
Subject: Trouble Over Seas

Posted by [Havocman](#) on Mon, 16 Jun 2003 18:07:24 GMT

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I First looked at it like. WHAT?!?!?!? But.. Well you Read it

Quote:

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan demanded Monday that the U.S. military hand over a Marine suspected of raping a 19-year-old woman on Okinawa in a case that looks set to fuel resentment of the U.S. military presence there.

The allegation, which follows several high-profile criminal cases involving U.S. military personnel based on the island, comes at a time when Washington is considering an overhaul of its forces in Asia, about a quarter of which are based in Okinawa.

Police in Naha, the capital, said they had obtained an arrest warrant for Lance Corporal Jose W. Torres, who allegedly raped a Japanese woman after punching her in the face on May 25.

The 21-year-old Marine, whose hometown was withheld, is in U.S. military custody.

Japan's Kyodo news agency last week quoted police sources as saying that the serviceman had denied raping the woman.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Japanese officials had held talks with U.S. officials in Tokyo and demanded that the suspect be handed over before he was indicted.

The U.S. side said it would consider Japan's request and reply at an early date, according to the ministry statement.

Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said earlier she had told U.S. Ambassador to Japan Howard Baker that the incident was "truly regrettable" and called for tighter discipline for the U.S. military as well as steps to prevent similar incidents.

HEINOUS CRIMES

Under the Status of Forces Agreement governing the conduct of the U.S. military in Japan, the United States need not hand over suspects until they are charged by Japanese prosecutors, except in the case of "heinous crimes" such as rape and murder.

Since the high-profile rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen in 1995, Washington has agreed to consider requests in serious cases.

The delay in the handover of rape suspects in previous cases involving U.S. servicemen has angered many people in Okinawa and fueled calls to revise the agreement.

Residents of Okinawa have long resented what they see as their unfair burden in hosting 26,000 of the 48,000 U.S. military personnel in the country as part of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, a pillar of Tokyo's post-war foreign policy.

The recent incidents in Okinawa, however, have not ignited anywhere near the levels of anger seen in South Korea after two schoolgirls were killed by a U.S. army vehicle a year ago.

The United States has begun a dramatic realignment of its military forces globally, including some 100,000 troops in Asia and the Pacific, mostly in Japan and South Korea.

U.S. officials have not confirmed media reports that they plan to move most of the 20,000 Marines stationed in Okinawa to elsewhere in the Pacific, perhaps to Australia.