

VIDEO 1: OPENING REMARKS

INTRODUCTION BY DR. BILL BROOKS:

Good morning, and welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to this morning's conference sponsored by the Okinawan Prefectural Government with the distinguished guests and security affairs experts discussing Okinawa's role in an evolving U.S.-Japan Alliance. For those of you who are using the machines for interpreting, number two is English and number 10 is Japanese, I think it's been mistaken on the indicator there.

This conference, I think, is long overdue, and based on the extraordinary turn out this morning, it's extremely of extreme interest to the Washington environment, and because this is being shown on live web stream, to an international audience as well.

My name is William Brooks, I teach at SAIS, and I'm your MC for this morning's conference. We also are honored to have with us this morning the Governor of Okinawa, Hirokazu Nakaima, who has come all the way from Okinawa to launch today's conference.

To preface my introduction to the Governor before he gives his remarks, I'd like to indicate – probably a lot of people don't realize, but this is the 40th year of the reversion of Okinawa from the U.S. to Japan. So in a sense this conference is a kind of commemorative event marking a long period where Okinawa has been able to be independent in its own economy, yet deal with a lot of other issues. In an ideal world the Governor of the beautiful islands, Prefecture of Okinawa would be coming to Washington to promote tourism on the island or investment in high-tech areas, and the economy, indeed, is starting to show signs of healthy growth. But the reality is otherwise. The reality is that Governor Nakaima and the residents of Okinawa Prefecture live with is, of course, quite different than the ideal that people would want. First there is the reality of Okinawa's geostrategic location facing China and an increasingly tense and even hostile East China Sea. There's also the reality of Okinawa having to host 74 percent of the U.S. Military bases in Japan, a security burden that everyone agrees is excessive. There is also the additional reality that despite government-to-government agreements to reduce the burden on Okinawa's Prefecture by returning bases and facilities, still a major base promised for reversion in 1996, MCAS Futenma remains open today and even is being upgraded with new aircraft. And to make matters even worse, word last week of another incident, another terrible crime, carried out by members of the U.S. personnel there. In such an atmosphere the usual conversation about Okinawa's geostrategic location and importance as a key basing site, which we will talk about today, still would not be doing much to ease Okinawan concerns. The importance is, then of this conference, first to voice Okinawa's concerns, and then to have a kind of brainstorming session by our distinguished panel about the strategic reality and what to do about it. These will not only, I think, awaken sensitivities to the Okinawa problem, but also hopefully reinvigorate all parties, perhaps the two governments in Okinawa to finally come together to resolve a great part of the base problem in Okinawa, as promised 16 years ago. In a way, my hope is for a win-win situation for all parties, especially the people of Okinawa.

Our distinguished guest and sponsor of this conference, Governor Hirokazu Nakaima has been governor of Okinawa Prefecture since 2006, having been reelected for a second term in 2010. After graduating from Tokyo University in 1961, Governor Nakaima joined the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, MITI, as a technical officer, rising to become a senior official in MITI's Okinawa General Bureau, the Machinery and Information Bureau and Agency of Industrial

Science and Technology. He then went on to a second career working as an executive at the Okinawa Electric Power Company, becoming president in 1995 and then chairman in 2003. Now as Governor of Okinawa he has had to spend an enormous amount of time and effort in dealing with the basing issues, but he's also put in an enormous amount of effort into developing Okinawa's economy. And based on what I have read, it is starting to pay off. Governor Nakaima, we welcome you to Washington, and we will listen intently to your message from the people of Okinawa Prefecture.

Mr. Governor, the podium is yours.

GOVERNOR NAKAIMA: I'm Governor Nakaima of Okinawa. I'd like to welcome you to this morning's event and thank you for coming. With the assistance of Dr. Mike Mochizuki, we have held a number of seminars and workshops in Okinawa. This is actually the third meeting of this kind. We've been holding workshops to exchange views and try to resolve international issues and challenges related to Okinawa. This event is part of that series.

Until 40 years ago Okinawa was under the administrative control of the US Military Government. Okinawa was then restored to Japan, thankfully, and now subsists mainly on tourism, IT and telecommunications industries. We enjoy cultural and academic exchanges with the U.S., including exchanges of foreign students. I'd also like to mention the recent opening of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University. We invited Dr. Dorfan and other scholars from MIT and Stanford to Okinawa, where advanced scientific and technological research began a decade ago. We have various kinds of cultural, economic, scientific, and technological interaction with the U.S. Okinawa's economy is progressing toward self-sufficiency.

As to the security situation involving the U.S. military bases in Okinawa, the people of Okinawa Prefecture are greatly dissatisfied. This is a challenge that must be resolved. Basically, within Japan, the U.S. bases known as exclusive-use facilities are heavily concentrated in Okinawa. We want this concentration reduced and have made this request to the Japanese government. Progress is very slow and there's no real improvement yet. The Futenma U.S. Marine base stands in the center of the city and also poses a bit of an obstacle to economic progress. People have been requesting to relocate the bases for 15 or 16 years. We know which direction we should be moving in, but it's not happening. After this, there will be a panel discussion. I'm also asking the Japanese government and the U.S. government for a variety of improvements and solutions. Today, we'll hear the views of the panelists in the discussion and as governor I want to try to achieve a solution as soon as possible. I hope you'll give us your kind attention. Thank you.