

# Converting Okinawa to the Island of “LIFE” and “PEACE” *Solidarity between the People and the Dugong*

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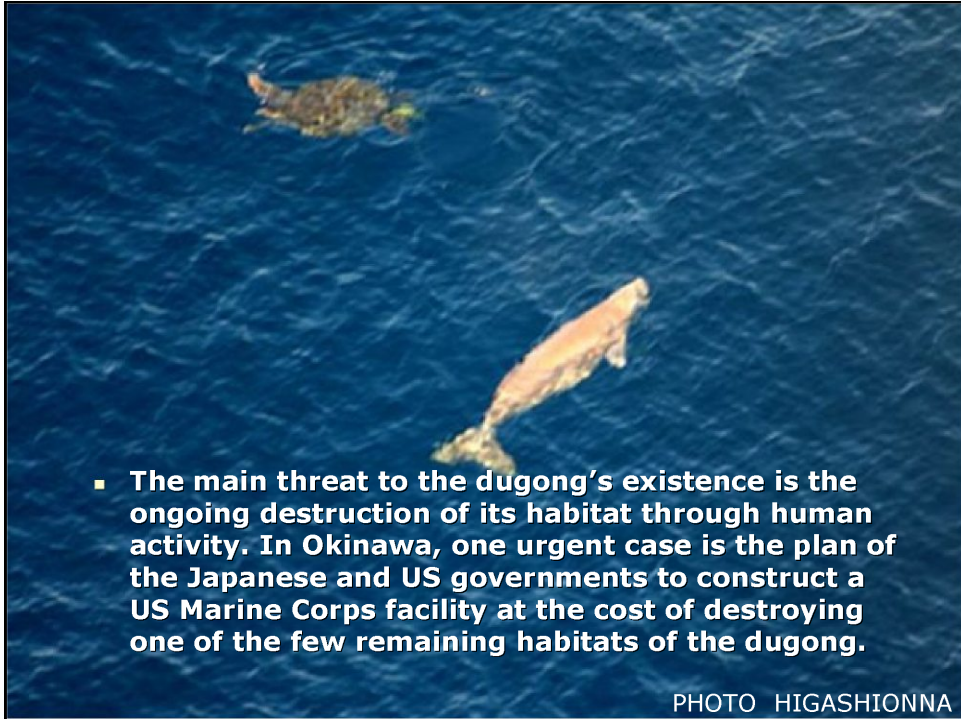


## 1. Extinction of the Okinawa Dugong and Plans to Construct a New US Military Base in Henoko, Okinawa



Okinawa

- The dugong is a large, peaceful marine mammal that lives in warm ocean waters of the western Pacific. An herbivorous marine mammal, the dugong can be found across a relatively large area of the ocean.
- However, throughout this large range, the dugong is on the verge of extinction. In Japan the dugong is only found in certain areas off the coast of Okinawa, and these populations represent one of the few remaining natural habitats for these rare mammals.



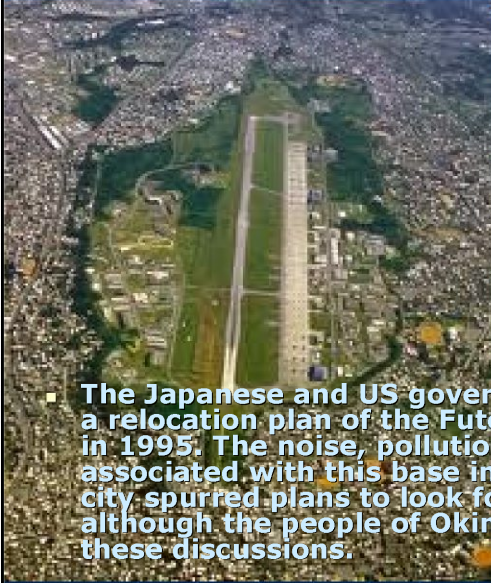
- **The main threat to the dugong's existence is the ongoing destruction of its habitat through human activity. In Okinawa, one urgent case is the plan of the Japanese and US governments to construct a US Marine Corps facility at the cost of destroying one of the few remaining habitats of the dugong.**

PHOTO HIGASHIONNA



- **The plans for this base include destroying a rare, pristine coral reef, building airstrips for loud helicopters over these tranquil waters. Should this destructive plan be followed, it directly threatens the lives of dugongs that inhabit the area, and will rapidly accelerate the decline of this rare and beautiful species.**

## Futenma Air Base



- The Japanese and US governments began developing a relocation plan of the Futenma Air Base in Okinawa in 1995. The noise, pollution and notorious crimes associated with this base in the middle of Ginowan city spurred plans to look for an alternative location, although the people of Okinawa were excluded from these discussions.

## CH53 was crashed at Okinawa International University (2004).



- Futenma Air Base is the most dangerous base in the world. When the two national governments announced their plans to close the Futenma base, Okinawans took this to mean that the base would be moved outside Okinawa.
- Okinawa has only 0.6% of the landmass of Japan, but has hosted 80% of the US forces in Japan.



