

# Why Build a New Base on Okinawa When the Marines are Relocating to Guam?: Okinawa Mayor Challenges Japan and the US 沖縄の海兵隊のほとんどがグアムに行くのに、なんで辺野古が必要なんですか?」ー宜野湾市長 伊波洋一 日テレインタビュー 完全版

Iha Yoichi, Satoko Oka Norimatsu

**Why Build a New Base on Okinawa When the Marines are Relocating to Guam?: Okinawa Mayor Challenges Japan and the US (Japanese Original Text at [Peace Philosophy Centre](#))**

**Iha Yoichi, Interviewed on Nihon TV, December 11, 2009**

**Translation by Satoko Norimatsu and Dan Aizawa**

**Introduction by Satoko Norimatsu**

*Below is a translation of the transcript of an interview with Iha Yoichi, Mayor of Okinawa's Ginowan City, broadcast on Nihon TV's "News 24" on December 11, 2009. Ginowan City is the reluctant host of the controversial Futenma Marine Air Station, and this interview took place shortly after Iha had made a series of presentations on the so-called "Futenma Base transfer" issue to senior figures in the Hatoyama government including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense. Iha and his staff, based on exhaustive research into U.S. documents, have concluded that the Pentagon is planning to move most of the Marine Corps units and personnel from Okinawa to Guam. Central to US regional military reorganization plans is a recent Guam Environmental Impact Statement pointing to the large scale move of the Marines from Okinawa. This finding is at odds with the widely-held understanding by the Japanese government and media that the*

*majority of the Marines in Okinawa, as many as 10,000, will remain even after the relocation of 8,000 Marines and 9,000 family members to Guam under the May 2006 Japan-U.S. "Roadmap Agreement" that sealed the U.S.-Japan agreement.*

*The media in both Japan and the United States has been generally silent on the points Iha makes. But if he is right, the fact that the U.S. is planning to move most of the Marines out of Okinawa makes it unnecessary to proceed with the planned construction of a costly, environmentally damaging new base in Henoko. The December 11 Nihon TV interview is one of the very few instances of mainstream media coverage of Iha's argument. During the 30-minute interview, Iha gave a concise, comprehensive, and accessible explanation of a series of U.S. Government documents that reveal the plan to move the strategic base of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (headquarters and operational units included) from Okinawa to Guam. He underlined the fact that the U.S. and Japanese Governments have failed thus far to explain the plan to the parliament and people of Japan, even though it is Japan that is to bear 60 per cent of the cost of the Marine relocation to Guam, US\$6.9 billion.*

*Iha's argument challenges the conventional political and media frame of thinking according to which the Hatoyama government now faces a decision over whether the Futenma Air*

Station is to be “relocated” within Okinawa, elsewhere in Japan, or outside Japan. Drawing on extensive public documentation, Iha suggests that the “relocation” of the Futenma Air Station, in the sense of construction of an alternative base, is not necessary. Futenma can be closed and returned to the people of Okinawa, and the shoreline and the rich ecological diversity of Henoko can be preserved intact. Indeed, Iha strikes at the very heart of the rationale jointly accepted by the U.S. and the former LDP government of Japan for the construction of the base.

Shortly after this interview, on December 15, DPJ Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio announced that he would postpone a decision on the issue until mid-2010. The U.S. repeatedly expressed the wish that the agreement be swiftly implemented, but it also expressed understanding of Hatoyama’s December 15 decision, and the careful process that Hatoyama has chosen with consideration to the feelings of the Okinawan people and his domestic political problems on the eve of elections.

Intensive diplomatic exchanges continue around the Futenma issue, in which various scenarios continue to be suggested, but in which there has been no serious discussion of the option of eliminating the Futenma Base without replacement. DPJ Secretary General Ozawa Ichiro on December 29, remarking on the beauty of the seas off Henoko, wondered whether Ie and Shimoji, smaller Okinawan islands, might serve as alternative Futenma relocation sites. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano Hirofumi visited Okinawa on January 9 to study the issue, and on January 10 Fukushima Mizuho, leader of the Social Democratic Party (a member of the governing coalition), met with U.S. Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, Chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment. Fukushima expressed opposition to the Henoko

construction plan and Faleomavaega noted that the sentiment of the Okinawan people was “the key consideration”. Foreign Minister Okada and Secretary of State Clinton, meeting in Hawaii on January 12, were officially upbeat about the prospects for the long-lasting bilateral cooperation, evidently seeking to shift the focus away from the wrangle over Futenma.

