

# MCAS Futenma: Located in the **Center** of the City

~ Refocusing on the Main Agenda of the Land Return Agreement: Alleviating Danger and Burden ~



**Masanori Matsugawa**  
**Mayor,**  
**Ginowan City**

Over the course of the last 70 years after the end of WWII, Marine Corps Air Station Futenma has greatly impacted the living environment of citizens by subjecting them to the dangers of aircraft accidents and aircraft noise. MCAS Futenma has also impacted the city's economic activities, specifically serving as a hindrance to the efficient city development of its urban functions and traffic system. 23 years have gone by with the return of MCAS Futenma unrealized since the 1996 Special Action Committee agreement. However, the load and burden on the residents have only increased.

MCAS Futenma base is located in the center of the city. It has been named the world's most dangerous airbase and thus requires a need for the return of MCAS Futenma at the earliest possible time. Included in this calculation is the high frequency of incidents, such as the 2017 accident in which a window fell off a U.S. military Helicopter and landed on the Futenma Daini Elementary School. Nevertheless the Japanese Government and Okinawa Prefecture have continued to confront each other, and while trying to eliminate the dangers and mitigating the burdens of this air station, which is the original agenda of the Land Return Agreement, have been left behind, the path towards resolution remains uncertain.

With this ongoing situation, Ginowan City Representatives visited the United States in May 2018, 2017 and 2016, to deliver the not only the voice and opinions of the local residents whom strongly insist upon on the return of the land and the mitigation of base, but also the protests from the numerous aircraft incidents operating out of MCAS Futenma.

Additionally, night time exercises and overhead flights over residential area for extended periods of time, to also include fighter jet operations have seriously affected the lives of civilians on a daily basis in the form of noise pollution and TV interference reception disorder. Citizens feel that countermeasures are urgently required. We will continue to urge the United States Governments to abide by "Aircraft Noise Abatement Countermeasures at Futenma Air Station" agreed between Japanese and the U.S. Governments, as well as specific flight routes. Requests have been made to the Government of Japan to consider more parts of the city for their soundproofing construction project and remediation work of the aircrafts' interception of TV signals (Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting) due to the temporary loss of signal every time an aircraft flies over a residence.

**We must prevent the MCAS Futenma from permanently establishing itself in its current location and must refocus on the original agenda of the Land Return Agreement- "Alleviating Danger and Burden."**

We take all measures to prioritize the return of the MCAS Futenma. Ginowan City intends to continue working to close MCAS Futenma at the earliest possible date and also return the land to the citizens. It is the citizens who desire to permanently close the air station and in the meanwhile mitigate deterrents and hazards.