### Sea of Henoko

- However, to the shock and disappointment of Okinawa, in 1996 the Japanese and US governments announced their plans to relocate the Marine Corps air base to the Northeast coast of the Okinawa main island, offshore of the town of Henoko.
- This would not diminish the vast footprint of the US military on Okinawa, but only change its shape a bit.

## The new base's construction has not yet commenced.



**Vigil in front of Camp Schwab**



**Protest the results of environmental assessment**

- Because of strong and sustained opposition from the people of Okinawa, even in the face of continued strong pressure from both Tokyo and Washington .
- The dugong and the pristine coral reefs it calls home remain.

## The Japanese government has submitted the final stages of environmental impact assessment to the prefecture of Okinawa.

- According to Japanese law, the government of Okinawa must approve this plan in order for construction to proceed.
- Not surprisingly, according to the Japanese Ministry of Defense, "Environmental impact of construction base is small, Impact to the dugong is not bad," as stated in the conclusion of the assessment.



**People to prevent the submission of environmental bassessment evaluation.**

## The governor's statement will be critical of this assessment.

- To verify the validity of this assessment, the governor of Okinawa Prefecture has gathered opinions from his citizenry. Also, the governor will issue a statement regarding the conclusions of the assessment by the end of March.
- we support and applaud the Governor in his brave stance against vast international and financial pressure to allow the base construction to proceed.



**To speak in front of the people, Governor of Okinawa Prefecture Nakaima.**

## 2. Established history and IUCN recommendation

- The Save the Dugong Campaign Center (SDCC) was founded 11 years ago. It is a non-governmental organization which aims to protect the Okinawa dugong and its biodiversity-rich habitats.
- We also feel strongly that our stewardship of the earth is a core value for our civilization, and we are dedicated to help promote good relationships between humans and nature, to use our focus on saving the dugong to and work towards building a peaceful and healthy environment for all beings.
- Some may feel that working to protect the continued existence of a species such as the dugong is not really important. But the loss of our habitat threatens our own existence in the long term, and in the short term diminishes the beauty and delicate balance of complex ecosystems that we all depend on for our continued existence.

### In 2000, before SDCC was established, a motion for the conservation of rare animals around Henoko was proposed to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)

- During the IUCN congress in Amman, Jordan, IUCN adopted a recommendation, "Conservation of Dugong (*Dugong dugon*), Okinawa Woodpecker (*Sapheopipo noguchii*) and Okinawa Rail (*Gallirallus okinawae*) in and around the Okinawa Island,".
- As signatories to United Nations UNESCO and IUCN conventions, the Japanese and the U.S. governments were asked to execute a proper environmental impact assessment to assure the protection of these endangered species.



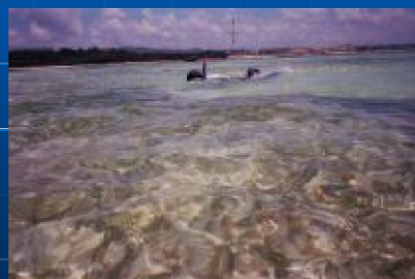
In 2001, SDCC was established in Tokyo, Japan, to work with and encourage its government to comply with the IUCN recommendation.

- IUCN has adopted the recommendations twice (2000 and 2004), resolution once (2008) for protection of the Okinawa dugong.
- The governments of Japan and the United States have been requested to provide a scientifically rigorous and fair environmental assessment, in response to the announcement for their plans to construct the new base in Henoko's waters.



We will continue to request the Japanese and US governments to stop the construction of the new military bases in Okinawa and to protect the dugongs.

- Whether or not the planned construction of base is suspended, we believe the IUCN recommendations have delayed the materialization of this new base.
- The IUCN recommendations have made both governments increasingly realize that environmental issues are socially and politically important, and cannot be ignored.



Sea of Henoko

### 3. Our goal and our activities

- The Sea of Henoko and Oura Bay are rich in biodiversity, and the importance of the delicate ecological balance this represents is increasingly recognized around the world.
- Corals, sea grass beds, and varieties of rare fish and shellfish, are living in these pristine areas, a precious and increasingly rare ecosystem that serves as a nursery and sanctuary for a wide range of marine life.

### Sea grass beds





Corals (*Heliopora coerulea*)



Anemone fish



We hope the reader can appreciate the profound relationship the people of Okinawa have for the sea and its life-giving nature.

- In the course of World War II, Okinawa was the scene of the bloodiest battles in history, with over 250,000 people killed, including well over 100,000 Okinawan civilians, representing about a third of the pre-war population.
- At that time, the land was practically defoliated, an agricultural way of life was destroyed, and a food crisis resulted. However, the people of Okinawa have long had a close relationship with the seas that surround it, and in large measure were able to survive the food crises because of the bountiful food that was provided by the sea.



