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Democracy Betrayed:
Okinawa Under U.S. Occupation
by Kensei Yoshida

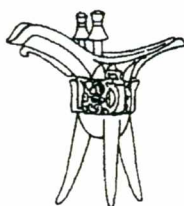
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Kensei Yoshida



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PREFACE

by

Chalmers Johnson

Kensei Yoshida's *Democracy Betrayed: The U.S. Occupation of Okinawa* is easily the best history, analysis, and commentary we have on the United States's domination from 1945 to 1972 over the unlucky people of Okinawa. It is written from an Okinawan perspective. Yoshida is of course aware that when the United States's formal dominion over Okinawa ended in 1972 and it condoned a *pro forma* "reversion" of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty, the semicolonial conditions he describes did not end. In fact, they continued and persist to the present day in an often exacerbated form. For the past fifty-six years, and with no end in sight, the American military has dominated the territory and 1.3 million people of the islands in total disregard of the values and wishes of the Okinawans themselves.

As Yoshida observes, the Americans, like the Japanese before them and the samurai of Satsuma even before imperial Japan annexed the Ryukyus, seem to value the territory of Okinawa and the comfortable living arrangements they have built for themselves there much more highly than the people whom they have displaced and whom they pretend to defend. In this study, Yoshida stresses the period 1945 to 1972, during which American imperial rule was explicit and responsibility for the welfare of the Okinawans rested squarely with the Pentagon rather than the period after 1972, when the realities of the currently thirty-eight American military bases were camouflaged behind a façade of Japanese administration. His book is indispensable reading for those interested in Okinawa today, a place where revolt against American domination and Japanese betrayal is endemic and which, when it explodes, is likely to unravel the entire fabric of American military enclaves in East Asia much as the breaching of the Berlin Wall in 1989 began the unraveling of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe.

One of Yoshida's most important achievements is his careful documentation of how well American leaders knew from the beginning that in imposing military colonialism on the Okinawans they were violating the United Nations Charter, their own proclaimed objectives in fighting World War II, and virtually all of the political ideals and values they have espoused as a nation. He quotes numerous high-ranking American officials that they perfectly well understood that in keeping Okinawa for twenty years after the 1952 Peace Treaty with Japan (and giving it up only under intense Okinawan and Japanese pressure), they were making a mockery of the pledge in the Atlantic Charter of August 1941 that the U.S. sought "no aggrandizement, territorial or other" in World War II. Even as President Harry Truman in December 1945 was proclaiming as "fundamentals" of American foreign policy that "We seek no territorial expansion or selfish advantage" and "believe in the eventual return of sovereign rights and self-government to all peoples who have been deprived of them by force," the military establishment of which he was the putative commander-in-chief was making a hypocrite of him in Okinawa.

During the height of the Cold War, the Pentagon turned Okinawa into its own private fortress and safehouse for clandestine activities, providing the Communists with material for anti-American propaganda at least as valid as American denunciations of the Berlin Wall. As Yoshida shows, some American officials recognized this and acknowledged the contradiction. He quotes President Richard Nixon's comparison of Okinawa's status to that of the original United States when they were British colonies. He records Secretary of State William Rogers's remarks that Okinawa under Pentagon occupation was inconsistent with American "national interests, national character, or history." He notes that in the early internecine conflicts between the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the future of Okinawa, the JCS always won despite the pretense that the American military is under civilian, elected-official control. And he cites the self-indictment of American policy by William J. Sebald, one of the State Department's key planners for Japan: concerning the peace treaty that John Foster Dulles was negotiating, Sebald feared "doing violence [to] public commitments re no territorial acquisitions" and giving the "appearances of outright and irrevocable alienation" of the Okinawan people from Japan.

Among other important incidents in the history of American foreign policy in East Asia after World War II—incidents that are almost invariably omitted from American histories of the era—Yoshida dissects the hypocrisy and mendacity of U.S. attempts to justify article 3 of the Peace Treaty (which left Okinawa in U.S. military hands) by claiming it was implicit in the Potsdam Declaration of 1945 that formed the basis of Japan's surrender. He draws attention to former Undersecretary of State U. Alexis Johnson's admission that giving Okinawa to the military was the price of getting the Pentagon to go along with the peace treaty. He exposes the lack of "due process of law" in the military's seizure of land from Okinawan farmers and the enormous embarrassment caused to the United States by American Civil Liberties Union director Roger Baldwin's report on these practices and his personal visit to Okinawa in August 1959 to draw attention to the denial there of "civil rights enjoyed by Americans and Japanese." Yoshida's detailed picture of President Dwight Eisenhower's visit to Naha in 1960 deserves to be much better known. Even though the American military bussed in crowds to line Eisenhower's route and gave them all little American flags to wave, the first president ever to visit Okinawa (and the only one until Clinton attended a summit meeting there forty years later) still faced violent Okinawan protests that had to be put down by bayonet-wielding American troops. These are not images that the American military or historians of America's role in the Cold War like to remember.

Despite all of the rapes, murders, assaults, bar brawls, environmental pollution, hit-and-run automobile accidents, airplane crashes, artillery practice, and incessant noise that the Okinawans have been forced to live with for well over half a century, I believe that the ultimate damage done by the Americans is to Okinawa's culture. We know from the history of the Ryukyuan civilization over the past six hundred years that it was one of the few truly pacifist cultures in East Asia and that at the time Commodore Matthew Perry called at Okinawa in 1853 enroute to his "opening" of Japan, the Okinawans managed the land and water of their small islands in complete compatibility with nature. A century later, Yoshida writes, "Bacon, ham, sausages, mayonnaise, luncheon meat, ketchup, salad, butter, milk, and chocolate became part of the people's diet and the names of these exotic foodstuffs entered their language. Coca Cola and Bireley's were synonymous for soft drinks, Wrigley's for chewing gum and Lucky Strike for cigarettes. People adopted words like 'gate,' 'guard,' 'pass,' 'checker,' 'dollar,' 'Quonset,' 'driver,' 'car-

penter,' 'civilian,' 'MP,' 'OK,' and 'bye-bye,' pronouncing them with their own accents."

