



The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus

in-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific...and the world.

Japanese Bureaucrats Hide Decision to Move All US Marines out of Okinawa to Guam [Japanese original text at Tanaka News (tanakanews.com)]

Tanaka Sakai

Translation by William Steele

Introduction by Gavan McCormack

The Japanese government announced on 15 December 2009 that it was postponing indefinitely any decision on the contentious issue of a "Replacement Facility" for the Futenma Marine base in Okinawa. The decision to make no decision was low-key and at first glance may seem inconsequential. Its symbolic importance, however, is huge, signalling a possible changing of the tide of history in East Asia, above all in the US-Japan relationship.

It meant that the Hatoyama government had withstood the most sustained barrage of US pressure, intimidation, insult, ultimatum, and threat, and decided, at least for the present, to say: "No." Hatoyama was telling the Obama government, in effect, that rather than rubber stamp an agreement made by the former ruling party, he would insist on renegotiating the 2005-6 "Reorganization of US Forces in Japan" and the "Guam Treaty" in which that agreement was incorporated. He was serving notice that the "Client State" relationship so carefully cultivated by the former (George W. Bush) administration and its successive LDP partners would be renegotiated and perhaps dismantled. How, was far from clear. But the US-Japan relationship can never be the same again.

The bottom line of the message was clear, even if it could only be read in the invisible ink of a bland announcement: if the Hayoyama administration prevails, no "Futenma Replacement Facility" will be built for the Marines in the waters off Cape Henoko in Northern Okinawa. A Pentagon dream since 1966, it had come close to realization under bilateral agreements in 1996, 2006, and 2009, only to be stalled each time by one of the most remarkable, non-violent political movements in modern Japanese history. Today this most unequal of struggles has reached a decisive moment.

Months of intense pressure (see ["The Battle of Okinawa 2009"](#)) had brought the Hatoyama government close to capitulation. The bureaucrats in both the Defense and Foreign Ministries insisted that the national interest was at stake and required submission. Moreover, the Futenma Base was a quid pro quo for US plans to withdraw—at Japanese expense—an estimated 8,000 Marines and their families to Guam. US Ambassador Roos (known to be a close personal friend of President Obama) expostulated, red-faced (according to observers) to the Japanese Defense and Foreign Ministers on 4 December that trust between Obama and Hatoyama might be grievously damaged if agreement to construct the Henoko base was not reached before the end of 2009. In Okinawa the following day, Foreign Minister Okada could only beg his audiences of Democratic Party faithful to understand how important this issue was for the US, and therefore for the alliance and for Japan. All previous LDP-led governments had submitted just as Okinawa had been forced to submit to American bases for more than six decades, unbroken by the 1972 "reversion" to Japan. The pressure applied to Hatoyama far exceeded that directed to any previous government of Japan, and many assumed that in due course he, too, would submit. He chose otherwise.

The mid-December decision was due to three factors, one long-term, one short-term, and one personal: the first and overwhelming one is the triumph of the non-violent resistance movement of the people of Okinawa itself, sustained since 1996; the second is the outcome of the 30 August Lower House national elections, which swept the Hatoyama DPJ to power nationally and especially in Okinawa gave them and other opponents of base construction a massive endorsement; the third is the strength of resolve by Prime Minister Hatoyama. He insisted throughout the crisis that he would personally make the key decision, and in the end that is what he has done, at least for the time being.

The decision was not solely shaped by US considerations. Japanese domestic politics played a critical role. Had Hatoyama submitted, however, and ordered work to commence on filling in the seas off Oura bay for the construction of a base, he would have faced the likely collapse of his coalition government (since both minor parties had said they would withdraw), the absolute alienation of the Okinawan people from him and his party (and in a sense from the Japanese national project itself), and the need to resort to martial law measures to enforce works whose legitimacy was accepted by virtually nobody in Okinawa. Submission, in other words, might over time not only have undermined the DPJ but might even have more seriously damaged the US-Japan relationship than resistance.