**Ginowan City Military Base Affairs and Policy Dept.**

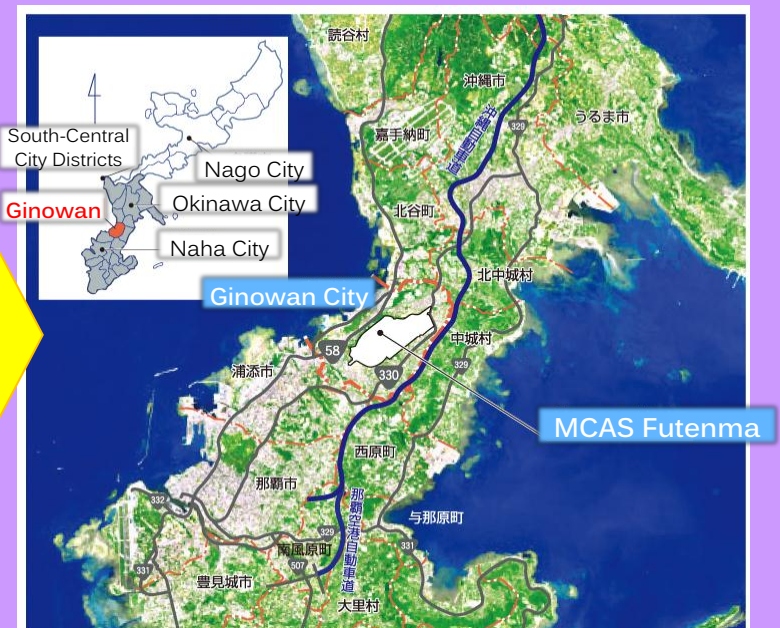
**March 2019**



# MCAS Futenma: Located in the Center of the City Greatly Affecting Daily Lives and Economy

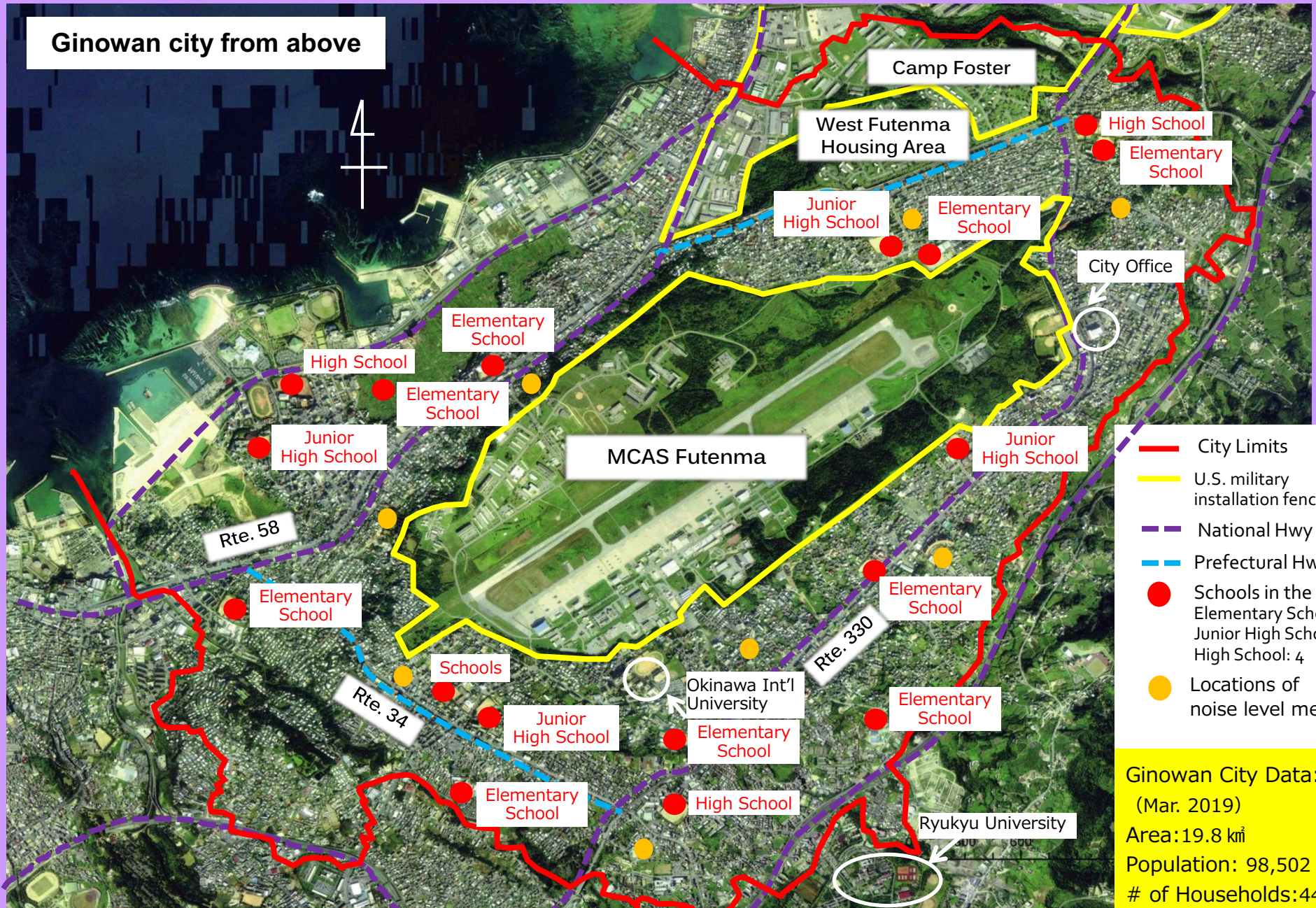


## Location of Ginowan City





# Ginowan city from above



- City Limits
- U.S. military installation fence-line
- National Hwy
- Prefectural Hwy
- Schools in the City  
 Elementary School: 10  
 Junior High School: 5  
 High School: 4
- Locations of noise level meters

**Ginowan City Data:**  
 (Mar. 2019)  
 Area: 19.8 km<sup>2</sup>  
 Population: 98,502  
 # of Households: 44,119



## MCAS Futenma Surface Area

# 475.9ha



MCAS Futenma is located in the center of Ginowan City and consumes 1/4 of the city's total surface area (approx. 19.8km<sup>2</sup>). Additionally, with Camp Foster taking up another 1.059km<sup>2</sup> in the northern part of the city, approximately 30% of the total city's surface area is occupied by U.S. military installations.

