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United States and Japan Cooperating on MV-22 Aircraft

Twelve MV-22 United States Marine Corps “Osprey” aircraft arrived in Japan on July 23. The MV-22 is a highly-capable aircraft with an excellent safety record. The United States Marine Corps is in the process of replacing CH-46 helicopters with the MV-22 on a worldwide basis, and deployment of these aircraft in Japan is a vital component in fulfilling the United States’ commitment to provide for the defense of Japan and to help maintain peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

As Secretary Clinton remarked during her press meeting with Foreign Minister Gemba earlier this month, “Meeting our security requirements requires the right equipment, including military aircraft. I understand and appreciate the concern raised here in Japan, in particular on Okinawa, about the Osprey. The United States cares deeply about the safety of the Japanese people, just as we care deeply about the safety of the men and women in the U.S. military. We will work closely with our Japanese partners to ensure that any American military equipment brought into Japan will meet the highest safety standards.”

The MV-22 combines the vertical capability of a helicopter with the speed and range of a fixed-wing aircraft. Its capabilities will significantly strengthen the ability of U.S. forces to fulfill their vital roles in the U.S.-Japan Alliance. MV-22 aircraft have been successfully deployed around the world for the last five years, including as part of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Haiti and in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Osprey is also stationed at a number of locations in the United States.

In order to address Japanese public concern regarding the safe operation of these aircraft, the United States and Japan have agreed that U.S. forces in Japan will refrain from any flight operations of the MV-22 in Japan until the results of investigations into recent incidents in Morocco and Florida are presented to the Government of Japan and the safety of MV-22 flight operations is reconfirmed. This information is expected to be presented to the Government of Japan in August.

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