When Foreign Minister Okada visited Okinawa on 5 December, he was shocked to find nobody at all who would support the base construction project. His pleas to understand the American insistence that it proceed and his calls to recognize the importance of the US-Japan "alliance," simply roused his DPJ audiences to anger. The Okinawan prefectural assembly is more than 90 percent opposed. Even the "conservative" Okinawan Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) League has said that it will switch from support to opposition to the base project if a decision is held off beyond the end of this year (as has now happened). Conservative mayors, including the Mayor of Naha, are increasingly lining up in support of the platform of anti-base meetings, while Futenma Mayor Iha, as Tanaka Sakai shows in the following report, has led the way in unmasking the machinations of Tokyo and Washington on the future of the base. The August election of the Hatoyama government has given Okinawan people the sense that at last they have a government that might listen to them.

Options for an alternative "Futenma Replacement Facility" to Henoko have been canvassed in recent months and they will now be submitted to a ruling coalition commission for further investigation. They include Guam (discussed below), Kadena, the US Air Force base close to Futenma, the island of Umage, just 8 square kilometres in area and 12 kilometres west of Tanegashima in Kagoshima prefecture, the island of Iwo (once known as Iwojima) south of Tokyo, and various unused or much underused airports in mainland Japan itself, from Osaka's Kansai International (offered for consideration by Osaka's Governor) to the recently built "white elephant" Shizuoka or Ibaraki airports.

Okinawan sentiments are especially aroused today as the lies and deception they have been fed by LDP governments over the past half-century gradually come to light. The Okinawan "return" to Japan in 1972 is now known to have been a purchase, in which Japan paid huge sums to subsidize the US war effort in Vietnam, opening the path to a system of Japanese war subsidies paid to the Pentagon ever since in the guise of "omoiyari" (consideration or sympathy) payments. The Japanese government, contrary to its proud "three non-nuclear policies", has long given covert permission to US vessels carrying nuclear weapons to pass through Japanese ports and signalled its readiness to allow them into Okinawa in advance of any renewed war in Korea. The details of the "secret nuclear agreements" are now being exposed by former Japanese government officials who were party to the arrangements. Most explosive is the fact that Okinawans continue to learn more details of the readiness of their government over decades to pay almost any price to keep the US forces in Okinawa while sparing mainland Japanese the inconvenience of having numerous GIs in residence. That sense of grievance cannot easily be assuaged.

One major new factor in the Okinawan equation is the revelation, flowing principally from the office of the Okinawan town mayor of Ginowan City (reluctant host to the Futenma Marine Air station), that the Henoko project itself rests on a massive deception. That revelation is the subject of the Tanaka Sakai text that follows.

The Marine Corps documents that Mayor Iha Yōichi analyses call into question the official Japanese government claim that the construction of a Futenma

Replacement Facility at Henoko is necessary to accommodate the Marine helicopter force by showing that the 2006 Guam Integrated Military Development Plan is a design to accommodate those helicopter forces plus battle force, artillery and supply units. If the Futenma Marines are designated under Pentagon plans for relocation to Guam anyway, the Henoko project loses its strategic purpose. And the foundations for Japanese government payments to maintain US forces in Okinawa, still less to pay for their transfer to Guam, are baseless. Even before the Iha revelations, military critics in Japan questioned the rationale behind the Agreement on Reorganization of US Forces in Japan and the Guam Treaty, many viewing them as new forms of coercion and of the secret diplomacy that has long characterized US-Japan dealings on Okinawa. If the Marines are going to Guam anyway, under Pentagon plans, the real design of the Guam Treaty agreements can only be to siphon off further substantial Japanese subsidies to the Pentagon, to provide a foothold for the Marines in an Okinawan resort location, or, perhaps, a fine new facility eventually for Japan's own Self Defense Forces.

The Government of Japan's initial response has been to deny Mayor Iha's claims and the national media has yet to pursue them seriously. They are, however, based on persuasive US documentation and on the evidence of Iha's investigations in Guam. Certainly, they sharply contradict the official rationale for the Henoko base construction and the official understanding of the Guam transfer. Now that the relocation issue has been returned to the drawing board, the newly established coalition body to study and report on the relocation issue has on the table many interesting and potentially explosive questions to examine.

GMcC

15 December 2009



Cape Henoko and Camp Schwab, 2009

After writing an article on Japan-China security arrangements that touched upon Okinawa and the Futenma debacle, I received feedback from readers and became aware that from the end of November 2009 the Mayor of Ginowan City, Iha Yōichi, has been pointing out something that will overturn the commonsense regarding American forces in Japan.