## City's Population Density (as of Mar. 2019)

# Approx. 4,975/km<sup>2</sup>

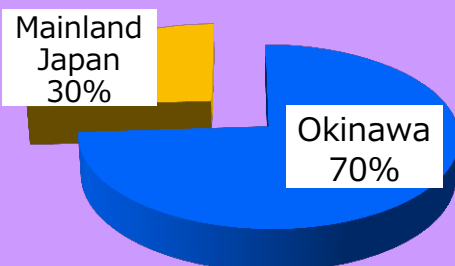
## Excluding Base Surface Area...

# Approx. 7,045/km<sup>2</sup>

## U.S. Military Facilities on Okinawa

Okinawa makes up a mere 0.6% of Japan, but **70%** of the total surface area in use by the U.S. military in Japan is located in Okinawa.

### The U.S. Military in Japan



## Number of Times Noise Was Detected

**11,408** (Fiscal Year 2018 Ue-Ojana Dist.)

In fiscal year 2018, aircraft noise was detected 31.3 times in a single day by the noise-level meter located in the Ue-Ojana Area. Citizens around the base are left with no option but to live under these burdensome living conditions.



## Highest Recorded Noise-Level

**123.7dB** (Dec. 5, 2018 Ue-Ojana Dist.)

## Night time Noise-Level

**100.1dB** (10:53PM Feb. 14, 2019 Ue-Ojana Dist.)

The highest recorded noise-level in fiscal year 2018 was 123.7dB—a noise-level said to be the same level that one would experience standing right next to an active aircraft engine. Moreover, although limited by the U.S.–Japan agreement, night time flight activity is still vigorous.

Noise-Level	
120dB	Next to an active aircraft engine
110dB	2 meters away from a automobile horn
100dB	Under a passing train
90dB	Inside an active factory



## Accidents Involving MCAS Futenma Aircrafts

**137** Total includes accident reports from the time of Okinawa's return to the Mainland in 1972 until March 2019.

There is an annual average of 2.9 aircraft mishaps involving aircrafts stationed at MCAS Futenma. Considering the location of the air station- in the center of a densely populated city, one accident can be catastrophic.



## 23 years since the SACO Agreement...

# MCAS Futenma Land Return Stands at a Halt

- Jun 1945** U.S. Forces seize land and begin construction of MCAS Futenma in preparation for the Mainland battle
- Dec 1996** Agreement to “return Futenma Air Station within the next five to seven years, after adequate replacement facilities are completed and operational” based upon SACO Final Report.
- Aug 2004** **U.S. military helicopter crash at Okinawa International University**
- May 2006** Agreed to make 2014 the completion goal for the MCAS Futenma relocation site under U.S.-Japan Roadmap for Realignment final report.
- Jun 2011** Revised the 2014 relocation goal and re-pledged to complete the relocation as soon as possible. (“2+2”)
- Oct 2012** Deployment of MV-22 Ospreys begins(completed Sept. 2013)
- Apr 2013** Japanese and U.S. governments agree to a new relocation goal of “2022 or later”
- Feb 2014** Okinawa governor and Ginowan City mayor petition to the Government of Japan to have the base closed and relocated within the next 5 years
- Feb 2014** The first MCAS Futenma Burden Reduction Promotion Meeting
- Aug 2014** 15 KC-130’s, aerial-refueling aircrafts stationed at MCAS Futenma, are relocated to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni
- Jul 2017** Returned approximately 4ha of the eastern part of MCAS Futenma.
- Dec 2017** **A Window from a U.S. military helicopter fell onto the Futenma Daini Elementary School**

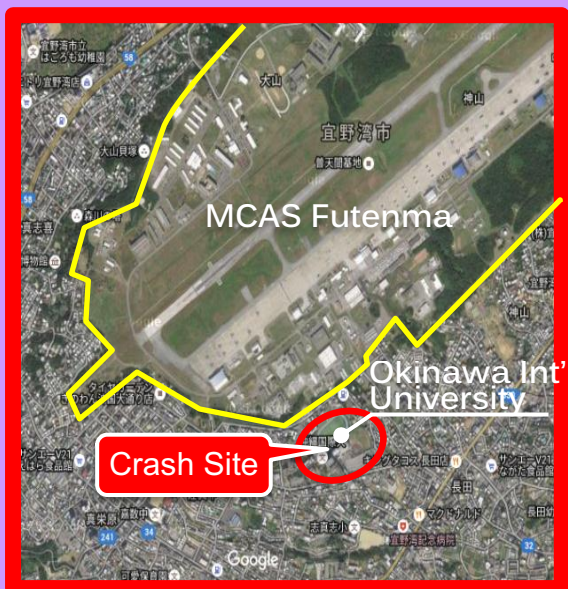
## Incidents of Aircrafts operated out of MCAS Futenma (Since Jan.2017)