Iha and Ginowan City remain hopeful that the Hatoyama Administration will in due course make an informed decision and are encouraged that the new government is at least prepared to listen to them when the previous LDP-led Government simply brushed Iha aside at the department-chief level when he visited Tokyo. The media too may slowly be changing. According to a Ginowan City official, NHK, the national broadcaster, is planning a special program on the issue, addressing Iha’s argument, for broadcast after the critical Nago Mayoral Election on January 24th, Nago being the jurisdiction that includes Henoko.

At any rate, it is remarkable that the mayor and the staff of a small city of 92,000 people on the marginalized island have undertaken such extensive research in the U.S. national archives and bravely challenged the national government and the U.S. government with the findings that expose their incompetence.

I would like to thank Gavan McCormack and Mark Selden for their editorial advice on the translation and suggestions for the introduction, and Iha Yoichi, Fukuhara Tomoaki, and Taira Hitomi at Ginowan City Office for their cooperation.

Satoko Norimatsu

January 13, 2010



### **Ginowan City Office Rooftop Message Addressed to Military Aircraft Flying Overhead**

#### **The December 15, 2009 Press Conference**

*Question: I am the MC of this evening, Konishi Miho.... Today's "Key Person" is Iha Yoichi, Mayor of Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture. The decision on relocation of Futenma Air Station has been postponed to next year. As mayor of Ginowan City that hosts Futenma Base, I am sure you have been listening to the voices of the city's residents about the relocation of what is said to be the world's most dangerous base. I would have thought that you would just be happy if the base got relocated somewhere, but I have heard that you are saying that the whole base is to be relocated to Guam. You have been in Tokyo since yesterday. Whom have you met with and what have you discussed?*

Iha: I met with the Parliamentary Secretary for Defense, Nagashima Akihisa. I also met with the Vice-Ministers for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet Office, and I have made

my submissions. The Futenma Problem has really become a problem for the government, but the issue has tended to be one of whether or not to move the base to Henoko. However, although the U.S. government has been steadily moving ahead with plans to move the Futenma Marines to Guam, and the Japanese government is spending \$6 billion towards funding the move, the Japanese people and Diet, and the people of Okinawa, have never been given a proper explanation of these plans. In the U.S., various documents, including an Environmental Impact Assessment on the relocation of the base to Guam, have been made public; I want to make this known in detail in Japan. The problems surrounding Henoko and U.S. bases within Okinawa Prefecture should be reviewed. The question is: why should a base be required in Henoko when most of the Marines in Okinawa are being relocated to Guam, and the Futenma Base itself is going to be moved to Guam.



**Aerial view of densely populated Ginowan City, with Futenma Air Station occupying 25% of the city's land.**

*Question: Let me ask our first question, Mayor Iha. Is a complete relocation to Guam possible? Defense Minister Kitazawa went to Guam. He has stated that a*

*complete relocation of facilities to Guam would be impossible; this is different from what you have been saying. What do you think about the Defense Minister's comments?*

Iha: In the "Roadmap" agreement (United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation, May 2006), Futenma's air capabilities were to be relocated to Henoko, but there was no agreement on relocating the Marine units from Futenma to Henoko. However, until October 2005, just half a year earlier, the agreement (U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future) was that the Marine units would also be relocated to Henoko. In May 2006, the U.S. Department of Defense changed its plan and decided that all Marine units in Okinawa would be relocated to Guam.

*Question: There would be no Marines in Okinawa?*

Iha: Most of them will be gone. It is public knowledge that 8,000 Marines will be relocated to Guam from Okinawa, and 9,000 of their family members will also be moved to Guam. But the number of the family members is less than 9,000 and at present it is said to be actually less than 8,000.

*Question: Are they just being loose with the figures? What does that mean?*

Iha: The Japanese government has agreed to build homes for 9,000 family members in Guam. Ultimately the Marine units relocating to Guam will total 10,600, but that figure is to be made up of units from around the world.

*Question: Is Defense Minister*

*Kitazawa wrong?*

Iha: Mr. Kitazawa is talking about constructing a replacement for Futenma Air Station in Guam, which is different from the existing U.S.-Japan agreement. Under the U.S.-Japan agreement, Futenma's replacement facilities were to be built in Henoko, but the reference is to base facilities, not Marine units. Building a new airbase in Henoko and building a new airbase in Guam are two completely different matters. There are already two air fields in Guam, so it is unlikely they will build another. But the reason behind wanting to build an airbase in Henoko was because the first agreement had decided that the Marine units would also be moved to Henoko.