The Marines stationed on Okinawa are pushing forward a plan to move to Guam. In the Japanese mass media and in Diet deliberations it is usually stated that "the relocation from Okinawa to Guam will consist primarily of the Marine command unit," but that "active duty forces including the helicopter unit and ground combat forces will remain."

However, according to the investigations of Mayor Iha and members of the Ginowan City Assembly, American forces have already been implementing a plan to relocate to Guam not only the command unit but also, by 2014, the majority of combat forces and even logistic sections including supply units. Ginowan City Hall, having long dealt with the Futenma Air Station, has developed significant information-gathering skills and powers of analysis.

If the helicopter units and the ground combat units move almost all of their personnel to Guam, there is no longer any need to build a replacement site for Futenma in Okinawa, be it Henoko in Nago city or for that matter anywhere in Japan. This means that the great fuss over the removal to Henoko that has been festering over the past few years may have been completely unnecessary from the beginning. In 2006 the American military came up with a plan to begin the complete transfer of the Marines from Okinawa to Guam. The Japanese government promised to provide a large sum of money for the removal of American troops to Guam; it can only be assumed, therefore, that the Japanese Foreign Ministry and other Japanese government officials knew of these plans to move to Guam in detail. Nonetheless, they have continued to spout the mantra that "the new base at Henoko is necessary for the helicopter units that will remain on Okinawa after Marineheadquarters moves to Guam." ([宜野湾市「普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について」](#))

On November 26 Mayor Iha traveled to Tokyo and explained this to members of the ruling party. On December 9 Iha visited the Foreign Ministry and voiced his contention that all the Marines based at Futenma can be expected to move to Guam. The Foreign Ministry, however, dissented, saying that such information "is counter to our understanding." The meeting ended with the two sides talking past each other. ([伊波宜野湾市長 政府にグアム移転を要請](#))

Of the 8000 troops to be relocated, Marine Headquarters amount to only 3000

One of the grounds for Mayor Iha's assertion that "the United States is sending the majority of Marines stationed on Okinawa to Guam" is derived from the draft of a report issued on November 20 by a U.S. environmental impact survey undertaken in conjunction with the expected relocation of Okinawa-based

Marines to Guam (and to the nearby island of Tinian), which states that nearly all of the units of the Okinawa-based Marines will relocate to Guam. The environmental impact would be impossible to evaluate unless one knew which units will relocate. Thus the report gives details of the relocation, which the US military has been reluctant to publicize. ([Guam and CNMI Military Relocation Draft EIS/OEIS](#))

The environmental impact report consists of 8,100 pages in 9 volumes. Volumes 2 and 3 of the report include details of the relocation of the Marine Corps from Okinawa. The Marine helicopter unit, for example, is (according to the draft report) scheduled for relocation, as are ground combat, assault, and supply forces. Listed for relocation from Okinawa to Guam are: 1) the Command Element, III Marine Expeditionary Force (CE, 3046 persons); 2) the Ground Combat Element, 3rd Marine Division Units (GCE, 1100); 3) Air Combat Element, First Marine Aircraft Wing and subsidiary units (ACE, 1856); 4) and the Logistics Combat Element, 3D Marine Logistics Group (LCE, 2550). The total number of troops in these four Marine Corps units slated to move is 8552, roughly the same as the 8000 number that had been officially announced as the size of the move from Okinawa to Guam. It is thus clearly wrong for the Foreign Ministry and others to maintain that “the 8000 Marines to be relocated to Guam consist primarily of the command unit.” The command unit itself consists of some 3046 persons; the remainder are combat and logistical forces. ([VOLUME 2: MARINE CORPS - GUAM](#)) ([宜野湾市「普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について」](#))

This is not the first time that the American side has reported that it plans to relocate the great majority of the Marines based on Okinawa to Guam. A September 2006 “Guam Integrated Military Development Plan” noted that a hangar, parking space, and helipad will be constructed for a maximum of 67 helicopters that will relocate along with the Marine Aircraft Groups. Since there are 56 helicopters in service at Futenma, this would mean that a greater number are to be moved to Guam. There is a high possibility that all of the helicopters stationed at Futenma will be moved to Guam (the rest may well arrive from the US). ([Guam Integrated Military Development Plan](#))