Jan.11 2017	CH-53 Helicopter had mechanical failure on the landing gear
Jan.20 2017	AH-1Z made an emergency landing in Uruma city
Jun.1 2017	CH-53 Helicopter made a precautionary landing in Kume Island
Jun.6 2017	MV-22 Osprey made a precautionary landing in Ie Island
Jun.10 2017	MV-22 Osprey made a precautionary landing in Amami Airport
Aug.5 2017	MV-22 Osprey smashed into a ship and eventually slid into the ocean off the coast in Australia
Aug.29 2017	MV-22 Osprey made a precautionary landing in Oita Prefecture
Sep.29 2017	MV-22 Osprey made a precautionary landing in New Ishigaki Airport
Oct.11 2017	CH-53 Helicopter made an emergency landing in Higashi Village after an inflight
Dec.13 2017	A Window from a U.S. military helicopter fell onto the Futenma Daini Elementary
Jan.6 2018	UH-Y Helicopter made an emergency landing in Higashi Village after an inflight fire
Jan.8 2018	AH-1Z Helicopter made a precautionary landing in Yomitan Village
Jan.23 2018	AH-1Z Helicopter made a precautionary landing in Tonaki Village
Feb.8 2018	Part of an MV-22 Osprey washed ashore on beach in Uruma city
Aug.14 2018	MV-22 Osprey made a precautionary landing in Amami Airport
Sep.5 2018	UH-1Y Helicopter made a precautionary landing in Kumejima Airport



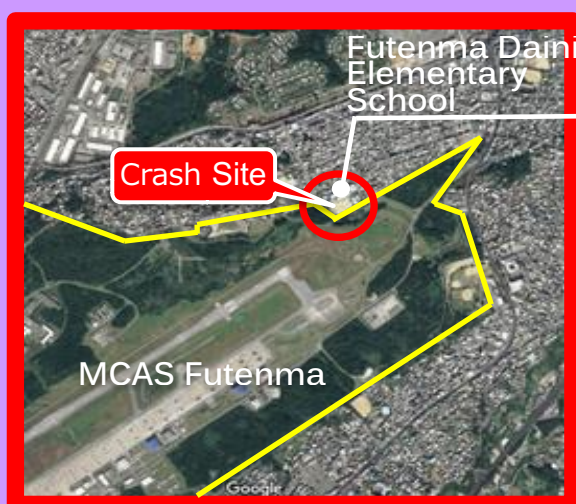
# U.S. Military Helicopter Crash at Okinawa International University

On Friday, August 13, 2004, at around 2:15PM, a CH-53D Helicopter operated out of MCAS Futenma crash landed into the main building of Okinawa International University. The helicopter went up into flames causing a major incident.

