

Letter from Americans Requesting the Termination of the Secretive Japan-US Joint Committee

By [Emanuel Pastreich](#)

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The following letter formally requesting the termination of the secretive Japan-US Joint Committee responsible for deciding through classified directives American and Japanese policy will be submitted to Brigadier General George B. Rowell IV, Deputy Commander for United States Forces Japan, at 10:30 AM on February 1, 2024 at formal gathering. The public is invited to attend (New Sano Hotel, 2-12 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku Tokyo 〒106-8501 港区4丁目12番).

2.1(木)午前10:30～

雨天決行・荒天中止

ニュー山王米軍センター

(ニュー山王ホテル)

諸悪の根源である

日米合同委員会廃止

親愛なる同盟国へ

抗議街宣

#みちばた

The text for the letter from American citizens is as follows.

February 1, 2024

Topic: The abolition of the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee

Brigadier General George B. Rowell IV

Deputy Commander, United States Forces Japan

Dear General Rowell:

We are writing you as U.S. citizens who are devoted to constructive, positive, and transparent cooperation between the United States and Japan. We are concerned about the unconstitutional Japan-U.S. Joint Committee ("Nichibei Goudou linkai" in Japanese) that dominates U.S.-Japan relations today.

This letter accompanies another letter concerning that selfsame committee that was drafted by a group of thoughtful Japanese citizens and describes its problems in detail.

The secretive Japan-U.S. Joint Committee has taken on malevolent tendencies in recent years, serving as a platform for the determination of policy in secret without any accountability to elected officials, or to the citizens of Japan, or of the United States.

The very concept of a secret Japan-U.S. Joint Committee was unconstitutional and unethical from the beginning. This opaque institution that meets regularly in downtown Tokyo to determine policy between unelected American military officers and Japanese government officials undermines the process of deliberative democracy and the rule of law in both Japan and the United States. Its actions encourage and abet the dangerous trend towards unconstitutional secret governance that has crept through the federal government and military of the United States over the past two decades.

Such secret governance has its origins in the British Empire, with its grotesque mixture of government, private bankers, and mercenaries known as the British East India Company. Such secret, imperial governance is precisely what our nation's forefathers, men like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, rightfully rejected when they signed the Declaration of Independence.

The United States of America is a republic, and its government is defined by the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Constitution of 1787. Our nation cannot tolerate secret governance by rich and influential individuals, or the privatization of the military as took place in the British Empire. Sadly, that is precisely what the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee practices.

Imposing this unaccountable and secretive institution on our ally Japan is an insulting infringement on Japan's sovereignty, but it is also unconstitutional on the U.S. side, and violates both the legal and moral imperatives behind the founding of our country.

The oath of enlistment for military officers, which you signed, contains the words, "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." As citizens of the U.S., we share this commitment to the Constitution.

In other words, the primary duty of the United States Forces Japan is to serve the American people according to the Constitution. Upholding the Constitution demands transparent and accountable government.

Our honorable Japanese colleagues have submitted a letter in defense of the sovereignty of the nation of Japan. This letter contains within it three demands of the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ), the US military as a whole, and the federal government. We feel that those demands are justified and appropriate.

- 1) Abolish the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee.

- 2) Make public all the records of the proceedings of the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee since its founding, and make them accessible to all Japanese citizens.

- 3) In addition to releasing to the Japanese public all the secret agreements decided on by

the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee without the authorization of the citizens of Japan through a democratic process, take immediate action to assure that all such secret agreements are from this day forward null and void.

All three actions are required in light of the extensive examples already revealed in declassified documents of secret agreements made by the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee that violate the constitution and the sovereignty of Japan, and also violate the constitution of the United States of America.

It is critical that our alliance remain between the peoples of the United States and Japan and that it be completely in accord with the constitutions of the two nations.

Our military must follow the Constitution and its members must refuse any secret directives issued within the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee, or elsewhere, that violate either the letter or the spirit of the Constitution. Consultants, corporations, banks, and their representatives can play no role in the decision-making process because our government is defined by that selfsame Constitution.

Finally, it is our responsibility as Americans to consider the malevolent forces at work in the military, and throughout the entire Federal government, that are dragging us away from an economy based on productive and sustainable economic activity of a transparent and morally sound nature, and towards one based on war, expansion, extraction, and domination.

Whether it is the illegal and unconstitutional use of military personnel to sell the weapons of arms manufactures (many of whom pay almost no taxes in the United States) or the demands made on the military by consulting firms and lobbyists representing the super-rich, we must stop such unaccountable governance and endless territorial expansion. The historical records of the last five thousand years tell us exactly what tragic end that path of endless military expansion leads to.

Governance in the United States was compromised in the 20th century by the subversion of the Constitution and federal law by a vaguely defined concept of national security. The result has been the establishment of a national security state that follows the economic and structural imperatives of imperialism while pretending to uphold the republic defined by the Constitution.

The existence of the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee declares to Americans and the world that the United States is not a republic. It is shameful that we behave like a global empire and treat Japan, supposedly our ally, as a client state.

We call on you to take action regarding the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee today. And we welcome your response to this letter.

Most respectfully,

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The text of the letter from our Japanese colleagues and allies is as follows.

February 1, 2023

Brigadier General George B. Rowell IV

Deputy Commander, United States Forces Japan

Dear General Rowell,

We have gathered here today as Japanese citizens for the purpose of presenting to you, in your capacity as Deputy Commander of the United States Forces Japan, this formal demand for immediate policy changes, specifically as a protest against the Japan-US Joint Committee.

The Japan-US Joint Committee is an organization made up of high ranking officers in the United States Forces Japan and of high ranking officials in the government of Japan that meets in secret at the New Sanno U.S. Force Center in downtown Tokyo on a regular basis.

