

Statement of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich
Message of Solidarity with the Japanese People
U.S. Military Bases in Japan
Saturday, April 25, 2010

The residents of Okinawa, Japan, have long expressed their opposition to the realignment of the U.S. military base in Okinawa. Earlier this year, their strong opposition was manifest in their recent overwhelming vote for Susumu Inamine as mayor--the candidate that campaigned on a promise that the U.S. military base would not be constructed in Nago.

Last week, I sent a letter to the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, expressing my concern over the plan to move the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station in Futenma, Okinawa, Japan to Nago. As the Marine Corps prepares to move their operations to Nago, completely absent from the discussion is the perspective of the local residents.

I believe that the election of Mayor Inamine was an important symbolic victory for the Okinawan people in their heroic struggle for the preservation of their environment and economic livelihood. The concerns of the residents of Okinawa must be taken into consideration – their strong opposition to the relocation of the military base, as well as the environmental and economic damage that would result from the construction of a new military base, cannot be brushed aside. The fragile coral reef that provides natural habitat for local marine life, as well as economic livelihood for local fisherman is at risk.

I will continue to support the efforts of the people of Okinawa to ensure that their concerns are heard in the Congress of the United States, and to advocate for the preservation of their land and environment.