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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: April 15, 1985  
Place: Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Tokyo, Japan  
Participants: Sadaaki Numata, Director Security Division  
Priscilla Clapp, Political/Military Officer  
Subject: MILITARY ACCIDENTS ON OKINAWA

D106

Distribution: DCM POL/C USFJ Gen. Phillips (hand delivered 4/18  
AmConsul Naha EAP/J by PAC)  
DOD:OSD/ISA-Jim Auer

Numata called me in to express MOFA's official concern about the recent series of military-related accidents on Okinawa. A number of Okinawan political figures, including Uehara, Tamaki, Senaga and Kyan, have called on North America Affairs Bureau Director General Kuriyama in the last few days, leaving the impression that the local atmosphere is "hardening" more than it has in the past. Consequently, MOFA feels it will be necessary to raise this problem at a higher level with the U.S. and is contemplating the possibility that DCM Clark will be invited to visit Mr. Kuriyama when he returns from Washington later this week.

Numata said that in MOFA's view, there are two issues: 1) the question of seeing that discipline is strictly observed, and 2) the question of taking effective measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. As an immediate measure, MOFA would like the U.S. side to consider temporary suspension of training in Camp Hansen, which is related to the M-16 "transitional range," and reducing the period of live firing now scheduled for April 16 so that there will be no night firing. I told Numata that General Day has decided to cancel the night firing on the 16th, and as we were sitting there, word came from DFSA that the firing period would end at 6:00 PM, instead of 8:00 PM.

When Makoto Watanabe talked with General Phillips earlier in the day, General Phillips expressed his concern and said he was talking with General Day about remedial measures, looking into all aspects of the problem. MOFA appreciates this, Numata said.

Numata then recited a series of accidents that have occurred recently with special military vehicles:

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-- On March 6 at Issa in Ginowan City on Route 58, a trailer carrying a power shovel 5.2m. high hit a 4.5m. high overpass, damaging the bridge structure to the tune of ¥ 10 million. The Joint Committee Agreement of 1973, relating to use of Sagamihara Depot, sets out procedures for informing the GOJ about movement by special vehicles. The GOJ makes recommendations regarding technical safety. In this case, the GOJ was informed about the movement of the power shovel, but apparently was not informed that the shovel would be sitting on top of a trailer, and miscalculations were consequently made as to height. Thus, it seems that the U.S. side did not follow procedures carefully.

-- On March 9 at Ihanashihara in Ishikawa City, two trucks and one jeep (the two trucks were pulling cannons) took the wrong road and had to turn back. In so doing they went into a sugarcane field and destroyed some of the crop. This seems to have been a clear case of negligence.

-- On March 19 in Hamakawa at Chattan, at a traffic light on Route 58, a truck pulling a cannon collided with a passenger car which was stopped at the traffic light. The driver suffered light injury. There was prior notification that the special vehicle would be using that route, but when the Ministry of Construction advised that the truck be led by an escort, the advice was not followed.

-- On March 28 in Kin-cho on Route 329, a truck pulling a mini-trailer swerved to the right to avoid a car crossing in front of it and went through the guardrail, damaging a portion of a house adjacent to the guardrail. USFJ claims that this was not a special vehicle as defined in the Joint Committee Agreement, but the Japanese side is not absolutely certain this is so.

-- On April 3 in front of an agricultural cooperative in Ginoza village on Route 329, a truck tried to overtake a bus and when faced with an oncoming car, braked and slipped, colliding with a stationary passenger car.

There is a need to look hard at this concentration of accidents, he said. The more they happen, the more difficult it becomes to defend U.S. Forces. In the past, MOFA has told Okinawan political figures that it has conveyed Japanese concern through the Joint Committee, but this time it would not be adequate simply to repeat this procedure. MOFA believes something more must be done for the smooth operation of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

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When Uehara met with Kuriyama, he mentioned a meeting he had with Ed Featherstone in which he -- Uehara -- suggested a number of measures that might be taken. These included keeping cannons at Hansen or Schwab so that they would not have to be constantly transported between Zukeran and Hansen, and limiting night transport.

Mr. Kuriyama would also like to discuss two specific points with Mr. Clark: First, that concern be conveyed at the highest level to see that more discipline is enforced and second, that some visible measures be taken to correct situations that have led to the recent string of incidents.

Drafted: POL/M:PClapp<sup>Me</sup>/bc  
4/16/85

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