The following is our formal demand:

When the Treaty of San Francisco that formally established peaceful relations between the United States and Japan took effect on April 28, 1952 the "US-Japan Security Treaty" and the "Administrative Agreement under Article III of the Security Treaty between Japan and the United States of America" also took effect.

The Japan-US Joint Committee was set up as an institution assigned the purpose of carrying out all consultation regarding the administration of the "U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement" (which replaced the "Administrative Agreement" in 1960).

If we considered the intention of the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement, we would assume that the Japan-US Joint Committee must be a place where a discussion is held in the open about what is in the interests of both nations, and that this discussion would be carried out by members of the Diet (for Japan) and members of the Congress (for the United States) who are empowered with the solemn trust of the citizens of both countries, the citizens in whom the ultimate sovereignty is vested. The members of the committee would thereby represent all of the citizens of the two allied nations.

However, the Japan-US Joint Committee consists of Japanese civil servants who are not elected in any election and unelected American military officers assigned to Japan. Moreover, the meetings are held in absolute secrecy.

We the people of Japan are incensed that this consultative meeting is being carried out in a manner that degrades the sovereignty of Japan as an independent nation.

The members of the Japan-US Joint Committee have no obligation to make public the agenda, or the topics discussed, at the regular meetings, nor to make available any of the documents describing what agreements have been reached.

It is precisely for this reason that the Japan-US Joint Committee is viewed as a black box wherein numerous secret agreements have been made.

As far as all previous meetings of the Japan-US Joint Committee are concerned, it is recorded that an agreement was reached "not to make public the content without a mutual

agreement by Japan and the United States.” The reason given for this secrecy is that “there is a concern that the relationship of trust between Japan and the United States might be damaged, that the stable stationing of American troops, and the smooth carrying out of their activities, might be impinged on, and that the safety of Japan might be harmed” if this information were made public.

The result is that all records of the meetings, and all written agreements that result from the meetings, are, in principle, secret and unavailable to the public.

But various secret agreements have been made public as a result of requests following the American Freedom of Information Act in the United States and the documents released demonstrate that these secret agreements reached by the Japan-US Joint Committee openly violate the sovereignty of Japan.

For example, at a meeting of the Japan-US Joint Committee in October, 1953, the subcommittee on criminal proceedings within the special committee on legal jurisdiction carried out deliberations on policy at which they agreed to an “secret agreement relinquishing rights of jurisdiction for Japan,” stating that “regarding criminal actions by members of the US military in Japan, with the exception of extremely important incidents for the nation of Japan, legal jurisdiction will not be exercised.”

The comments of the Japanese representative at that subcommittee, Tsuda Minoru, who was at that time director general for the criminal justice division at the Ministry of Justice, were recorded and they remain in the transcripts made public since then.

Another case made public involves the deliberations at a meeting of the Committee on Commercial Aviation of the Japan-US Joint Committee in May, 1975 which produced an “Agreement concerning traffic control for aviation and transportation.” This agreement resulted in the complete control of the airspace around the Yokota Base, the Iwakuni Base, and the Kadena Base by the United States military in violation of Japanese sovereignty.

Even though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formally stated that “even though there may be an agreement of the Japan-US Joint Committee in effect, there is no pressing legal basis for it to take precedence over Japanese aviation law,” the reality today is that aviation management continues to follow exclusively the agreements reached in secret by the Japan-US Joint Committee for takeoff and landing in the airspace at the Yokota Base and Atsugi Base. Moreover, in addition, air control for the airspace of all of Japan for the altitude of 2450 meters to 7000 meters is reserved for US military aircraft and is placed entirely in the hands of the US military. The result is that Japanese civil aircraft that wish to use that airspace are required to have permission from the US military command.

The cases described above are but two examples of the numerous secret agreements reached at the Japan-US Joint Committee which grant special rights to the US military in Japan. The fact that the records of the meetings cannot be made public means that we have no way of knowing how many other secret agreements have been reached. These secret agreements are kept hidden from the citizens of Japan who have sovereignty in this republic in accord with the constitution. Moreover, the elected representatives of the Japanese people in the Diet, who are entrusted with legislative authority, are also not privy to these agreements.

These egregious special powers and privileges assigned by the Japan-US Joint Committee

have no legal basis in the original “U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement” and are by their very nature unacceptable for an independent nation state.

These embargoed agreements decided in secret rooms have eaten away at the very foundations of the rule of law in Japan, creating a world of shadows that is incompatible with the Japanese constitution which must serve as the highest legal authority in the nation.

The grave consequence is that our sovereignty is transgressed and degraded by these secret agreements.

We Japanese of conscience cannot tolerate the reduction of our nation to a vassal nation in blatant violation of our constitution and our sovereignty.

We therefore, in place of the members of the Japanese Diet who have been stripped by the United States and the United States military of the authority granted by our constitution, respectfully request that you, honorable Brigadier General George B. Rowell IV, in your capacity as Deputy Commander of United States Forces Japan, carry out the following actions:

First, abolish the US-Japan Joint Committee.

Second, make public all records of the proceeds of the US-Japan Joint Committee since its founding, and make them accessible to all Japanese citizens.

Third, in addition to releasing to the Japanese public all the secret agreements decided on by the Japan-US Joint Committee without authorization by the citizens of Japan, take immediate action to assure that all such secret agreements are from this moment null and void.

Respectfully,

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Emanuel Pastreich served as the president of the Asia Institute, a think tank with offices in Washington DC, Seoul, Tokyo and Hanoi. Pastreich also serves as director general of the Institute for Future Urban Environments. Pastreich declared his candidacy for president of the United States as an independent in February, 2020.

He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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