefecture.

Following the planned presentation of the report by the end of this year, the national government intends to ask Okinawa for permission to reclaim the waterfront area of Nago's Henoko district so that new U.S. military facilities can be built to accommodate flight functions to be moved from the

Futenma Air Station in a populated area in the city of Ginowan.

To help thwart such a move, the assembly resorted to the rare measure of adopting a petition against the plan.

On Saturday, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda told U.S. President Barack Obama that Japan is preparing to present the report to Okinawa by the end of the year.

The petition said Noda's behavior was "impermissible" since it ignores the opinion of the people of Okinawa opposing the relocation of the Futenma base inside the prefecture.

**Kyodo Press**, November 14, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/14/20111114p2g00m0dm094000c.html>

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