Many other, truly unprintable words associated with the brothels of the Goya district of Koza also entered the Okinawan language. Until 1974 Koza was the only city in Japan that wrote its name in the *katakana* syllabary, its original name written in Chinese characters having been obliterated along with the village itself during the Battle of Okinawa. After the race riots, anti-Vietnam War protests, and the discovery that nerve gas and nuclear weapons were stored just next door, on April 1, 1974, the city of Koza tried to forget its past by changing its name to Okinawa City. But nothing really changed. The base "culture" cannot even begin to be eradicated until the bases themselves are gone.

Yoshida is generous about this legacy. "The American experience," he writes, "has also enriched their [the Okinawan] culture, making it unique in Japan and Asia." It may well be that Okinawa today attracts mainland tourists in part because they can hear and dance to American blues and rock music, in which many Okinawan musicians have become adept. But this seems a small compensation for the destruction of one of East Asia's most interesting civilizations and its replacement by a military version of America's homogenized, corporate-dominated fast-food "civilization." The United States has a lot to answer for in East Asia, and the bill is still being toted up, not just in Okinawa. For important insights into just how hard it will be for the Americans eventually to pay up, Yoshida provides a truly expert guide.

a

Foreword

A popular Okinawan folk song of the early 1950s captured people's surprise and bewilderment at the vicissitudes of life spent at the mercy of outside forces.¹ It went like this:

From Chinese days to the Japanese,
And now from Japanese days to the American,
How unbelievably has Okinawa changed.
Women used to let their hair grow long;
Now they cut it short,
Get it curled into a pigeon nest.
Wear high-heeled shoes,
And walk like chickens in strong winds . . .

The transition from the Japanese to the American era was of much shorter duration than the earlier changes, but affected most people more directly and sweepingly. Nothing could have been more dramatic: the Americans crossed the ocean, devastated the Okinawans' land completely, occupied that land with thousands of troops and powerful weapons, then suddenly began to feed and shelter the Okinawan people, instituted a democratic system but also governed them by proclamations and ordinances. Unlike the Chinese and the Japanese before them, the Americans controlled extensive stretches of their land and turned the island into a huge military complex surrounded by American-style residential suburbs. They sent hundreds of young Okinawans to America for university education, and built schools, highways, water and power plants, and introduced American ways of life. An unknown number of "Amerasians" were fathered by American soldiers and their Okinawan mothers. Many of these children were born out of wedlock, and often left fatherless and destitute.

A glance through any of the annual or semi-annual reports of United States authorities on the island shows the scope of American involvement in the Okinawan people's daily lives. In 1965,² for example, the United States contributed \$24,200,000 to the Ryukyu Islands in financial assistance—\$12,000,000 from the Congressional (Administration

¹The terms "Okinawa" and "the Ryukyu Islands" (or "the Ryukyus") are used interchangeably in this book although occasionally "Okinawa" refers only to the main island. Geographically, the Ryukyu Islands consist of three groups of islands that make up Okinawa Prefecture: from northeast to southwest, Okinawa, Miyako and Yaeyama. The Okinawa group is made up of Okinawa island and some two dozen offshore islets including Ie, Kume, Zamami, and Kudaka. Thus, "Okinawa" is not only the name of the entire prefecture, but of a group of islands and of the principal island in that group. The island of Okinawa, where most of the American bases are located, accounts for 54 percent of the prefecture's total land area and more than 90 percent of its population.

²High Commissioner, *Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands*, Vol. XIII: 1 July 1964-30 June 1965. Also see Ryukyu Development Loan Corporation, *Annual Report on the Ryukyuan Economy: A Profile of Economic Development in the Last Ten Years* (Ryukyu Development Loan Corporation, 1967), 5, 27, 28.

Ryukyu Islands, Army, or ARIA) appropriation and the remaining \$12,200,000 from the USCAR (United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands) general fund. USCAR, which operated the Ryukyu Electric Power Corporation, the Ryukyu Domestic Water Corporation and the Ryukyu Development Loan Corporation, derived its general fund (\$10,800,000 in 1965) mostly from the earnings of these corporations and from interest and dividends accumulated by them, and from the resale of petroleum products. Some of these funds were used to cover the administrative costs of USCAR. Most were used to finance a number of projects or activities such as the construction of water and sewage systems, public works and economic development, improvement of educational facilities, development of public health and sanitation services, and provision of technical education and training, often for the purpose of winning over the local population.

The United States built and maintained major highways for military and civilian use. It provided additional economic aid through other programs, such as the free distribution of surplus foodstuffs under Public Law 480. A total of \$7,800,000 in rice, wheat, soy beans and other products was sold to authorized Okinawan importers, who then sold these foodstuffs to retailers. In the final years of its administration of the islands, a number of U.S. multinational corporations such as Pacific Gulf Oil and Esso Standard received licenses from the Government of the Ryukyu Islands to invest millions of dollars in Okinawa.

The United States also provided eighty-five scholarships in 1965 alone to young Okinawans for study in American colleges and universities as well as funding agricultural, technical and medical training programs at American institutions. The University of the Ryukyus, originally established with U.S. funds as the first institution of higher education in Okinawan history, produced a large number of young Okinawan graduates in liberal arts, education, engineering and other fields. U.S. forces also made "mercy flights" to transport patients from remote islands to Okinawa, rescued fishermen caught in storms, and even attempted cloud seeding in an effort to prevent water shortages and typhoons.

In the same year, expenditure by the U.S. forces and their personnel amounted to roughly \$100,000,000, or 43 percent of total foreign receipts. Local purchases by the U.S. of goods and business services (\$63,600,000), rental payments to the military land owners (\$4,700,000), and the wages paid to the Okinawans directly or indirectly employed by the U.S. forces (\$31,700,000), accounted for a large proportion of U.S. expenditures. The workers paid from appropriated or non-appropriated funds or employed by contractors, concessionaires or American investors, and domestics such as maids and houseboys, constituted a little less than 10 percent of the total labor force, a substantial drop compared with the 14 percent figure in 1958 but still considerable. Such expenditure more or less made up for the trade deficit (\$130,000,000) of the islands, which exported only \$79,400,000 worth of commodities in 1965.