**Iha making his case at the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, April 8, 2009**

*Question: So why then did Defense Minister Kitazawa make a trip to Guam at this juncture? ... Could it be possible that Mr. Kitazawa went to Guam to see whether it would actually be possible to completely relocate U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam?*

Iha: I think he probably learned other things there. According to the previous (2005) agreement, only the headquarters of the Marine units was to be moved to Guam. The operational units would not be moved. This is what the government explained. Much of the debate regarding the relocation has been based on this information. However, this is a debate surrounding the agreement up to October 2005, and the situation changed afterwards. Under the 2005 agreement, the headquarters of the III Marine Expeditionary Force were to be moved to either Guam or Hawaii. At that point, there were no talks on relocating any of the other Marine units to Guam. However, by May 2006, the U.S. Military had decided to turn Guam into a stronghold; and subsequently it decided to move all 8,000 Marines in Okinawa to Guam. This plan was devised in July 2006. We have been able to read the documents on this plan, which is known as the Guam Integrated Military Development Plan.

For the past three years the environmental impact of this Plan has been examined, and the EIS/OEIS (Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement) Statement was released on November 20, 2009.

*Question: Yes we have those documents here with us as well. I don't wish to press you, but what do you really think Defense Minister Kitazawa meant by his recent actions and statements?*

Iha: We learned a lot from these statements. We learned that the U.S. Marine presence in Okinawa is strictly tactical. This means that up until recently the Marines in Okinawa were there for purposes of forward deployment, to anywhere. That function is now to be moved to Guam. A small contingent of troops will remain in Okinawa, but for Okinawa alone, not for redeployment elsewhere. In the past, U.S. troops would be posted to Okinawa and then

they would be redeployed to places like Iraq and elsewhere. Okinawa was the center for deployment of troops, but by 2014 troop deployment capabilities will be moved to Guam entirely.

*Question: I guess Mr. Kitazawa had your arguments in mind when he made his statement today. It sounded as though he had heard that there was a plan to move all the Okinawa Marines to Guam but thought it would be difficult to do so.*

Iha: The most important consideration is that everyone, including the media, is thinking about the October 2005 argument. In other words, everyone thinks that only the headquarters will move to Guam and that the Marines will stay in Okinawa. However, this is a misunderstanding. I think Defense Minister Kitazawa, by going to Guam, has understood this. He must have had such a briefing there, from the relevant departments. I am pretty sure that he would have been informed of the change in the position of Okinawa, though we need to ask him to be really sure.

*Question: But that did not come up in Mr. Kitazawa's statement today.*

Iha: One point that did come up was that we now understand that the troops in Okinawa are there for tactical, not strategic reasons. It is probably difficult to understand, but let me put it this way. Do you know how many Marines there are in Okinawa right now?

*Question: How many?*

Iha: The "quota" for U.S. Marines in Okinawa is said to be 18,000; however, there are only

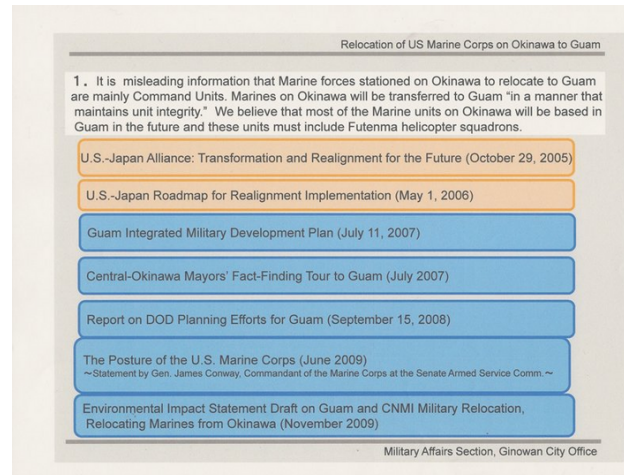
approximately 11,000 at the moment. If, from those 11,000 Marines, 8,000 are relocated to Guam, no more than 3,000 will be left in Okinawa. However, the Japanese government claims that 10,000 Marines will remain in Okinawa.

*Question: As (Foreign Minister) Okada is saying?*

Iha: Yes. There can't be more than 3,000 Marines remaining. It doesn't make sense to think of Okinawa continuing to have 10,000 Marines once Guam becomes the Marines' stronghold.