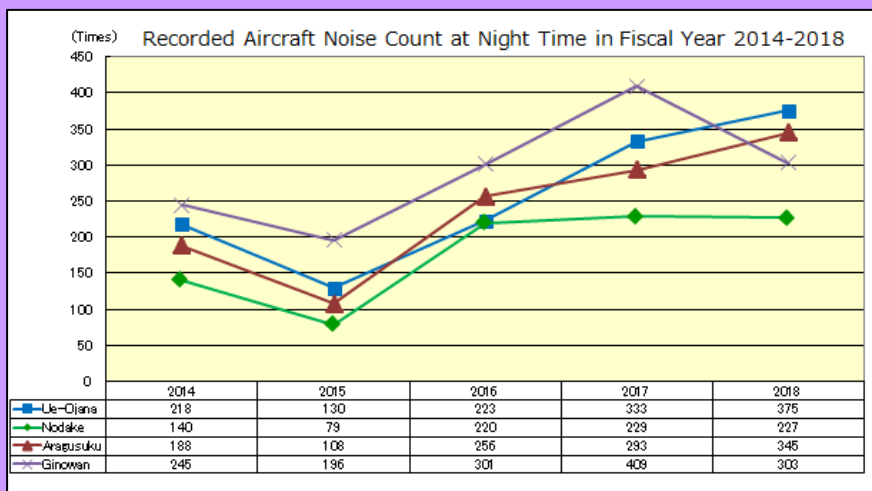
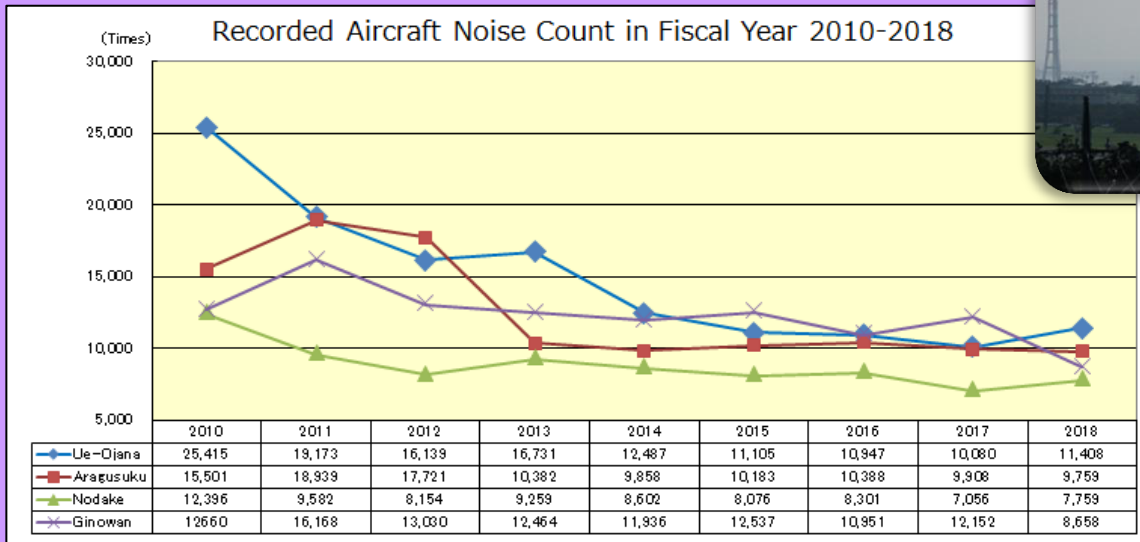


# Accident of the Window falling from the U.S. military Helicopter onto Futenma Daini Elementary School

On Wednesday, 13th December 2017, around 10:25 AM, a serious accident occurred in which a window (approximately 7.7 kilograms) belonging to a CH-53 Helicopter that belongs to MCAS Futenma, fell onto the grounds of the Futenma Daini Elementary School. When that accident happened, physical education classes were being held in the sports field that was only 10 meters from the point where the window landed. The marines insisted that their helicopters had avoided the school, protests were held in response to this accident but the helicopters were continuing to fly over the school area a month after the accident.



# Noise pollution

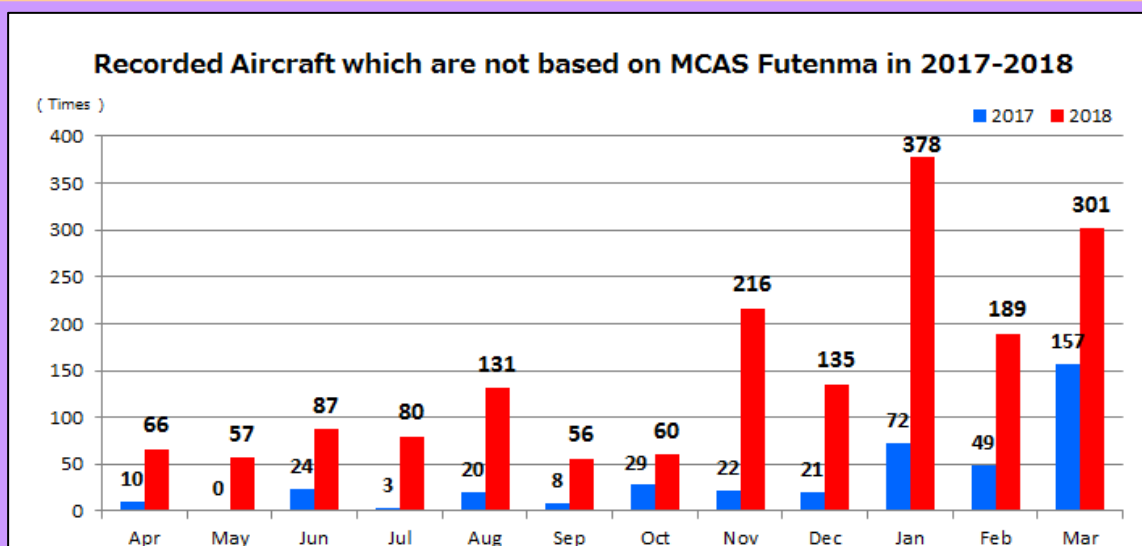


The flight activity of U.S. military aircraft is restricted by the Aircraft Noise Abatement Countermeasures at Futenma Air Station agreed between Japanese and the U.S. Governments from 22:00 to 06:00. However, noise is regularly measured at night throughout the city. Complaints from citizens of the noise pollution caused by the night time flights continues to increase.