Indeed, anyone who visited Okinawa in the 1960s for the first time in thirty, or even twenty years, would have looked at the transformation in total disbelief. Although the roads were mostly still unpaved and dusty and the dwellings grass- or tin-roofed, cars and trucks jammed the four-lane, asphalt-paved main highway lined with service stations, repair shops, upholsterers, restaurants, car dealers, banks, construction companies, churches, and small general stores. A narrow 3.2-foot lane through the swamp at the sparsely populated edge of Naha had changed into Kokusai ("International") Street, the busiest shopping center in Okinawa, lined with department stores, souvenir shops, restaurants, coffee shops, photo studios, and bookstores and congested with traffic. In central Okinawa, a group of farm villages located adjacent to major U.S. military bases had amal-

gamated and grown into the sprawling city of Koza. Many of its residents worked on base or for American families. The Goya district was known as “Little America” or “the base town” for the souvenir shops, laundries, flower shops, photo studios, repair shops, pawn shops, bars and restaurants with “A” signs³ and brothels that catered to servicemen.

Fashion-conscious young women walked in shoes and western clothes instead of the traditional grass sandals and the working *kimono*, and had their hair waved at a beauty parlor into what they called “*pahmanento*” or “*pahma*” for short. The traditional hump of hair atop the head had fallen out of fashion, as had farm work. Men, too, had discarded their *kimonos* for army fatigues, and white-collar workers dressed in business suits. Bacon, ham, sausages, mayonnaise, luncheon meat, ketchup, salad, butter, milk, and chocolate became part of the people’s diet and the names of these exotic foodstuffs entered their language. Coca Cola and Bireley’s were synonyms for soft drinks, Wrigley’s for chewing gum and Lucky Strike for cigarettes. People adopted words like “gate,” “guard,” “pass,” “checker,” “dollar,” “Quonset,” “driver,” “carpenter,” “civilian,” “MP,” “OK,” and “bye-bye,” pronouncing them with their own accent. Many built “two-by-four,” and then “block” (concrete-block) houses with block walls. Water from the tap replaced well water, and kerosene lamps gave way to electric lights.

No amount of American goodwill and generosity or importation of its “civilized” modes of life, however, satisfied the Okinawan people’s wishes for an end to foreign military occupation or for the restoration of their political and social rights and privileges as Japanese citizens protected by the Japanese constitution. As Thaddeus Holt, Deputy Under Secretary of the Army, acknowledged in 1967: “Foreign administration—even the most benign—is seldom popular for any long period. In the Ryukyus, almost a million people in an area less than half the size of Delaware have lived under American administration for 21 years.”⁴ However, contrary to Holt’s assertion that “over these years we have enjoyed the reasonable acquiescence of the Ryukyuan people in our bases and our administration,” most people were resentful of prolonged foreign rule. In fact, his successor, James V. Siena, had to revise Holt’s assessment the following year: “There is a rising impatience on the part of the people of the Ryukyus and Japan for reversion of the Ryukyus to Japan.” The historian Fuyu Iha once wrote, in reference to the mainland Japanese feudal family that controlled Okinawa for 260 years, that “the Shimazu clan loved the land of Ryukyu more than they loved its people. . . . It was nothing less than colonialism.”⁵ Perhaps the same could be said about the United States occupation.

Nevertheless, Okinawa was, perhaps, fortunate in many respects in comparison with Manchuria, the Philippines, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia exploited for Japan’s economic, territorial and hegemonic interests under Japanese military control.⁶ The Ameri-

³Mainly for hygiene reasons, U.S. authorities allowed only those bars, clubs and restaurants with their approval (thus, “A” signs) to serve military personnel and their dependents. The authorities closed off an entire neighborhood of nightspots to these Americans not only when venereal disease was reported but when military workers went on strike.

⁴Testimony before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, the House Appropriations Committee. 21 March 1967.

⁵Quoted in Seitoku Kinjo and Sokichi Takara, *Iha Fuyu: “Okinawagaku”-no Chichi* (Shimizu Shoin, 1984), 106.

⁶See, for example, Hideo Kobayashi, *Nihon Gunseika-no Asia* (Tokyo: Iwanami Press, 1993), Joyce Lebra, ed., *Japan’s Greater East Asia Sphere in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Sino-Japanese Dispute* (Lytton Commission Report, 1932), Robert S. Ward, *Asia for the Asiatics?: The Techniques of Japanese*

can occupation of Okinawa was unique in the history of the post-World War II era.⁷ Military government was established in Germany, Austria, Japan and Korea, but they had either been former enemies or colonies of former enemies, in which the United States sought to restore order and administrative structure through “denazification,” “democratization,” “demilitarization” and economic recovery. Once a national government was formed and peace declared, the occupying forces withdrew from active administration of the area even if they remained present to defend it. Neither did the Okinawan experience resemble the two other examples described by Bruce W. Watson in his essay on military government.⁸ On the American frontier, they were “transitory and provided for government and law in sparsely developed regions until adequate numbers of people had settled and civil institutions were established,” he writes. And in Guam, the Pacific islands, the Panama Canal Zone, and Alaska, more permanent military governments were established.

Of these U.S.-controlled territories, Guam’s situation came closest to Okinawa’s.⁹ The United States acquired Guam from Spain in 1898, designating the entire island as a naval station, and appointing Captain R.P. Leary as commanding officer and governor. The U.S. Navy controlled the island until surrendering it to Japan in December 1941. American forces under Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, recaptured it in July 1944 and placed it under naval military government.¹⁰ Guam and Okinawa shared some similarities. As in Okinawa, a U.S. commander (who doubled as governor) was the supreme authority, and administered the islands by executive and verbal orders, and by proclamations.¹¹ B.J. Bordallo, chairman of the Guam House of Council, could thus testify before the U.S. Senate: “A naval officer, as governor of Guam, has the power to make or break laws The governor appoints all the high government officials If any native official desires to hold his job he must not incur the

Occupation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), and A.V.H. Hartendorp, *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines* (Manila: Bookmark, 1967).