**Old woman who experienced the war and her morning market**

“No to Military Base, YES to Dugong Protection Area” is the slogan that embodies our goals.

- Our NGO is thus committed to the dual purposes of working to protect the dugongs while also working to cultivating peace in Okinawa.
- To achieve this goal, we have worked to educate and inform through a signature campaign, photo exhibitions, and sponsored study tours to Okinawa from Tokyo and Osaka. We also negotiated with the Japanese government for it to recognize the recommendations of IUCN.

## Signature campaign



## Campaign in front of the American Consulate



## Study tours



we visited the dugong sanctuary in the Philippines and learned that it also serves as a form of community development.

- This sanctuary project not only promotes protection of the creatures by regulating human activities but also works to cultivate local pride in the region.
- In the Philippines, cooperation of residents, the government and NGOs exists. They are working together to create a community-based project that aims for the assurance of the dugongs' protection.



## It's time to make the Okinawa dugong protection area a permanent community development for the protection of our natural resources and a symbolic gesture for peace.

- Establishing the dugong protection area in Henoko has been a tremendous political challenge. It is currently Japanese national policy to build the new US military base .
- we are strongly opposed to this plan, because the military base will destroy the beautiful Henoko sea, trample local pride and further diminish the quality of life of the Okinawa people.



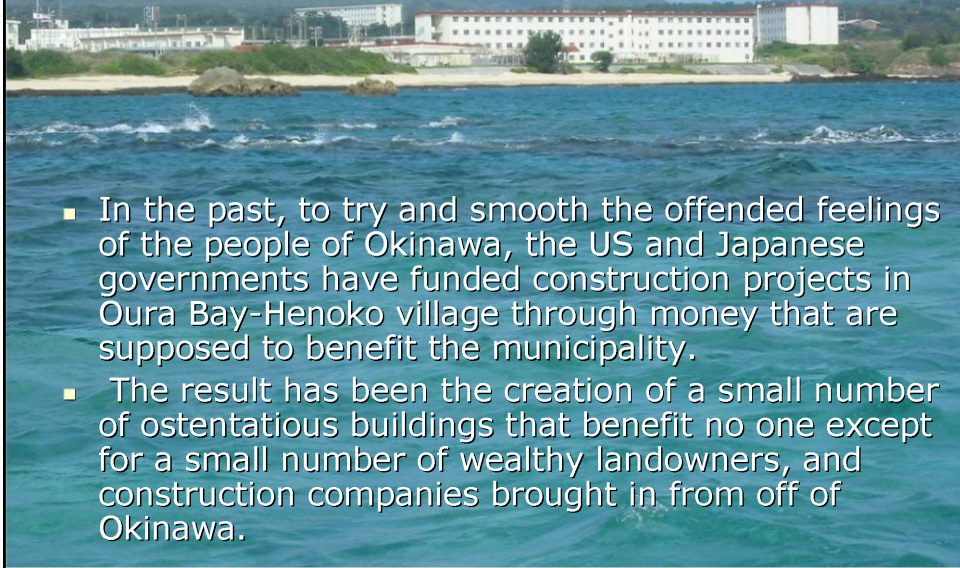
## Living with dugong for the future and converting Okinawa to the Island of Life and Peace

- The then-Mayor of Nago in 1998 unfortunately accepted this plan to construct the US military Base in this environmentally sensitive location.
- However, Mr. Susumu Inamine, elected Mayor of 2010 said that, "the land base is not even in the sea of Henoko".



Mr.Susumu Inamine,Mayor of Nago

## Community development does not depend on the US military base



- In the past, to try and smooth the offended feelings of the people of Okinawa, the US and Japanese governments have funded construction projects in Oura Bay-Henoko village through money that are supposed to benefit the municipality.
- The result has been the creation of a small number of ostentatious buildings that benefit no one except for a small number of wealthy landowners, and construction companies brought in from off of Okinawa.

The government of Nago is working to promote community development based on hotel-based resort and eco-tourism, as well as an environmentally sound and sustainable industrial reconstruction plan.

- The mayor recently visited Henoko and Oura bay and confirmed his commitment to the importance of environmental protection.
- The SDCC is cooperating with Nago and hosts a study tour to Nago from Tokyo and Osaka every July.



**We hope to make "No to Military Base  
YES to Dugong Protection Area " the  
world's public opinion during the IUCN  
congress in Jeju (South Korea).**

- In September 2012, the IUCN congress will be held on the island of Jeju, South Korea. Jeju is in the news lately because of plans to build a new naval base on the island, and the local people share many of the concerns we have on Okinawa
- At this conference, SDCC will appeal to the IUCN that the Japanese Government will continue to promote new base construction based on the conclusions of a biased and unscientific Environmental Impact Assessment regarding base development.

**We hope to establish the dugong protection area with the help of the people of the world, and state our desire to convert Okinawa from its current status as an island occupied by governments from distant lands, and which serves as one vast Military base used to launch wars throughout Asia, into the island of "LIFE" and "PEACE"**



**Thank you**