*Question: After listening to you speak, there seems to be a wide gap between what Mr. Okada and Mr. Kitazawa have been saying and what you have been telling us. Which is the truth? I would like you to explain more. What do you think of the way the Japanese government has been handling this issue?*

Iha: The biggest problem is that the U.S. side has failed to explain in detail its Guam relocation plan. There has been no detailed explanation since the May 2006 "Roadmap," even though the situation has changed considerably since then. (Iha shows a document illustrating the time-line of events.)



**Time Line of Events 2005 to Present. Iha argues that people of Japan have not been informed of developments since 2006 - in blue in the above chart.**

The situation has changed since May 2006. The Guam Integrated Military Development Plan was drawn up, and in 2007 the mayors of Okinawa's central municipalities went to Guam. In Guam, the Okinawa mayors, myself included, were given detailed explanations on where the Marines from Okinawa would go, where the Futenma helicopter units were to be located. We were given detailed explanation on each of these. On September 15th, 2008 the U.S. Secretary of the Navy presented to the House of Representatives, a detailed document on the relocation of troops; particularly on the relocation of the various marine units to Guam. In June 2009 the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps presented to the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services a detailed document on the 8,000 Marines that were to be relocated to Guam. This document assessed the situation at Futenma, noting that Futenma had become surrounded by local residents and come to be located in a highly populated area. The document assesses the problems of Futenma and the reasons for relocation. However, the shift in the situation from May 2006 to November of 2009 has not been explained in Japan; it has not been explained in

the Diet, and the government has not explained it to the Japanese people.



**Iha (second from the left) and Central Okinawan Mayors being briefed by Col. Joel Westa at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, July 2007**

*Question: It seems strange, as you say, that moves to relocate to Henoko can proceed without such explanation. Let me proceed to the second question. Why has there been no progress on the base relocation? Is someone at fault? Is it the Government of Japan? The U.S.? Or the Okinawan people? Where does the problem lie?*

Iha: The people of Okinawa are strongly opposed to relocating the base within Okinawa. It has been 64 years since the war, and 13 years ago, in 1996, there was an agreement. At that time, there was a base relocation plan with a possibility of removal, but that was rejected. The people of Okinawa are strongly opposed to constructing any more new bases. Okinawa Prefecture comprises just 0.6% of Japan's land mass, and yet 75% of Japan's U.S. military installations are located in Okinawa. The people of Okinawa will not accept a resolution to this problem that involves removing a base simply to build it in another location. This would be

unacceptable. This is the greatest opposition, and this is why relocation within the prefecture has been opposed so strongly

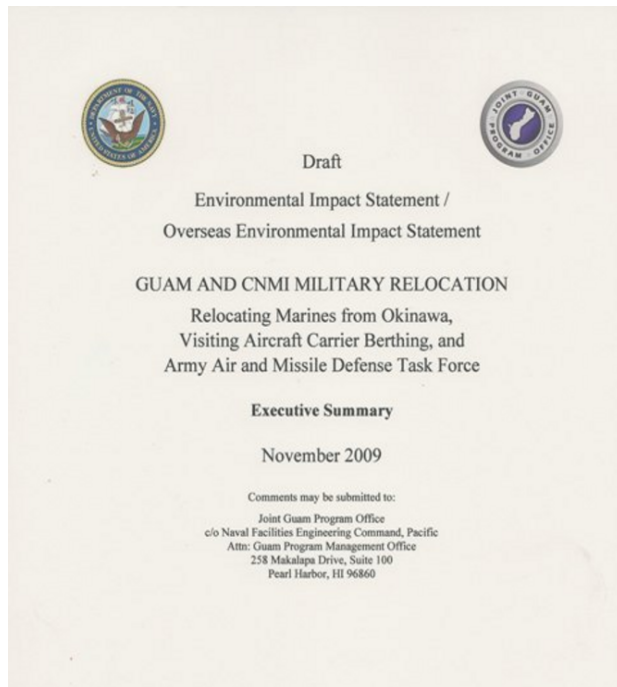


**U.S. Military Facilities on the main island of Okinawa (from the website of Okinawa Prefecture)**

*Question: So is it just the sentiment of the Okinawan people that has led to the Japanese government dragging its feet on the matter for so long? Do you think there might also be issues concerning concessions, maybe stakeholders who have something to gain by construction?*

Iha: That has been said a lot by the media, but we are not debating from that vantage point. For a long time it has been said, and it is the government's position, that U.S. military bases were a necessity under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and the government assumed from the beginning that there was nowhere else to site them but Okinawa. In other words, the reason why Henoko was chosen under the previous LDP government was that it was decided that there was nowhere else to build a new base. The sentiments of us Okinawans were always trampled upon.