⁷Earlier forms of military colonialism had, however, followed a different pattern. Following the financial failure of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century, Cyprus was assigned to Britain which ruled the island as a military base to protect the Suez Canal, and Bosnia-Herzegovina came under the administration of Austria-Hungary. Britain subsequently annexed Cyprus and later made it into a colony. The Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia tried to build a “model colony” by developing infrastructure, industries, and education, but Austro-Hungary’s decision to formally annex Bosnia-Herzegovina inflamed ethno-religious conflicts that led to the outbreak of World War I.

⁸*International Military and Defense Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (Washington: Brassey’s, 1993), 1077-1082.

⁹David Wurfel has discussed the Okinawan situation in terms of “irredentism” (“Okinawa: Irredenta on the Pacific,” *Pacific Affairs*, 35:4 [1962/1963 winter], 353-374) and Akio Watanabe compared Okinawa under U.S. control with the Saar with control divided between Germany and France after World War II (“The Okinawa Conflict and the U.S.-Japan Alliance,” *Australian Outlook*, April 1966, 36-38). Others have compared Okinawa with Puerto Rico, Northern Ireland, and the Basque lands. But Okinawa was different from these areas and Guam in many respects. Naomi Chazan defines “irredentism” as “any political effort to unite ethnically, historically, or geographically related segments of a population in adjacent countries within a common political framework.” (*Irredentism and International Politics* [Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991]).

¹⁰Paul Carano and Pedro C. Sanchez, *A Complete History of Guam* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1964), 178-184.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 185.

displeasure of His Excellency, or he will find himself without a position”¹² Like Okinawa, Guam was not economically self-sustaining and had to rely on the United States for relief and assistance.¹³ In both cases, the U.S. administration also took an “arrogant, somewhat racist approach,” and it faced the problem of “balancing colonial (primarily military) priorities with the establishment of ‘democratic values’ among the people.” While the United States controlled both islands for strategic interests, it took upon itself the task of implanting democratic values and improving living standards as benefits of U.S. rule, in the belief that “such achievements would . . . help to justify whatever otherwise would be unjustifiable to the American public.”¹⁴ But there were essential differences. Unlike Guam, a former Spanish colony, Okinawa had been an integral part of a sovereign country. Unlike the Okinawans, the people of Guam sought to become American citizens; Guam became an unincorporated territory of the United States governed under the Organic Act of 1950, making all native Guamanians (Chamorros) Americans.

Puerto Rico also provides some parallels. A Spanish colony for more than four centuries, it was occupied by the United States in 1898. Washington established an administration with a U.S. governor, an upper legislative chamber appointed by the U.S. President, and an elected house of delegates and, in 1917, in response to an independence movement, made it a U.S. territory. Puerto Ricans were thereafter entitled to U.S. citizenship. They could now elect both houses of their legislature, but the governor, with the power to veto any legislation, and other key officials continued to be appointed by the president. In 1967, 1981, 1993 and 1998, Puerto Rico held referenda on whether it should remain a commonwealth, become a U.S. state, or become an independent country. Commonwealth and independence were the top choices in 1993 (at 48.6% and 46.3%, respectively), while in 1998 only 0.1% voted for a “territorial” commonwealth, 0.3% for free association with the United States, and 2.5% for independence, against 46.5% who opted for statehood and 50.3% for “none of the above.” Rejection of a *territorial* commonwealth by those who voted for “none of the above” was in fact a vote for commonwealth.

The off-shore Puerto Rican island of Vieques provides a striking parallel to the situation of Okinawa. Measuring some fifty square miles and populated by fewer than 10,000 people, two-thirds of Vieques has been used by the U.S. Navy as a training base since World War II. The Navy’s Atlantic Fleet practices air to ground targeting, offshore support and amphibious landings to simulate actual combat operations, using live ammunition. The people of Vieques have for years been demanding an end to these exercises which they claimed threatened health and the environment. Protests intensified after a stray Marine Corps bomb killed a civilian security guard in 1999. In response, President Clinton promised to discontinue Navy and Marine bombing exercises on the island after 2003 and allow Puerto Rican voters to decide the practice range’s future thereafter. In 2001, after crowds of protesters, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Dennis Rivera, president of New York’s largest health care worker’s union, broke into the bombing range and forced the Navy to suspend operations, the Bush administration announced that the United States would end the exercises within two years.

Ironically, in its political relationship with the dominant power, Okinawa under U.S.

¹²American Civil Liberties Union, *Civil Liberties in American Colonies* (New York: American Civil Liberties Union, 1939). <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ailtexts/civillib.html>, in Jim Zwick, ed., *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*. <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ail98-35.html> (accessed 4 November 2000).

¹³Watson, in *International Military and Defense Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, 1078.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

administration in fact bore greater similarity to the thirteen colonies that became the core of what is now the United States today on the eve of the War for Independence. The Okinawan demands and allegations—as expressed over the years in petitions and resolutions adopted either in the legislature or at mass rallies—were reminiscent of those that the American revolutionary leaders drew up against the British crown in their Declaration of Independence. The Declaration held as “self-evident” truths that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and enumerated grievances against the king of Great Britain. Although, admittedly, many of their grievances did not apply to the American occupation of Okinawa, some resembled those that the Okinawans leveled against the United States:

- he has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good;
- he has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries;
- he has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures;
- he has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power;
- he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation: . . . for protecting [armed troops] by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; . . . for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever;
- in every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

Nor did the United States adhere to the Atlantic Charter that President Franklin Roosevelt had signed with Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1941. Their countries, they declared, would “seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other,” “desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned,” and “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.”