This “Guam Integrated Military Development Plan” sought to develop Guam into one of the most modern integrated military facilities in the world. During the Cold War, when the United States created a “Eurasian network,” it wanted to station troops in countries including Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, but after the Cold War, there is no longer a need to station troops in each country, making Guam, located at nearly equal distances within 2000 nautical miles from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, and Indonesia, an ideal place to set up a new integrated facility that would allow troops to be withdrawn from bases in Japan and Korea. ([グアムの戦略地図](#))



Map and location of Guam

In concrete terms, the plan not only sought to relocate all structural units of the Marine Corps, but to develop Guam into a major base of operations with joint use by the Navy and Air Force. As such, Guam would replace Okinawa as the true keystone of the Pacific, giving free rein to an integrated American global presence. It is natural to consider that the course this will take is that Okinawa-based Marines will be reduced to something like a remnant small branch, all the rest moving to Guam. ([グアム統合軍事開発計画」より抜粋](#))

The Guam Plan that was Erased in One Week

The “Guam Integrated Military Development Plan” was drawn up in July of 2006 and released in September. A few months earlier, in May, the U.S.-Japan “Roadmap” was agreed upon in order to realize the relocation of American military forces in Okinawa. On this occasion, for the first time, it was decided that the Japanese government would pay most of the moving expenses for the removal of Okinawa-based Marines to Guam (6.1 billion dollars of the total estimated cost of 10.3 billion dollars). The American military, knowing that Japan would pay the construction costs, can be thought to have decided on a plan to develop Guam as a unique global integrated military center. ([再編実施のための日米のロードマップ](#)) ([Link](#))

However, one week after the “Guam Integrated Military Development Plan” was posted on the Department of Defense website, it was deleted. The U.S.-Japan Roadmap had earlier called for the removal of Marines from Okinawa to Guam “in a manner that maintains unit integrity.” This also hinted that the transfer would not only involve Marine Corps headquarters but the relocation of combat units as well. At the same time it noted that “U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) forces remaining on Okinawa will consist of Marine Air-Ground Task Force elements, such as command, ground, aviation, and combat service support, as well as a base support capability.” “Marine Air-Ground Task Force,” however, is a term describing the principal organization for all missions across the range of military operations, and its meaning remains unclear. ([Marine Air-Ground Task Force From Wikipedia](#))

It is suspected that the US and Japanese governments had agreed that, by deliberately keeping ambiguous which portions of the Okinawa-based Marines would relocate to Guam and which would remain, the Marines would continue to stay on Okinawa, the Japanese government would offer "sympathy monies" to the US military, the financially troubled US would divert these to the maintenance of the Guam base, and the Japanese government would maintain the blueprint of subordination to the US that it wished to continue as long as possible. Perhaps the "Guam Integrated Military Development Plan" revealed too much, causing fear that people would wake up to the fact that the Okinawa-based Marines were planning a complete withdrawal. It may have been this fear that caused the site to disappear so quickly. ([日本の官僚支配と沖縄米軍](#))

After the plan was released in 2006, persons associated with the city of Ginowan, referring to the Guam Integrated Military Development Plan, asked the Consul General in Okinawa, "Isn't there a plan for the Marine helicopter unit based in Futenma to relocate to Guam?" The Consul General replied that the plan they referred to was "a mere scrap of paper" and that "no formal decisions have been made." He went on to insist that only the command element of the Okinawa-based Marines would be moving to Guam. However, three years later, on November 20, 2009, the draft environmental impact survey described above followed along lines laid out in the integrated development plan, allowing one to conclude that the American military authorities have been silently proceeding to move most of the Okinawa-based Marines to Guam. ([宜野湾市「普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について」](#))

Ginowan joined neighboring cities and villages in August 2007 in an inspection tour of American bases on Guam, gathering information from American and Guam official sources. As a result, they came to know the following:

- 1) The Vice Commander of Andersen Air Force Base in Guam took them to see the site intended to house facilities for the Okinawa-based Marines Air unit and explained that "65 to 70 Marine aircraft would be coming." At present there are 71 aircraft stationed at Futenma, allowing one to conclude that nearly all of them would be moving to Guam.



U.S. F-15E Strike Eagles and a B-2 Spirit bomber fly in formation over Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. MSNBC on October 7, 2009 reported that "With a planned transfer of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force from Japan, and expansion of military facilities, Guam is to be transformed into a key military hub in the Pacific."