Question: Let us return to this document...



(The front page of the document)

This is the material on which you base your argument that the total Marine relocation to Guam is possible. Dated November, 2009, it is titled "Environmental Impact Statement," and I understand it is a document that shows how new bases impact upon every aspect of the environment, including the area's residents and its nature. It is an 8,000-page document that is publically available on the Internet. You have concentrated on a particular section entitled "Global Alternatives Analysis Summary" (Page 69, Volume 1), which rates the candidate locations using three criteria. Could you explain this for us?

Alternative Site	Criteria		
	Alliance and Treaty Requirements	Response Time to Southeast Asia	Freedom of Action
Okinawa (Current)		+	—
Hawaii	—	—	+
West Coast U.S. (including Alaska)	—	—	+
Marianas (Guam)	+	+	+
Philippines	—	+	—
Thailand	—	+	—
Australia	—	+	—
Singapore	—	+	—
Korea	—	+	—

### Global Alternatives Analysis Summary

Iha: The process of relocating Marines from Okinawa started in 2002, when the U.S. began a global realignment of its bases. Within this larger picture Okinawa's Marines were also included and where they should be relocated. When looking for candidates for a replacement location for Okinawa, Guam got the top score, three stars, as a possible candidate, and Okinawa got only one star.

Question: Okinawa only has one plus. So you are saying that Guam, which got three stars, is a better relocation site.

Iha: It is not me but the U.S. military that came to such a view. The "Roadmap" was agreed based on this decision on Guam by the U.S. I don't know if the Japanese government has been given a proper explanation of this U.S. stance on Guam, but regardless of this, the U.S. will go through on its decision to relocate to Guam. Relocating to Guam from Futenma is not to solve the Futenma problem, but is part of a larger U.S. strategic military decision. I believe that the U.S. will begin large scale relocation of Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2010.

Question: So all of this has been released by the U.S. military? Surely it cannot be just you who

*has looked through and analyzed these documents; important people from Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Defense (MoD) must have gone through these documents, analyzed them, and reached the same conclusion as you?*

Iha: No. They have not. That is the strange thing about Japan.

*Question: Well, surely the MOFA people had better see them....*

Iha: This is where the biggest problem lies. The Japanese government has agreed to spend over \$6.9 billion for this relocation, but the Japanese government doesn't really know what it is going to be spent on.

*Question: I wonder is it possible that they know all of this, but since for diplomatic reasons there was no way of reversing, they just let the plan proceed....?*

Iha: No. That's not the case. Last week when I met with Foreign Minister Okada, he said he had never heard of what I told him. He had not heard from the US about the Environmental Impact Statement, or about the other things I had told him.

*Question: In other words, he only knew for the first time when you, Mayor Iha, told him?*

Iha: Even hearing what I told him, he said that could not be so. But because of what I as Mayor have been saying, Mr. Okada has decided to reexamine the question of the 8,000

Marines who are supposed to be moving.

Foreign Minister Okada understands there to be 18,000 Marines in Okinawa right now (the "quota"), but the actual number is about 11,000, so there are 7,000 missing somehow. His understanding is that after the relocation of 8,000 Marines to Guam, there will still be 10,000 remaining in Okinawa. This is the explanation he received from the U.S. So this is why he is not aware of the other plan and does not think the Marine's operational units will also go to Guam (He thinks it is just headquarters that is to move to Guam.)

*Question: How can this have happened? Basic procedures are not being followed if such information is not being properly conveyed.*

Iha: This has been going on for the past three years. During that time, the plan was decided in July 2006, and the documents then uploaded in September onto the U.S. Pacific Command homepage. We downloaded this document, translated it, and analyzed and explained what it was about. (Shows the document "Guam Integrated Military Development Plan.") This is that plan of September 2006. Next is this document about the airfield (presenting the document). Here you can see in detail which unit goes where at Anderson Air Base [Guam]. Here (pointing at the map) are the areas to be constructed at the expense of the Japanese Government.



**A Map of Guam from the Guam Integrated Military Development Plan, translated and analyzed by Ginowan City**

This plan has been around for three years. Now the environmental assessment has been done and the Environmental Impact Statement issued. Once revised in accord with opinions received, the plan will, if approved, then be implemented. Approval is anticipated by July 30, 2010.

