

February 13, 2014

Her Excellency Ms. Caroline KENNEDY  
Ambassador of the United States of America to Japan  
American Embassy

Re: Request concerning American military heliport in Minato City

Dear Madame Ambassador:

We would like to call your attention to the fact that a US military heliport (Akasaka Press Center) currently exists in a built-up area of Minato City in central Tokyo. Because of this heliport, local residents in neighboring areas suffer from the noise and live in constant fear of an accident.

Minato City and the Minato City Assembly have, on numerous occasions, requested of the Japanese and US governments that this issue be resolved by removing the heliport from its present site at the earliest possible date. On the other hand, on July 29, 2011, the return of the site carried out under the agreement of the Japan-US Joint Committee was not restoration of the original site, or return of the park site in the temporary heliport site provided along with construction of Inner Circular Route No.3, as requested by Minato City and the Minato City Assembly. It was a return of an alternative site, which was far from what the local community desired.

Amidst this backdrop, there have been successive accidents involving US military helicopters, including a US Air Force helicopter crash last August in Ginoza-son Village in Okinawa Prefecture, and the rollover crash of a US Navy helicopter in Miura City, Kanagawa Prefecture in December. The frequent occurrence of accidents that cause casualties involving human lives has created a feeling of shock and unease among Minato City residents living near the heliport site.

Minato City and the Minato City Assembly have an important mission—that of assuring the safety and protecting the daily lives of the city's residents. We therefore request that steps be taken to prevent a recurrence of accidents and reduce the noise including early morning flights and night flights. We further request that the US heliport be completely removed from its present site at the earliest possible date.

Yours respectfully,

Masaaki Takei  
Mayor, Minato City



Nobuhiro Izutsu  
President, Minato City Assembly