- 2) At Apra Harbor in Guam, a docking area will be newly constructed to allow for berthing facilities for the large amphibious assault ships that are now stationed at Sasebo: the USS Essex (LHD-2), the USS Juneau (LPD-10), the USS Germantown (LSD-42) and the USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43). Plans appear to be in the works to redeploy these ships from Sasebo to Guam. Moreover, it is likely that the 31st Expeditionary Force, consisting of the Marine combat and logistic units that, to prepare for emergencies, must stay near the landing craft, will also move to Guam from its base in Sasebo. ([グアム米軍基地視察報告 2007年8月13日](#))



Apra Harbor on the West side of Guam

In September 2008 the Secretary of the U.S. Navy submitted a report to a House of Representatives Military Committee on plans to develop Guam entitled "The Current Situation of American Military planning in Guam." In it, the names of the units that were to move from Okinawa to Guam were noted, making it further clear that the majority of the Futenma-based units including almost all combat and helicopter units would be moved to Guam. ([宜野湾市「普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について」](#))

A Force of 10,000 Fabricated by the Japanese Foreign Ministry

According to Foreign Ministry reports and major news sources, some 18,000 Marines are stationed on Okinawa and only about 8,000 will be moved to Guam.

This would leave about 10,000 Marines remaining on Okinawa. I too have written articles following this line. However, according to the American Military's Japan headquarters, while the number of troops is "fixed" (*teisū*) at 18,000, the actual number presently in Okinawa is 12,500. Moreover, according to a May 17, 2006 article in the *Okinawa Times*, "The move to Guam involves a mysterious number," the number of family dependents of Marines stationed in Okinawa is 8000. If 9000 family dependents move to Guam as announced, a negative number would remain in Okinawa. ([「在沖縄海兵隊のグアム移転に係る協定」の署名に抗議する](#))

The "actual numbers" of Okinawa-based Marines are: 12,500 on-duty personnel and 8,000 dependents, making a total of 20,500. Of these, the number going to Guam is approximately 8,000 on-duty personnel and 9000 dependents for a total of 17,000. Now, if we close our eyes to the negative number of family members, the total number of Marines (and their dependents) remaining on Okinawa should only be 3,500. As part of an overall American military re-alignment, including the desire for cutbacks, there should be many key personnel who return to the United States, in the end making the number of those who remain on Okinawa even smaller. According to the aforementioned Ginowan City source, "the fixed number" of those Marines who remain on Okinawa is at present an empty number with no troops assigned to actual duties." "An empty number" perhaps refers to the number of people (ghost members) who are not there in fact but are assumed to be there. ([宜野湾市「普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について」](#))

The Japanese Foreign Ministry, for example, has fabricated the number of 10,000 phantom troops, and has succeeded in making Japanese citizens and politicians believe that 10,000 Marines will continue to remain on Okinawa after the transfer. U.S. Marines stationed on Okinawa serve as a symbol of the subordinate status of Japan to the United States. The Japanese Foreign Ministry has long exercised control of Japan's power structure by threatening politicians and business circles with the message that "if we cross the United States there will be terrible consequences", while at the same time, bribing the US military with the right of "continued stationing of 10,000 troops" so that the Japanese government will continue to support sympathy budgets. In this way, the Foreign Ministry maintains the "right to interpret what the US" thinks. ([日本の官僚支配と沖縄米軍](#))

In this fabricated blueprint, the Futenma base will never be returned. At Henoko, within Camp Schwab's Marine base, quite a number of clean barracks and entertainment facilities are already being built. Because the Marines are to relocate to Guam by 2014, these new facilities would only be used for a short time. Because of the fraudulent acts of the Foreign Ministry, an exorbitant amount of tax money has been wasted. This is criminal waste of public funds meant for enhancing their own power. In April 2009 Mayor Iha gave testimony at the Diet saying that, "if the ghost fixed number were to be emphasized, 6.09 billion dollars (contributed by Japan for the relocation of the Marines to Guam) can only be seen as wasted money." ([伊波参考人 2009年4月8日](#))

(Ultimately, after the Marines leave Okinawa, Camp Schwab may well become a base for the SDF, with the barracks at Henoko used to house SDF forces.)

