**Call for Goverment Accountability Office (GAO) Investigation of Henoko Base Construction,**

**Okinawa**

**Whereas**, GAO declared in its 2017 *Marine Corps Asian-Pacific Realignment* (GAO-17-415) that the

runways at the proposed MCAS Futenma Replacement Facility in Okinawa are of insufficient length,

and

 **Whereas**, in doing so GAO declared itself competent to investigate the merits of this project, and

 **Whereas**, other aspects of this project cast doubt on whether it serves US national interest, to wit:

\*the majority of the once-sovereign Okinawans, now bearing 74% of all US bases in Japan, view this

project as another example of the discrimination to which Okinawa has been subjected throughout its

modern history, and

\*because both of fierce protests and environmental problems, construction is years behind; and

\*among the latter is the fact that the runways are to be built over a pristine coral garden, habitat of the

endangered dugong, requiring an environmental sensitivity of which Japan’s Defense Agency seems

incapable; and

\* soil testing, begun in 2014, continues today, which means the Defense Agency has not yet

determined that the sea bottom is sufficiently firm to support two runways (some areas are soft

limestone, others mayonnaise-like slime); and

\*adjacent the site are 19 electrical transmission towers, buildings including a college campus, and the

Henoko Ordnance Storage Facility, all exceeding US military height limits; and

\*two active earthquake faults lie beneath the site; and,

 **Whereas**, on 28 July Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga began the legal proceedings required to

revoke the permit, granted to Japan’s Defense Agency by his predecessor, to fill part of Oura Bay,

triggering a legal battle that will surely cause further delays and possibly, should law prevail over

politics, doom the project altogether; and,

 **Whereas**, this project makes a mockery of the US military’s “good neighbor” pretensions and places

its entire presence in Okinawa in danger, and

 **Whereas**, the Japanese Government, obsessed with saving face, has not proved a reliable informant

regarding this project,

 **Now therefore**, Veterans For Peace-Ryukyu/Okinawa Chapter Kokusai (VFP-ROCK – an independent international chapter associated with Veterans For Peace) urges GAO to launch its own investigation of this situation, to determine the merit of these allegations, and to judge whether attempting to force this project through will be worth the cost – or, more ominously, the risk.