In fiscal year 2018, **over 300 night time noises** were confirmed in the Ue-Ojana area.

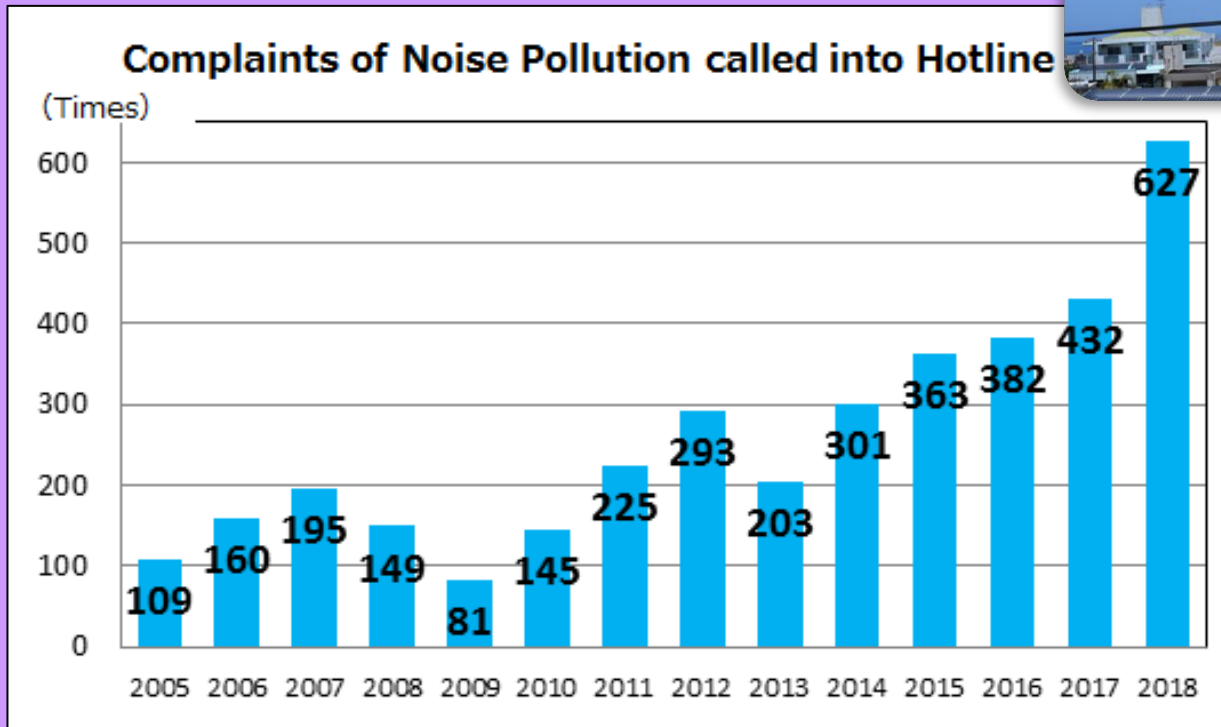
## Traffic and Activity of Aircraft which are not based on MCAS Futenma

The City of Ginowan has requested prohibition of aircraft operations from aircraft that are not based on MCAS Futenma. These fighter jets and large cargo planes tremendously influence the daily lives of citizens. Numerous aircraft that are not based on MCAS Futenma have conducted flight activity at MCAS Futenma at increasing levels compared to last year. The city routinely records noise levels over 100dB by fighter jet activities at MCAS Futenma. This loud noise throughout the city is serious issue.





# Multiple complaints to the Hotline Regarding Noise Pollution



Ginowan City has established a hotline to accommodate complaints made outside of our office hours. The Hotline is an automated messaging system which staff will review the following morning and relay any messages to the mayor, U.S. military and Okinawa Defense Bureau. In the case that numerous complaints are made about the same topic, the city directly petitions to the appropriate entities.

## Actual Calls (translated) Made to the Hotline

Dec.5, 2018 20:51(Ue-Ojana Resident- Female)

I am living in Ue-Ojana District and I just heard very loud noise even after I covered my ears. It is time for my children go to bed but this is terrible burden for us. Please consider the feeling of residents.

