

Whidbey News Times

Letter: Japanese understand impact of Navy jet noise

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Editor,

The Jan. 9, 2019 edition of *The Asahi Shimbun News* reports that the Japanese government is going to purchase “a small, uninhabited island in Kagoshima Prefecture ... as a site for the U.S. military’s much-criticized field carrier landing practice.”

This relocation of Navy FCLPs is in response to Japanese citizen noise complaints at current practice locations on Iwojima. The Japanese government, recognizing the severe impacts of FCLP practice upon its citizens, plans to spend the equivalent of \$147 million U.S. dollars to provide the U.S. Navy with this alternate site at Mageshima Island.

Here on Whidbey Island, the U.S. Navy wants to expand its flight practices, quadrupling noise impacts upon the residents of Central Whidbey. The Japanese government understands that U.S. Navy FCLPs harm its citizens and is willing to spend its own money to move them. Why isn’t our government, and the Navy, as concerned about the harm from FCLPs to us?

Instead of relocating its FLCP practice to locations where civilian harm is minimized, or better eliminated, the Navy plan is to increase the impact upon our civilians claiming a lack of funds and options.

However, the Navy will have to spend on infrastructure on Mageshima to prepare it in order to eliminate jet noise for Japanese civilians at the same time claiming to be unable to do the same at home for U.S. civilians.

This rings hollow. And here, our government doesn’t even need to buy or improve new practice locations; the military already owns little-used airfields in remote areas where FCLPs could be practiced today without harm to U.S. civilians.

It is time that our leaders acknowledge that military training and civilians do not mix. The Navy’s Growler expansion on Whidbey Island is ill-advised and unsustainable. Central Whidbey residents have been protesting jet noise for decades. Up until now no one has been listening to us. The Japanese government is acting to protect its citizens. Does the Japanese government really care more about its citizens than our government does about ours?

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