While the War Department prepared a manual on military government, it proved inappropriate for the American occupation of Okinawa. The *Basic Field Manual on Military Government* (FM27-5) of 1940 advised that military government, while pursuing “the prosecution of the war to a successful termination” as its top priority, “should be just, humane, and as mild as practicable, and the welfare of the people governed should always be the aim of every person engaged therein.”¹⁵ But the manual was revised in 1943 to respond to the exigencies of war. “Military necessity,” it now stated, “is the primary underlying principle for the conduct of military government.” “Welfare of the governed” was no longer one of the basic objectives of military government. “While the welfare of the inhabitants should be considered for humane reasons and should be safeguarded” within the limit of military requirements, “fraternization” between military personnel and inhabitants was strictly prohibited. The problem for Okinawa was that the manual, de-

¹⁵Carl J. Friedrich, *et al.*, *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1948). Also see Roy A. Prete and A. Hamish Iron, eds., *Armies of Occupation* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984).

signed for the requirements of the combat phase in a hostile country, with “relatively little thought or attention . . . devoted to problems of military government after hostilities cease[d],”¹⁶ served as a guide to policy makers long after hostilities had ceased. Another 1940 field manual, *Rules of Land Warfare* (FM 27-10), provided that the occupation “ceases” when “the legitimate government actually resumes its functions.” But many of its principles of “military occupation and government of enemy territory” remained effective in Okinawa even after the Government of the Ryukyus was installed in 1952.

The prolonged military occupation of Okinawa also ran counter to the “fundamentals” of the American foreign policy announced by President Truman in 1945. “We seek no territorial expansion or selfish advantage” and “believe in the eventual return of sovereign rights and self-government to all peoples who have been deprived of them by force,” he declared. “[We] shall approve no territorial changes in any friendly part of the world.” The United States, he added, also believed “that all peoples who are prepared for self-government should be permitted to choose their own form of government by their own freely expressed choice, without interference from any foreign source.”¹⁷ George Kennan called on each American to recognize his (or her) “obligation . . . as an individual to his God and his faith,” and as a political society to its “own national ideals and through those ideals to the wider human community, of which we are in ever increasing measure a part.”¹⁸ The presidential executive order, the principal U.S. instrument for the administration of the Ryukyu Islands, also guaranteed the basic democratic rights and freedoms.

These lofty ideals, however, had only limited application in the islands under military occupation. Since the United States, which championed democracy in its foreign policy, maintained control over Okinawa solely for strategic reasons, a conflict—or what Brown describes as the problem of “balancing”—inevitably arose between military priorities and democratic principles.¹⁹ Democratic rights and freedoms in Okinawa were often sacrificed for security elsewhere. The military administration had almost dictatorial powers over the people and occasionally exercised them. Okinawa evoked a question from the world as to whether the Americans were concealing a double standard behind the rhetoric of “national security.”

When President Richard Nixon submitted the reversion agreement to the Senate on September 21, 1971, he reminded the American people of some of their historical legacies. “In undertaking these negotiations [on reversion],” he stated, “the United States recognized, as a matter of basic principle, that it is consistent with neither our national character or our national interest to continue to administer a territory which has been historically connected with Japan and whose people desire to rejoin their mother country.”²⁰ Similarly, William Rogers, the Secretary of State, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a month later: “It was clear in 1969, it remains clear today, that continuance of a situation in which a million Japanese are still living under United States military administration more than twenty-five years after the end of world war II has subjected our posi-

¹⁶Friedrich, *et al.*, 31.

¹⁷“Foreign Policy of the United States: Fundamentals,” 1 December 1945. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter, *FRUS*), 1946, vol. 1, 1134.

¹⁸George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 11.

¹⁹For the “democratization” aspect of U.S. foreign policy or its military government objectives, see Friedrich, *et al.*, 3-4.

²⁰“Statement of President Richard M. Nixon in Submitting the Reversion Agreement to the U.S. Senate,” 21 September 1971.

tion in the Ryukyu Islands and our relationship with Japan to increasing strain. Such a situation is no longer tenable. It is not in keeping with our national character or our national interest. Nor is it consistent with [our] history."

If the military administration of Okinawa was considered in 1971 to be inconsistent with the American "national character," "national interest" or "history," the Okinawan people could be forgiven for asking how the United States could have disregarded these values for so long? For, what was "clear in 1969" when the Japan-U.S. joint communiqué committed the two governments to accomplishing the reversion "during 1972," should have been clear to them through most of the occupation years.

Even the economic and social benefits of the occupation, of which the U.S. authorities constantly reminded the Okinawans, were open to question. Under the administration of the richest country in the world, Okinawa remained one of the poorest regions in Japan, a rising economic power but still far behind the United States. A joint study of economic development on the island conducted in early 1964 by the Ryukyuan government and USCAR showed that, in spite of rapid annual increases in the gross national product, Okinawa lagged far behind the Japanese mainland in public health, education and welfare. "Despite the fact that the United States has been working toward those goals since 1962," a high commissioner testified before Congress, "we have made progress but it is evident that the rate of progress is too slow. Japan's economy and standard of living continue to progress at rapid rates." In 1969, another high commissioner told a subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee: "Ryukyuan school facilities are significantly behind the schools in Japan, both in terms of quantity and quality. The doctor-to-population ratio and the hospital-bed-to-population ratio in the Ryukyus are less than one-half of the Japanese level. The number of families in need of improved housing is estimated at three to four times the number in comparable prefectures in Japan."

The "friendship" that the U.S. authorities had strenuously tried to build between the Americans and the Okinawans failed to take root. In *Cocktail Party*, which received the Akutagawa prize in 1967, Tatsuhiro Oshiro questioned the true meaning of "international friendship." The novella opens innocently with a cocktail party hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Miller in an American on-base housing area for guests, including the Okinawan protagonist, and Chinese and mainland Japanese. The conversation inevitably revolves around the status of Okinawa with flashback references to Japanese activities in China before and during the war. Midway through the story, the host announces that the three-year-old son of an American guest is missing, and the Okinawan is troubled by the suggestion that the boy may have been kidnapped by an Okinawan. The tension dissipates when it is learned that the Okinawan maid has taken the boy to her home for an overnight stay. The protagonist returns home to discover that his high school-aged daughter has been raped by a serviceman renting their backroom for his Okinawan girlfriend, around the time when he was searching for the missing boy and that his daughter had been arrested for pushing the man off a cliff after the rape and causing him serious injuries. Advised by the Okinawan police to swallow the insult, the protagonist visits Miller to ask for his personal help, but Miller, who turns out to be an agent of the Criminal Investigation Division at USCAR's Public Safety Department, declines "for the sake of American-Okinawan friendship." The Okinawan subsequently refers Miller to Ordinance No. 144, which makes rape of an American woman punishable by death, indicating to him the fictitious nature of the "friendship" between the unequal Americans and Okinawans.