Unwelcome Remarks by Governor Hashimoto on his Willingness to Consider the Relocation of Futenma to Kansai Airport

The Okinawa-based Marines are steadily moving to Guam while leaving a phantom force of 10,000 and continuing to receive huge sums of money from Japan. However, on the premise that 10,000 Marines will remain, talk continues about the need to build a new base in Henoko and the voices of opposition of the Okinawa people grow louder.

Hearing these cries of opposition, the Governor of Osaka, Hashimoto Tōru, made a statement on November 30 in which he said "he would accept the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Kansai International Airport." In fact, two weeks earlier he made the same remarks to a group of reporters. Although his remarks became a topic of discussion in the Diet, the mass media kept totally silent about these happenings. The November 30 press conference was made public by a free lance journalist who posted it on YouTube. Only after people began to talk about it did the mass media, it is said, have no choice but to report on it. ([大手マスコミ黙殺した橋下発言「普天間関西へ」浮上の舞台裏](#)) ([Link](#))

If we see the Japanese mass media as a sort of propaganda machine manipulated by the Foreign Ministry and other bureaucratic organizations, then the reasons for the silence on Governor Hashimoto's remarks can be understood. Because American military authorities intend to move nearly all Marines from Okinawa to Guam, there will be no need for Japan to have a facility to replace Futenma. The argument that "we must find a place to relocate Futenma" must not, in their view, be made concrete. If Hashimoto uses unwarranted care so that the suggestion about moving the Marines to the Kansai Airport really becomes concrete, then you never know if the structure of fraudulence may be exposed. Maybe that is why Hashimoto's speech was ignored as unwelcome.

Iwo Jima has been mentioned as a potential replacement site, and the plan of joining up with Kadena base has been proposed, but for the same reasons there has been little follow up.

(Governor Hashimoto called upon the citizens of Osaka to "think about Okinawa together." This seems to represent the trend of Japanese awakening that connects the Okinawan base problem and division of power, which I have written about in two blogs "Japan waking up to Okinawa" and "The Hidden Multipolarism of the DJP")

Off to the Showdown that will Determine Japan's future

The contention of the mayor of Ginowan City that "The Marines intend to pull out completely from Okinawa to go to Guam" also has been conspicuously absent from the mass media. However, since Mayor Iha discussed these issues with members of the ruling party in late November, Prime Minister Hatoyama has begun to say that "Japan must in the near future make a decision on the Futenma Problem," or that "a complete removal to Guam is under consideration," making the situation suddenly fluid. It is hard to tell whether Prime Minister Hatoyama's mention of the possibility of a complete removal to Guam may have some relation to what Mayor Iha had been pointing out for some time. In the end, all will have to agree that what happens is "the complete relocation to Guam." So the government is beginning to stifle opposing views. ([普天間移設「新しい場所を」首相が指示](#))

The idea of "complete removal to Guam" was not initially advanced by Japan, but came from the United States. Yet people act upon the idea that mass media reports are "facts," and the fabricated story that 10,000 Marines will remain in Okinawa is a "fact" in the head of citizens. As long as this function is sufficiently powerful that even the Prime Minister cannot alert citizens about the mass media playing a propaganda role, Hatoyama has no choice but to use the gesture of "suggesting to the US" the complete relocation to Guam.

Hatoyama has stated that "concerning the removal from Futenma, agreement within the government has to be the first priority, and if necessary and the opportunity arises, he wishes to discuss the issue with the President of the United States." But what is really important is not to re-negotiate the issue with the United States, but rather to coordinate the thinking of the Japanese government and to stop padding the number of Marines involved. If the Foreign Ministry and other bureaucratic organizations were to agree, the Japanese government could set a course of action so that "Okinawa-based Marines would completely relocate to Guam by the year 2014." This would allow Japan to finally be in line with plans the American forces have already been advancing. ([自米首脳会談、要請もできず...米側も消極的](#))

If the complete relocation of Marines to Guam becomes official Japanese government policy, Japan's subordination to the United States based on the fabricated number of 10,000 Marines remaining on Okinawa will evaporate; in turn this will cause the Foreign Ministry to lose power. Therefore, the Foreign Ministry and other organizations under its umbrella are resisting this with full force. What is in store is a major showdown that will determine the future of Japan. The LDP have taken this chance to criticize the Democrat administration. The LDP should adopt a new policy as a conservative party, ridding itself of the subordinate relationship with the United States and its dependence on the bureaucracy, but it is foolish for it to remain the servant of the bureaucrats. ([自民が民主批判の大号令、問題指摘のメモ作成](#))