Mar.12, 2019 18:10(Maehara Resident- Male)

I am calling for complaint of noise pollution caused by Fighter Jet. I saw 2 fighter jets took off from Futenma Air Station in between 18:05-18:10 today and made a very loud noise. My ears were hurts if I did not cover it and also I was afraid too. I move to the Ginowan city a month ago, and never heard a noise like that before.

Mar.19, 2019 22:57(Uehara Resident-Female)

It is almost 23:00 but the Helicopters were still flying. They are circulating over us from 22:00 up to now. Please do something about this. The noise is very loud.

Mar.27, 2019 15:21 (Mashiki Resident- Female)

The Helicopters have been flying until around 22:00 lately and it is very disturbing. They were flying over my house. It woke my baby up crying.

April.8, 2019 22:45 (Kyuna Resident- Female)

It is almost 23:00 but they are still flying and it is very loud. I have been listening to the helicopters fly for a long time now. Please do something.

# The 9 Organization Joint Statement

Regarding a return to MCAS Futenma, not only the administrative-only efforts, but included are the 9 organizations within the assembled city which are protesting and requesting resolution. We have worked with the citizens towards the realization and alleviation of the risks and burdens surrounding the base, which is the origin of the MCAS Futenma early return and return agreement.

## Participating Organizations:

- Ginowan City
- Youth Assn.
- Head of Districts
- Women's Assn.
- Board of Education
- PTA Assn.
- Ginowan City Council
- Commerce and Industry
- Elder's Assn.

## Based on the night time noises pollution

On November 2015: Upon receiving over 100 noise complaint calls of the Night time noise pollution in November 2015, the 9 organizations within the city assembled to voice the opinions of the local residents which are protesting and requesting the earliest possible closure and return date of the base. A joint statement and petition was submitted to the Japanese government and other related political parties.



## Based on the accident of window falls onto the grounds of the Futenma Daini Elementary School

On December 2017: On December 13th, After a serious accident which occurred when a window belonging to a U.S. military helicopter fell onto the Futenmae Daini Elementary School, the 9 organizations within the assembled city and PTA of the Futenmae Daini Elementary School are protesting to stop flying above all school facilities in the city area as well as the closure of MCAS Futenma at the earliest possible date and return of the land to solve the root cause of these arising issues.



## Agenda at MCAS Futenma Burden Reduction Promotion Meeting

“The MCAS Futenma Burden Reduction Promotion Meeting” which consists of the Japanese government, the Okinawa prefecture and Ginowan City is continuously being held accountable for the closure of MCAS Futenma at the earliest possible date and return of the land to solve the root cause of these arising issues, as well as realization of the agreement to cease all operation MCAS Futenma in the next 5 years and the alleviation of these risks and burdens. One of the achievements, 15 KC-130's aerial-refueling aircrafts stationed at MCAS Futenma, is relocated to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.





# The Ginowan City Project

It has been more than 22 years since the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed to return the MCAS Futenma land, an overloaded base burden which has remained unchanged to the Ginowan citizen. We visited the United States to delivered the unified voice and opinions of the local residents, which is; we the Ginowan citizens must prevent the air station from permanently establishing itself in its current location, as well as make efforts with a sense of crisis and realize as soon as possible to eliminate the risk of MCAS Futenma and reduce the base burden until return if the land. We exchanged opinions with the government officials of the State and Ministry of Defense, the counselors, the Congressmen, the think tank, to share the necessity of the earliest return of the land. We reaffirmed that both Japan and the United States should cooperate and work toward the return of the land. In addition, we showed our propose project for “Studying Abroad” for a Middle School in the city who will work from the viewpoint of human resource development looking at the site use after the return of the land. We requested to the U.S. side for cooperation to meet with the U.S. government officials and visit the government facilities when it happens.