*Question: So an already existing plan is being reviewed. It is not that the plan is still being drawn up. The fact is, as written in this plan, that a new base is to be built to accommodate the Futenma Marines (shows document of the plan). Isn't it extremely important that this be discussed?*

Iha: You are right. Japan has already decided to pay 30 billion yen for the relocation construction, and the U.S. will pay more than \$300 million, bringing the total to about 70 billion yen. This allocation of funds has been decided for the 2010 fiscal plan, so construction will begin in 2010, and the first units from Okinawa will begin relocating to Guam in 2010. At first it will only be the

command elements, depending on how the actual construction proceeds, but starting from 2010, and then through 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 all units from Okinawa will be relocated to Guam.

*Question: It is still possible that the plan might be sent back to the drawing board?*

Iha: No, that is not possible. The U.S. has decided, not necessarily in order to solve the Futenma Problem, but anyway it has decided to build a Marine base in Guam as part of its global strategic plans. That means that the Marines in Okinawa will be relocated to Guam.

*Question: So what does it mean when some people talk about the possibility of sending it back to the drawing board?*

Iha: I believe such a statement is a threat used to push the Henoko construction. Relocation to Guam will not be put back to the drawing board. This is because in April, relocation to Guam was already decided by a treaty, the Guam Treaty. According to this treaty, Japan agreed to pay \$6.9 billion and the U.S. agreed to pay \$4 billion to implement the relocation plan. However, this is quite distinct from construction of a Futenma replacement facility at Henoko. As has been revealed in the Diet, these proceedings do not mean that the U.S. is under any obligation to relocate Futenma. Despite this, work on the Guam transfer continues.

*Question: Do you have anything you wish to say to the Japanese government?*

Iha: As I have said now, I want the government

to give a detailed explanation on the Guam relocation. Japan has agreed to spend a huge sum of money for it, and yet the Japanese government has failed over the past three years to make a detailed explanation of the plans. Since the biggest reason for this is the failure of the U.S. government to inform the Japanese government, I ask the Japanese government to pressure the U.S. government to give a detailed explanation as to which units from Okinawa will move to Guam, and in what form they will be relocated. The Henoko issue should only be discussed after these points have been clarified - whether building a base there is really necessary. Is a new base necessary at Henoko? In my view, no. The reason should be made clear to the people of Japan, and to the Diet. I believe this is the responsibility of the Hatoyama Government. I want the Hatoyama Government to resolve the Futenma problem by cancelling the construction of the Henoko base, and I want it to take up the question of removal of the Marines from Okinawa as a whole.

*Question: I get an impression that you are speaking on behalf of all Okinawans, not just as Mayor of Ginowan City. Have you thought about running for election as Okinawa Governor in November 2010?*

Iha: That is a separate issue. A lot will happen between now and then. Right now I want to focus on solving the Futenma problem.



**The quiet shore of Henoko, Nago, where protesters have sat in for the last eight years to stop the construction of the Futenma Air Station “replacement facility”**

#### Links

Ginowan City Homepage

[宜野湾市ホームページ](#)

Iha Yoichi Presentation “The Marine Corps Relocation to Guam and Elimination of Dangers of Futenma Air Station”

[沖縄からグアムへの海兵隊移転と普天間飛行場の危険性除去](#)

Iha Yoichi Presentation “About the Possibility of Relocation of Futenma Air Station to Guam”

[普天間基地のグアム移転の可能性について](#)

*Iha Yoichi, raised and educated in Okinawa, pursued his career in the City Office of Ginowan and as a Member of the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly before he became Mayor of Ginowan in 2003. Iha has led numerous local and global initiatives for realizing a*

*peaceful Okinawa without military bases.*

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*This introduction and translation were prepared for The Asia-Pacific Journal.*

*Recommended citation: Iha Yoichi, "Why Build a New Base on Okinawa When the Marines are*

*Relocating to Guam?: Okinawa Mayor Challenges Japan and the US," The Asia-Pacific Journal, 3-1-10, January 18, 2010. 沖縄の海兵隊のほとんどがグアムに行くのに、なんで辺野古が必要なんですか？」ー宜野湾市長 伊波洋一 日テレインタビュー完全版*

See the following articles related to Okinawa base issues and U.S.-Japan relations:

Tanaka Sakai, [Japanese Bureaucrats Hide Decision to Move All US Marines out of Okinawa to Guam](#)

Study Group on Okinawan External Affairs, [Okinawan Message to President Obama: Withdraw the Marines](#)

Gavan McCormack, [The Battle of Okinawa 2009: Obama vs Hatoyama](#)