The 1972 reversion reunited Okinawa with the mainland, placed its people under the protection of the Japanese constitution, and bridged various economic and social gaps. Okinawa has changed dramatically, particularly in terms of public facilities such as roads,

air and sea ports, government and school buildings and parks,²¹ in the relationship between the Okinawan people and the U.S. forces on the island, and in the sharply reduced military base-related expenditures in the economy. The people are covered by the same constitutional rights and freedoms and the same social security benefits as elsewhere in Japan. They can travel freely to mainland Japan without being concerned about reentry and visitors from the mainland or elsewhere, are welcomed without security checks by overbearing American authorities. They also elect representatives to the national Diet. But Okinawa remains among the least industrialized and poorest prefectures in Japan, with the highest unemployment rate. Furthermore, the administrative reunion fell short of satisfying their single most intense desire: to live peacefully free of the huge complex of air fields, military ports, logistics bases, training grounds, firing ranges, ordnance depots, and other military facilities. The continuing presence of U.S. forces which still occupy nearly 20 percent of the main island, including bases immediately adjacent to crowded residential areas irritates many people. Their strong sense of Okinawan identity reinforces their dissatisfaction and feelings of betrayal.

This book traces the evolution of the current situation from an Okinawan perspective. It seeks to show how in 1945 the Americans conquered and subjected them and how the Okinawans reacted, how the U.S. policy toward Okinawa evolved and how the “security interests” acted as a shibboleth that permitted military logic to prevail over the civilian arguments of the Department of State, and how democratic principles and civil rights fell prey to military priorities and the paternalism of some American authorities. It also illustrates how Japan, primarily for its own security, collaborated with the United States and allowed Washington to maintain free use of its bases on Okinawa and to exercise absolute administrative control over a large number of Japanese nationals for so long. The book ends with a discussion of the post-reversion situation in Okinawa, taking readers up to the controversy over the relocation of a Marine Corps air station and the summit of major world leaders held in Okinawa in the year 2000.

The few books written in English about Okinawa under U.S. administration discuss the “high politics,” i.e., governmental decision-making processes in Japan or the United States or negotiations between the two governments. This book attempts to demonstrate that internal pressures in Okinawa played a significant role in forcing Japan and the United States to re-evaluate their policies and, eventually, to decide to extricate themselves from what became an “untenable” situation. These pressures intensified after the end of the war in Vietnam and the United States’ recognition of China. U.S. attempts to confer legitimacy on its administration of the islands by reference to tensions in the Far East, long at odds with the people’s sentiments in Okinawa, had become even more unacceptable.

It is therefore also a story of American policy failures in Okinawa, as implicitly acknowledged by Nixon and Rogers. As a matter of expediency, the American government gave its military complete responsibility for the Ryukyu Islands and massive discretionary power to administer them. The Executive Order charged the American deputy governor and his successor, the high commissioner, with the dual tasks of military responsibility and civilian government. Since, as High Commissioner Ferdinand Unger stated, “the only reason that the United States is in the Ryukyu [*sic*] is because of the military base we maintain there” and his “primary mission” was “to insure the continuation of the op-

²¹The transformation has been so radical that people like folklorist Kenichi Tanikawa lament the loss of many cultural and historic sites and, along with them, valuable Okinawan traditions. See his *Okinawa: Sono Kiki-to Kamigami* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996).

erational effectiveness of this base,"²² it was only natural that military priorities would override civilian ones. Under the circumstances, and with their future uncertain, people placed little faith even in the best intentions of the U.S. administration.

The American people would have to shoulder the final responsibility for having shown little interest in the grievances of a people under the military occupation of their government. To military planners and strategists, Okinawa was nothing more than a geographical reference. For example, Henry Kissinger wrote in 1957: "... for the foreseeable future we should be able to count on Okinawa or perhaps the Philippines as a staging area for the Far East, on Cyprus or Libya as staging areas for the Middle East, and on Great Britain as a staging area for Europe. And if our policy is at all farsighted we should be able to create other friendly areas close to likely danger zones."²³ Political leaders such as senators and congressmen repeatedly endorsed the arguments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff over those of the Department of State or the President and authorized policies and actions in Okinawa which were so inconsistent with American values and principles and would have been unthinkable in the United States. Many of the American journalists who visited Okinawa before 1972 also tended to rely on briefings by military spokesmen and thus to overlook or misrepresent the real situation of the Okinawan people. Although there were exceptions, such as Otis Bell and Roger Baldwin, Americans in general, and journalists and congressmen in particular became unwittingly or otherwise "accomplices" in the many injustices committed in Okinawa.²⁴

Yet, even in spite of the negative impact of the U.S. political and military presence, it is only fair to acknowledge that quite apart from whatever material prosperity they gained, Okinawans have benefited in a number of ways from the long American presence on their island. They are, perhaps, one of the most internationally minded and politically alert groups in all of Japan. The American experience has also enriched their culture, making it unique in Japan and Asia, and expanded their world. They have evolved lifestyles that incorporate elements from Okinawa, Japan, China and the United States. At the same time, many have come to appreciate their own history, tradition, music, dances, karate and kinship, and even the hard experience of the occupation.

Almost thirty years after the American occupation ended, and more than ten years after the Cold War became history, Okinawa remains a military keystone in the security arrangements between Japan and the United States. With Japan's consent and cooperation, the United States still maintains a large network of military bases on the island training marines and airmen, storing weapons and ammunition, carrying out intelligence activities, and standing ready for responding to emergencies in Asia and elsewhere. In fact, the so-called "Nye Report" in 1995 kept Okinawa at the center of the U.S.-Japan military alliance. But, as the people's outburst of anger in that year over the rape of a schoolgirl by three servicemen and over subsequent incidents involving U.S. forces have demonstrated, many Okinawans are increasingly intolerant of the continued presence of what they perceive as an encumbrance imposed unfairly on them for too long. The frustration has become so intense, in fact, that Keiichi Inamine, the conservative governor whose election

²²High Commissioner F. T. Unger's testimony before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, the House Appropriations Committee, 21 March 1967.

