

U.S. Activists Protest “Military Colonization” of Okinawa



Tokyo, January 31 (RHC)-- Over 100 prominent U.S. activists have expressed solidarity with the Japanese people, who are against a U.S. military base hosting thousands of U.S. troops on Japan's Okinawa Island.

In a statement, the activists -- including the filmmakers Oliver Stone and Michael Moore -- voiced their support for the residents of the island in their struggle for peace and dignity. The statement reads: "Not unlike the 20th century U.S. civil rights struggle, Okinawans have non-violently pressed for the end to their military colonization. We support the people of Okinawa in their non-violent struggle for peace, dignity, human rights and protection of the environment."

The U.S. military base in Okinawa has been a thorny issue in relations between Japan and the United States. Washington and Tokyo agreed in 1996 to relocate the Futenma air base from a more congested part of Okinawa to the southern city of Nago, but opposition from local people and environmental groups has prevented construction in the small town of nearly 60,000 people.

According to the relocation plans, the Futenma air base would be moved from Ginowan city to the thinly populated Henoko district in Nago, due to concerns over high levels of aircraft noise, accidents in civilian areas and rampant crimes, including rape and abuse, by the U.S. soldiers stationed at the base.

The move is reportedly part of a broader plan to reduce the U.S. military's presence in Okinawa, currently home to thousands of American troops. Latest opinion polls by Okinawa media outlets indicate that about 84 percent of Nago's residents oppose moving the base to Henoko, but Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which supports the move, is trying to win voters with pledges of more development funds for the city.

Documents leaked by Snowden have shown, among other things, how the NSA collects phone records of all American citizens and tracks the use of U.S.-based web servers by all people around the world.

Edward Snowden has repeatedly maintained he's no longer in possession of any of the documents he took from the NSA, having passed them on to journalists to report at their discretion. Clapper was appearing before the same panel he was caught lying to last year about the deliberate collection of Americans' personal information.

In other news, Edward Snowden was honored with his second nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Two Swedish lawmakers say they tapped Snowden for "whistleblowing that has contributed to a more stable and peaceful world order."

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