

Trial of Major Michael Brown/Okinawa

Donald R. Brown, Chalmers Johnson

Dear Mr. Johnson;

My name is Donald R. Brown, father of U.S. Marine Corps Major Michael J. Brown. He has been the subject of very detailed articles in your "Japan Focus" publication.

I am writing to ask that you publish some corrections to the information you have published regarding Major Brown. In many respects, your thoroughly research article concerning the status of American forces in Japan and Okinawa is highly accurate. However, sadly it contains untruths, errors and distortions which should be corrected.

Major Brown is not the author of the web site

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your letter. I understand and appreciate your defense of and desire for justice for your son, Major Michael Brown. My interest is in the defense of and justice for the 1.3 million Okinawan people among whom the U.S. Marine Corps has been an uninvited and unwelcome guest for the past fifty-four years, often doing great harm to them. As to the points in your letter, I do not intend to alter my article, which has in any case not been published but has appeared only on the Internet. If an opportunity should develop to alter it, I will add a sentence saying that Major Brown's relatives claim that the web site in his name is not actually by him but by his fellow Marine brother. Since Major Brown has not denounced anything on the web site that I know of, I do not see that this information adds much light to the case.

I do deal with the "sympathetic consideration" note of 1995, which was, however, not a modification of the SOFA itself but a side agreement between the Japanese and American governments.

Two letters from the State Department about this case strikes me as a rather forthcoming response from our government, given its 725 military bases located in other people's countries.

I specifically do not think it is the business of foreigners to denounce the system of justice in Japan, an independent and sovereign nation fully capable of governing itself without advice from Americans. I first visited Japan in 1953 and have lived there for extended periods of time. If Americans do not like the Japanese system of criminal justice, they would be well advised to leave the country or ensure that they do not violate Japan's Penal Code while they are there. I explicitly denounce Secretary Rumsfeld's bullying of Japan over the numerous crimes our troops commit there, particularly when the Status of Forces Agreement already grants American soldiers many exemptions that they do not enjoy in NATO countries. I feel that your son's complaint, if he has one, is with the United States Government for sending him there. As I said in my article, I would be delighted-as would the Okinawans-if the U.S. returned the Third Marine Division to their own country. There are, incidentally, no foreign soldiers encamped in the United States on a more or less permanent basis. Given the course of the trial, I imagine that the Japanese courts may deal very leniently with your son. I fully trust the well established and long supported Japanese system of criminal justice, even if it differs from the one in this country. The only people who have to support it are the Japanese themselves and it is up to them to alter it if they choose to do so. In any case, virtually all the American soldiers convicted of sexually-violent crimes in Japan received considerably lighter sentences than they would have for the same felonies in any American civilian jurisdiction.

Yours sincerely, Chalmers Johnson
Japan Policy Research Institute
Web: www.jpri.org