²³Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 165.

²⁴In her article, "Our Blindspot in Asia," Helen Mears criticizes those Congressmen and American journalists who incorrectly called Okinawa "a showcase for democracy." *The Progressive* (July, 1957), 15-18.

had been welcomed in Tokyo and Washington in 1998, compared it in February 2001 to the increasing pressure of subterranean volcanic magma prefiguring an eruption. In the same month, the Prefectural Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution demanding a reduction in the number of U.S. Marines on the island and another resolution later in the month calling for a substantial revision of the Status of Forces Agreement between Japan and the United States, which allows U.S. military police to hold suspects in custody until indictment, and for tighter discipline for U.S. military personnel.

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Kensei Yoshida
Tokyo, June 2001

Prologue

When Commodore Matthew C. Perry took his fleet of five ships to Naha harbor in May 1853, Okinawa, or Ryukyu, was a semi-independent kingdom, paying tribute to both China and Satsuma in the southernmost part of mainland Japan. He had good reason to visit this tiny island in the Western Pacific, lying between Japan and Taiwan.

As “commander-in-chief of the United States naval forces in the East India, China and Japan Seas, and Special Envoy to Japan,” he was on his way to Edo (Tokyo). He had a mission to negotiate the opening of Japan to United States trade, and particularly to its whaling ships that required harbors to secure shelter, coal, water and other supplies.¹ But negotiations with the feudal government, intent on maintaining its 250-year-old policy of isolation, were expected to be difficult and time-consuming. He had to prepare himself for this. So, on December 14, 1852, Perry wrote the Secretary of the Navy, John P. Kennedy, from the island of Madeira off the coast of Morocco: “As a preliminary step, and one of easy accomplishment, one or more ports of refuge and supply to our whaling and other ships must at once be secured.”

If he could not acquire such ports on mainland Japan, at least not without resorting to force, Perry said, then it would be “desirable” and “necessary” first to secure some meeting places for the squadron in the southern islands “with a good harbor and . . . facilities for obtaining water and supplies.” He was looking for a staging station to help accomplish his mission.

Okinawa, the principal island in the Ryukyu Archipelago, which Perry called “the Great Lew Chew” or “the Lew Chew,”² seemed ideal for his purpose. For one thing, the islanders were ruled by the powerful lord of Satsuma some 400 miles (650 km) northeast away across the ocean who, Perry thought, “exercise[s] his rights more from the influence of [their] fear . . . than from any power to coerce their obedience.”

The commodore had read about Napoleon’s surprise when he was told that the people of the Lew Chew had no arms and they had never fought any war. “No arms!” reportedly

¹Commodore Perry to the Secretary of the Navy, 14 December 1852, in *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry, United States Navy, by Order of the Government of the United States. Compiled from the Original Notes and Journals of Commodore Perry and his Officers, at his request, and under his supervision, by Francis L. Hawks, D.D., L.L.D.*, 85-87. (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1856), published by Order of the Congress of the United States.

²Okinawans have called their island “Uchinaa (“Okinawa” in Japanese) and “Lew Chew.” It was romanized “Liu-ch’iu” in the Chinese romanization system devised by Thomas Francis Wade and subsequently modified by Herbert Allen Giles (Wade-Giles system). It is now spelled “Liuqiu” in the Pinyin system of the People’s Republic of China. “Lew Chew” is pidgin. (This information was provided by Chalmers Johnson.)

exclaimed the exiled former emperor of France. "No wars!"³

At the time when Napoleon heard this incredible story from the British Captain Basil Hall on St. Helena in 1816, Okinawa was indeed a peaceable kingdom, with all arms placed under the strict control of the royal government in Shuri. It had maintained tributary relations with China since the fourteenth century and, since the early seventeenth century, it had come under the feudal administration of the ruling clan of Satsuma which conquered the kingdom but allowed it to maintain ties with China. Economically, that relationship was of great benefit to Satsuma, and the people, as Perry pointed out, were powerless "to rebel against the grinding oppression of their rulers" in southern Japan.

Accordingly, Perry thought he was justified in occupying the principal ports in these islands by "the strictest rules of moral law" as well as by "the laws of stern necessity." Warships and merchant vessels of different countries could anchor there to refuel and obtain water and other supplies. Visits by foreign vessels might also improve the living conditions of the Okinawan people, he said, though thoughtfully adding that "the vices attendant upon civilization may be entailed upon them."

By "occupy," he meant just that. The commodore cited his own previous experiences in which he had "subjugate[d] many towns and communities" along the coast of Africa and in the Gulf of Mexico and administer[ed] . . . unrestricted power. . . . He boasted that he exercised power "to the comfort and protection" of the conquered peoples; he felt he should win similar confidence and friendship among the people in Okinawa. He even suggested that the islanders be provided with "simple agricultural implements" so that they could cultivate fruits, vegetables, grains and other products for visiting vessels.

This was a period of great turmoil in both the United States and East Asia. In addition to the Philippines, what is today Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Penang, Malacca (Melaka) and Labuan had been conquered by Western colonial empires. The first Opium War, waged from 1839 to 1842 between China and Britain, resulted in the Treaty of Nanking while armed uprisings threatened the Ch'ing (Qing) dynasty from within. China ceded the island of Hong Kong to Britain. Across the China Sea, one foreign power after another tried to persuade Japan to end its self-imposed isolation and open its doors to the rest of the world.

In American history, it was the high noon of territorial expansion, or "manifest destiny," and of the controversy over slavery. During the administration of President Millard Fillmore, who succeeded Zachary Taylor in 1850 upon the latter's sudden death, the territory ceded from Mexico was divided into several states and territories such as California, Texas, New Mexico and Utah. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in book form, and was to sell about 1,200,000 copies in a year. It was in January of the same year that President Fillmore authorized Commodore Perry to command a special expedition to Japan.

