

Tens of Thousands Protest U.S. Military Presence in Japan



Tokyo, June 20 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people have demonstrated in Japan against the heavy U.S. military presence and violent crimes by U.S. personnel on the Island of Okinawa. The protest rally, considered one of the largest anti-U.S. demonstrations held in Japan in the past two decades, was held at an athletics park on Sunday in Okinawa's prefectural capital, Naha.

The demonstrators, who organizers said numbered at more than 50,000, called for the scrapping of plans to relocate a major U.S. Marine facility in the center of the island to pristine waters off its northern coast.

The U.S. and Japan agreed in 1996 to relocate the U.S. Marines' Futenma base, currently in a heavily-populated area, to a new site in Okinawa. However, many residents, whose prefecture was the only part of Japan to suffer a bloody land battle during World War II, want the base and the US military off their land altogether.

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