

## **New Diplomacy Initiative hosts symposium on the Henoko issue at Nago**

January 12, 2014 Ryukyu Shimpo

Tokyo based think tank the New Diplomacy Initiative held a symposium on the theme, “Rethinking the relocation of the US Futenma Air Station to Henoko,” at the Nago Civic Hall on January 10. This think tank makes diplomacy policy recommendations to both the governments of Japan and the United States. Kyoji Yanagisawa, the former assistant deputy chief cabinet and former senior official at the defense ministry, gave a lecture on the controversial US military presence in Japan that functions as a deterrent against China’s growing military power. “There is friction as though people are running in the same direction all at once during rush hour. However, there is not a threat that you cannot save yourself without destroying your opponents,” Yanagisawa commented. “The logic behind the argument that the U.S. forces staying there has a deterrent effect is not rational.”

Questioning the role of the U.S. Marine Corps on Okinawa as a deterrent, he asserted that in military circles there are possible scenario that would allow the Marines on the Futenma base to move outside Okinawa. “It is the role of politics to achieve it for the benefit of the residents,” he stressed. Referring to the idea that the governments will move the base from Futenma to Henoko, he said, “This is the same thinking as the U.S. bases in Japan having been concentrated in Okinawa because the anti-base struggle has intensified in the mainland of Japan. As long as the government does not stop the cycle of pressing problems on a location where there is less resistance from the residents, Okinawan people must live in among bases.”

Hiromori Maedomari, professor at Okinawa International University, said, “The central government tax revenues and national treasury disbursement are allocated to local governments across the country. That is money that all local governments can get as a matter of normal process. Why does the central government allocate these funds to Okinawa only in exchange for accepting the military base? Why do they threat us like this?”

In a video message, Mike Mochizuki, professor at George Washington University, pointed out that the U.S. Marine Corps will redeploy its troops to Guam, Hawaii and the U.S. mainland from Okinawa in the long term, and stressed that it is not necessary to put a full-blown permanent base in Okinawa.

(English translation by T&CT)