Within the government, Defense Minister Kitazawa Toshimi has visited Guam. He may well have gone there to see if it is possible for all of the Marines to move from Okinawa to Guam, but it would seem that he was pushed around by the American military authorities there, for while in Guam, he reported that "a complete relocation to Guam is impossible. This would mean a departure from the US-Japan agreement." In response to this, lower house representatives

from the Social Democratic Party criticized Kitazawa saying "how could he stay so briefly, see so little, and conclude that it was impossible?" Fighting has broken out within the ruling coalition as well. ([社民・重野氏「ちよろっと見て結論出るのが」 グラム移設で防衛相に不快感](#))

If the Japanese government came together on a policy of "complete relocation to Guam" then whether Japan would continue to pay for the relocation expenses after 2014 would naturally emerge as a problem for Japan and the US. The American military at the outset announced plans to build a large military facility on Guam at a cost of 10.7 billion dollars (of which 6.1 billion would be paid by Japan). However this cost does not include the construction of new roads and water and sewage systems, electric power supply and other additional construction costs that will result from an increase of military-related personnel and vehicles on the island. In July 2008 the American GAO (Government Accountability Office) issued a report that criticized the military saying that the relocation to Guam would increase the island's population by 14 percent. ([GAO says cost of Guam move will exceed estimate](#))

The American military has a habit of operating beyond budget; from around thirty years ago its operations have greatly exceed its budget. The American military may have been looking to Japan to make up for the shortfall, but the Hatoyama government is seeking to withdraw from a position of subordination to the United States and to emphasize its autonomy or independence, so it will be reluctant to dole out funds, using the pretext of financial difficulties. During the recent visit to Guam by Defense Minister Kitazawa, the Governor of Guam for the first time announced his opposition to the relocation of Marines from Okinawa to Guam, but behind his opposition can be seen a request to Japan to help pay for the costs of infrastructure and new facilities.

The American government is also experiencing financial difficulties, and if Japan is unwilling to pay the costs of relocating the Marines to Guam, they may well not send them, remaining instead in Futenma. However, if they do this, popular opposition in Okinawa will grow louder and the Hatoyama administration may well demand, without giving money, that the Marines leave. This is a demand that the Philippines and other so-called "normal countries" have made. Ultimately, the US military had no choice but to leave without receiving additional funds from Japan. In this case, it is conceivable that it will be taken care of by reducing the number of Marines who relocate to Guam and increasing the number of people returning to the United States. The common sense of the world that "a one-time resolution by the government or the congress can make the US military leave", which the Japanese have been made to consider impossible, will now be put into practice.

There will be an election for the governor of Okinawa in 2010. Many people support a movement to urge Ginowan City Mayor Iha to stand as a candidate. If Mayor Iha becomes governor, Okinawa Prefecture will undoubtedly urge an early removal of American forces from Okinawa that Tokyo cannot ignore. This may lead to Okinawa's freeing itself from its status as an island of American military bases.

This article was originally published at Tanaka Sakai's website on December 10, 2009. [官僚が隠す沖縄海兵隊グラム全移転](#)

Tanaka Sakai is the creator, researcher, writer and editor of Tanaka News (www.tanakanews.com), a Japanese-language news service on Japan and the world. This is the sequel to an earlier article called "China-Japan Defense Cooperation and the Okinawa-based US Military Base." Both of the original Japanese texts of December 10 and December 15, 2009 are available at his site, [田中宇の国際ニュース解説](#)

Tanaka Sakai's new book is 『日本が「対米従属」を脱する日』—多極化する新世界秩序の中で—
[The Day Japan Breaks with "Subordination to the US": Amidst the Multipolarizing New World Order](#)

Gavan McCormack is emeritus professor at Australian National University, coordinator of The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus, author, most recently, of [Client State: Japan in the American Embrace](#) (in English, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean).

William Steele, professor of history, International Christian University, is author of Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History . His most recent book is [Japan and Russia: Three Centuries of Mutual Images](#).

Recommended citation: Tanaka Sakai, "Japanese Bureaucrats Hide Decision to Move All US Marines out of Okinawa to Guam," The Asia-Pacific Journal, 51-4-09, December 21, 2009.