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Yoshihiko Noda, Prime Minister
Koichiro Genba, Foreign Minister
Satoshi Morimoto, Defense Minister
Barack Obama, President of the United States
John V. Roos, U.S. Ambassador to Japan
Kenneth Glueck, Okinawa Area Coordinator and Commanding General of III Marine Expeditionary Force
Alfred Magleby, U.S. Consul General of Naha, Okinawa

October 17, 2012

Protest Statement against Sexual Assault by US Sailors and
Demand for Withdrawal of US Military from Okinawa

We, people of Okinawa, particularly women, have suffered as a result of the long-term stationing of US military and their bases in Okinawa. We are deeply shocked and outraged at the alleged gang-rape and injury committed by US sailors on October 16th. It has been reported that the victim was attacked as she was walking home alone from work and that she had a mark of possible strangulation on her neck. We strongly deplore such a crime that targeted a woman, violating her freedom and safety. We remember another recent sexual assault case by a US soldier in Naha in August this year, and hundreds of others over many years.

The perpetrators, two US sailors, had arrived at Kadena Air Base from the US mainland on transport duty, staying over in Okinawa for only two nights. The crime was reported to have been committed within a few hours before they were to depart Okinawa for Guam, the next stop on their return to the US. We are appalled by the fact that they committed this sexual crime during their brief tour of duty. This clearly reveals the violence structured into the institution of the military. If the victim had not reported the crime to the local police quickly enough, the perpetrators would have left Okinawa without being apprehended. Then the crime would never have been disclosed.

Moreover, the unsafe Marine Corps aircraft, the MV-22 Osprey, has been forcibly deployed in Okinawa recently, ignoring the very strong protest of Okinawan citizens. These planes are now flying over residential areas, posing a deep threat from the air to people of Okinawa. On the ground, the numerous cases of sexual assault accidents and other crimes continue to pose another threat to Okinawan people. We recently learned from the Department of Defense Annual Report of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program that in Fiscal Year 2011, the rate of sexual assaults against female soldiers on the bases in Okinawa was twice as high as that of other bases. This statistic does not even include sexual assaults against Okinawan women.

Since June 2006, the US military in Okinawa has issued a midnight curfew on soldiers for an indefinite period in order to cope with frequent occurrences of crimes committed by US soldiers, including hit & runs or taxi robberies. The perpetrators of this particular sexual assault were not subject to this curfew as they are not stationed in Okinawa. We question whether any disciplinary measures are taken regarding those military personnel who stay in Okinawa temporarily.

The physical and psychological pain and the fear that the victim has to endure must be enormous. The care and treatment for the victim needs to be the first priority, and the

perpetrators must be strictly punished. Repeated cases of violence against women by US soldiers and a long-standing pattern of human rights violations against Okinawan people by US soldiers demonstrate the insecurity and threat caused by the long-term stationing of the US military to the lives and dignity of Okinawan people. We also need to be mindful of a number of other victims of sexual assault by US soldiers who could not come forward.

Standing on our analysis that the military is an institution in which violence is intrinsic and that the military does not provide genuine security in local communities or among nations, we demand the following:

- Respect for the privacy of the woman victim, and physical and psychological care for her.
- Apology to be issued to the woman victim by US military authorities; and the perpetrators to be strictly punished.
- Banning of all off-base activities for all US military personnel, in order to secure safe living environments for women and children.
- Withdrawal of all US military bases from Okinawa.

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