



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

January 21, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Berkeley Peace & Justice Commission

Submitted by: Igor Tregub, Chairperson

Subject: Resolution: Oppose the new U.S. base construction in Henoko-Oura Bay of Okinawa

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution in opposition of the new U.S. base construction in Henoko-Oura Bay of Okinawa.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

A new U.S. military base is being constructed in the Pacific Ocean, in Okinawa's Oura Bay in the Henoko region of Okinawa. Oura Bay is one of the most bio-diverse ecosystems on the planet with over 5,300 species and world-renowned coral reef systems. Fully 262 of the species in Oura Bay are endangered, including the dugong, a medium-sized marine mammal, which have been closely monitored internationally by environmental groups due to its diminishing numbers as well as its status as a designated of indigenous historical value.

The construction of this base has been repeatedly opposed by the Okinawan people. Most recently on February 24, 2019, over 70% of Okinawans voted in opposition to the construction of this U.S. Marine Corps base.

At its regular meeting on November 4, 2019, the Peace and Justice Commission recommended that the Council of the City of Berkeley adopt a resolution opposing the new U.S. base construction in Henoko-Oura Bay of Okinawa. The vote for the attached resolution was as follows:

M/S/C: Bohn/Meola
 Ayes: Askary, Bohn, Lippman, Maran, Meola, Morizawa, Pancoast, Pierce, Rodriguez
 Noes: None
 Abstain: None
 Absent: al-Bazian, Gussman, Tregub
 Excused: None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental impacts or opportunities associated with the subject of this report. This resolution is a statement against U.S. involvement in grave environmental destruction in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Okinawa.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Japanese government, in partnership with the U.S. government, is causing irreversible harm to the ecosystem by dropping concrete blocks on top of precious coral and suffocating the marine habitat. The construction is already adversely impacting the region, contributing to species collapse and furthering environmental damage already sustained from rapid climate change.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position.

CONTACT PERSON

Igor Tregub, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission

Nina Goldman, Commission Secretary, City Manager's Office (510) 981-7537

Attachment:

1. Resolution in opposition of the new U.S. base construction in Henoko-Oura Bay of Okinawa

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.
OPPOSE THE NEW U.S. BASE CONSTRUCTION IN HENOKO-OURA BAY OF
OKINAWA

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070); and

WHEREAS, a new U.S. military base is being constructed in the Pacific Ocean, in Okinawa's Oura Bay,ⁱ in the Henoko region of Okinawa. Oura Bay is one of the most bio-diverse ecosystems on the planet with over 5,300 species and world-renowned coral reef systems. 262 of the species in Oura Bay are endangered, including the dugong, a medium-sized marine mammal, which have been closely monitored internationally by environmental groups due to its diminishing numbers as well as its status as a designated cultural propertyⁱⁱ of indigenous historical value; and

WHEREAS, the Japanese government, in partnership with the U.S. government, is causing irreversible harm to the ecosystem by dropping concrete blocks on top of precious coral and suffocating the marine habitat with dirt and concrete. The construction is already adversely impacting the region, contributing to species collapse and furthering environmental damage already sustained from rapid climate change; and

WHEREAS, the construction of this base has been repeatedly opposed by the Okinawan people.ⁱⁱⁱ Most recently on February 24, 2019, over 70% of Okinawans voted in opposition to the construction of this particular U.S. Marine Corps base; and

WHEREAS, Okinawa has already been forced to host nearly 70% of U.S. military facilities in Japan^{iv} despite consisting of only 0.6% of Japan's national landmass; and

WHEREAS, this treatment of Okinawa as a colonial military outpost has continued since the Japanese annexation of the once sovereign nation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Then during WWII, Okinawan land was destroyed in a war between U.S. and Japan, killing almost a third of the entire Okinawan population. From there, the U.S. construction of military bases began against the will of the Okinawan people and continues today;^v and

WHEREAS, the Okinawan people have employed all legal and peaceful means of opposing this new base from being forced upon them – from elders staging nonviolent protests and sit-ins to Okinawan governors challenging the Japanese government through the legal system, only to be disregarded in Tokyo and Washington, D.C. Okinawan Diaspora members of Global Uchinanchu Alliance (GUA)^{vi} have come together to reach out for support in this international crisis; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has expressed its solidarity with the Okinawan people by passing a resolution in support of the immediate halting of new U.S. military base

construction at Henoko, Okinawa, passed by the Berkeley City Council on September 9, 2015.^{vii}

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City stands in solidarity with the people of Okinawa in demanding the immediate and complete halt of the U.S. Marine Corps base construction and ocean destruction in Henoko, Okinawa.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley ask the City Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to Representative Barbara Lee and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, and to the chairs of the U.S. House and Senate Committees on Armed Services.

ⁱ “Expansion of US Military base puts endangered Henoko Bay Dugong at risk on Okinawa, Japan”, May, 1, 2019 (last update), <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/henoko-bay-dugong-or-us-base-for-okinawa>

ⁱⁱ “Okinawa Dugong Lawsuit Judge asks why US govt did not consult with environmental experts and Okinawans about Landfill, Construction Impact on Okinawa Dugong Cultural Heritage”, June 28, 2018, <https://tenthousandthingsfromkyoto.blogspot.com/2018/06/okinawa-dugong-lawsuit-judge-asks-why.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ “We shall overcome (戦場ぬ止み Ikusaba Nu Tudumi)” Trailer, YouTube video, October 3, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEc_D_meOBY&list=PL55Jwk9JymqyuApWq7gi08uWQKyZhK3cH&index=20&t=0s

^{iv} Okinawa Prefectural Government, September 2011, “US Military Base Issues in Okinawa.” <https://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/chijiko/kichitai/documents/us%20military%20base%20issues%20in%20okinawa.pdf>

^v “Message to Obama from a Veteran in Okinawa,” YouTube video, February 29, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p5kXBod1gg&list=PL55Jwk9JymqyuApWq7gi08uWQKyZhK3cH&index=4&t=11s>

^{vi} [Global Uchinānchu Alliance, https://uchinanchu.com/](https://uchinanchu.com/)

^{vii} Resolution in support of the immediate halting of new U.S. military base construction at Henoko, Okinawa, passed through the Berkeley City Council on September 9, 2015: https://www.cityofberkeley.info/...Council/.../2017-05-30_Item_34_Support_the_Immediate_Halting.aspx