【Fiscal year 2016】

Mr. Sung Kim  
Special Representative for  
North Korea Policy and  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Korea and Japan,  
Department of State

Mr. Joseph Young  
Director, Office of  
Japanese Affairs,  
Department of State



【Fiscal year 2017】

Mr. Mark Lambert  
Director, Office of  
Korean Affairs,  
Department of State

Ms. Julie Chung  
Director of Japanese  
Affair,  
Department of State



【Fiscal year 2017】

Senator Dan Sullivan



【Fiscal year 2018】

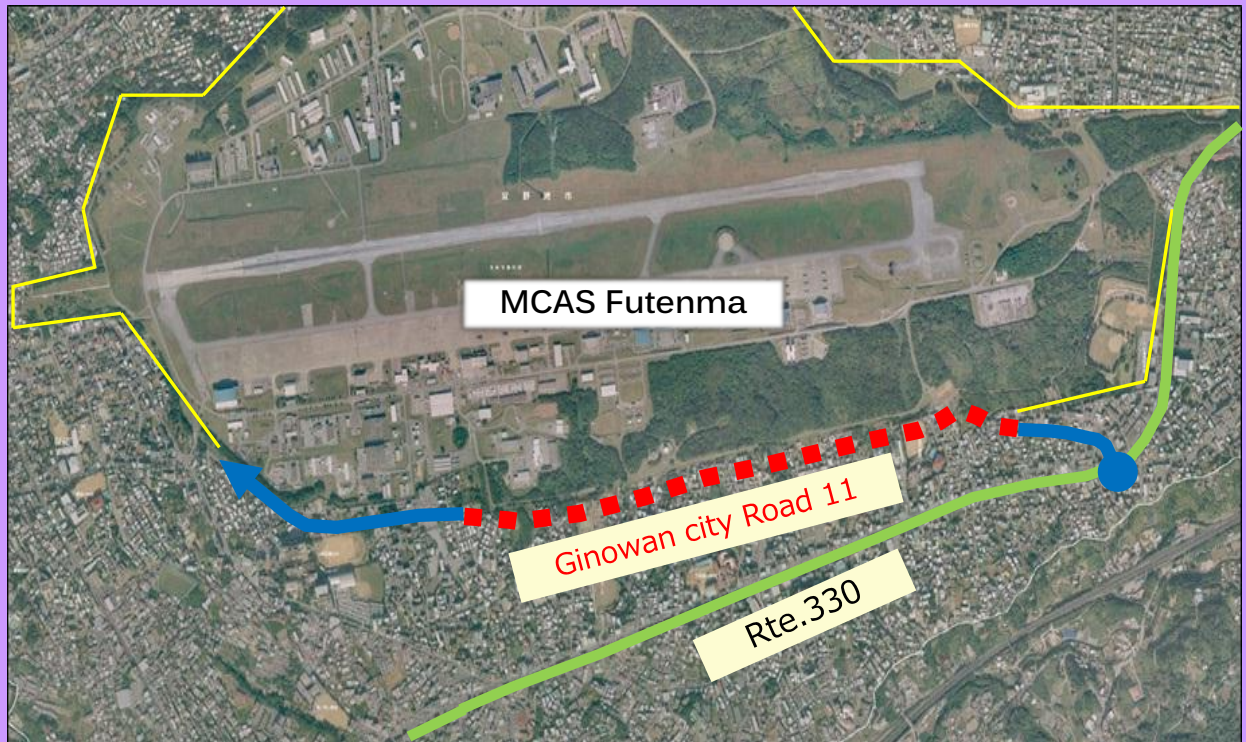
Mr. Matthew Pottinger  
Senior Director on Asian  
Affairs, U.S. NSC

Mr. Eric Johnson  
Director for Japan Affairs,  
U.S. NSC

## 6 Main Points of the Joint Statement:

1. To avoid the permanent placement or prolonged usage of MCAS Futenma, and realize its closure and return as soon as possible.
2. To confirm at an early time the date for the return of MCAS Futenma upon the sincere consultation between Japanese and the U.S. Governments.
3. Until the return of MCAS Futenma is realized, To increase efforts by Japanese and the U.S. Governments in eliminating the dangers of MCAS Futenma and mitigating the burdens of bearing the military base.
4. To relocate MV-22 Osprey stationed in MCAS Futenma to another base.
5. To respect “Aircraft Noise Abatement Countermeasures at Futenma Air Station” agreed between Japanese and the U.S. Governments and to cease all night flight activities as well as circular flights above residential areas which essentially have great impact on the citizens’ life.
6. To assure commitment to recurrence-prevention of the incidents of the aircraft stationed in MCAS Futenma as well as the implementation of thorough safety management given the current situation with the series of their incidents and troubles.

# Returned land on the East side of Futenma Air Station



On July 2017, the East side of Futenma Air Station land (Approx. 4ha) was returned. Many local residents, Japanese governments and U.S. Military's we're in attendance for the Land Return Ceremony and Reception. The long-awaited return of the land is a step towards the future of Ginowan City and we believe that it is a guide to the full return of the land which has been planned to be returned which in turn will improve the city roads thus alleviating chronic congestion. (Start schedule 2019)