The response to his letter came from Secretary of State Edward Everett.⁴ It said: "The President [Franklin Pierce who succeeded Fillmore in March 1853] concurs with you in the opinion that it is highly desirable, probably necessary...that you should secure one or more ports of refuge of easy access." Everett warned Perry, however, that if the ports could be obtained only by the use of force he should look for them elsewhere. But Okinawa being so well situated and with the natives known to be so friendly and peaceful, the President believed that Perry would accomplish his objective. The letter instructed

³Basil Hall, *Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea, and the Great Loo-Choo Island* (London: John Murray, 1818).

⁴Everett to Perry, 15 February 1853, in *Narrative*. 87.

Perry that the base be established “with the consent of the natives” and that the commodore “pursue the most friendly and conciliatory course,” and warned again: “Make no use of force, except in the last resort for defense if attacked, and for self-preservation.” The letter added: “the President approves the idea . . . of encouraging the natives to turn their attention to agriculture, and has given orders to have the implements of husbandry mentioned by you sent out by the Vermont.”

Once in Okinawa, Perry disregarded Washington’s instructions to take “the most friendly and conciliatory course.” Americans instead went ashore armed with guns and surveyed freely and, in one instance, literally broke into a town hall, an incident that invoked Perry’s official Chinese-language interpreter to lament: “a more high handed piece of aggression has not been committed by anyone. I was ashamed at having been a party to such a procedure, and pitied these poor defenseless islanders . . .” At one time, Perry, impatient with the royal reluctance to receive him and assent to his demands, forced his way into the palace accompanied by a party of about 200 men in full dress and armed with two fieldpieces each mounted with a U.S. flag, to demand an audience with the king and the dowager queen, but with no success. Among his “demands” were that the government build a coal depot for rent, that Americans “shall have the privilege” of visiting the market and buying their necessities, that they shall not be “followed by low officials and spies,” and that the women and children “shall not fly from us as if we were their greatest enemies.”

Although the chronicler of his expedition disclaimed any serious intention on the part of the commodore to carry out his threat, Perry had not given up his desire to take over Okinawa for the United States. In a letter to Washington dated December 24, 1853, he asked for permission to establish “a foothold in this quarter of the globe, as a measure of positive necessity to the sustainment of our maritime rights in the east.” It was followed a month later with another missive, in which he stated:

It is my intention, should the Japanese government refuse to negotiate [a treaty] or to assign a port of resort for our merchant and whaling ships, to take under surveillance of the American flag, upon the ground of reclamation for insults and injuries committed upon American citizens, this island of Great Lew-Chew, a dependency of the empire, to be held under such restraint, until the decision of my government shall be known, whether to avow or disavow my acts. . . . I shall assume [the responsibility] as a measure of political precaution for it is certain that if I do not take preliminary steps before leaving this port [Naha] for Yedo, for adopting such course, the Russians or French, or probably the English, will anticipate the design.⁵

The Secretary of the Navy, James C. Dobbin, rejected this plan outright. “Your suggestion about holding one of the Lew-Chew Islands . . . is more embarrassing. The President [Pierce] . . . is disinclined, without the authority of the Congress, to take and retain possession of an island in that distant country, particularly unless more urgent and potent reasons demanded it than now exist.”⁶

Fortunately for Okinawa, events overtook Perry’s design: he successfully negotiated a treaty with Japan on May 31, 1854, and therefore did not think it necessary to pursue his initial proposal to occupy Okinawa. (Communication was extremely slow then. Samuel F. B. Morse had developed the telegraph by 1840 and, in fact, Perry exhibited it to the

⁵Perry to Dobbin, 25 January 1854.

⁶Dobbin to Perry, 30 May 1854.

Japanese along with railroad and agricultural implements, but it could not yet be operated across an ocean.)

In any event, Okinawa had also acceded to Perry's demands, particularly the need to send a force to take over the palace. When he returned to Okinawa after concluding a treaty of friendship with Japan, Perry further signed a "Compact between the United States and the Kingdom of Lew Chew" which provided that:

- U.S. citizens visiting Lew Chew "shall be treated with great courtesy and friendship" and allowed to buy or sell goods "at reasonable prices" without restrictions.
- When American ships were wrecked in the neighborhood, the local authorities should arrange to save life and property.
- Americans should be "at liberty to ramble where they please, without hindrance." But "if they violently go into houses, or trifle with women, or force people to sell them things, or do other such like illegal acts, they shall be arrested by the local officers . . . and shall be reported to the captain of the ship to which they belong, for punishment by him."
- The Lew Chew government should furnish American ships with "skillful pilots" to guide them through the reefs and with wood and water, all at cost.⁷

This was accomplished through "gun-boat" diplomacy, with Perry accompanied at the negotiating table by two large howitzers manned by cutlass-bearing crewmen, two bands, and forty-eight marines. "Our government should pay a little attention to the fantastic tricks which its commodorial gentry cut up in such countries as Loo Choo—'fixed ammunition,' 'cutlasses' and 'ball-carriages' taken ashore among a people whose forts are disarmed;" commented J. W. Spalding, clerk on the Mississippi, "among whom not one offensive weapon was noticed after months of intercourse; and whose nation in its present condition . . . might be driven with a crutch." It was his view that "as a mouse in the talons of the eagle, they promised everything."⁸

In the end, however, Okinawa was spared the fate that had befallen the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong and which would shortly strike other islands in the Pacific. In January, 1872, just twenty years after Perry's visit to the kingdom of Lew Chew, Commodore Richard W. Meade of the U.S. Navy negotiated a treaty with the Kingdom of Samoa giving the United States exclusive rights to establish a naval station at Pago Pago, a strategic harbor on the island of Tutuila. Objects of intrigue between the United States, Great Britain and Germany for dominance, all the Samoan Islands were eventually placed under American control in 1929. The United States also obtained the exclusive right to use Pearl Harbor in 1887 as a coaling and repair station, annexed the Hawaiian islands in 1898, and made them the fiftieth state in 1959. Pearl Harbor has since remained an important naval base as well as being the headquarters of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. In addition, Guam which had long been a Pacific outpost of Spain was ceded, along with the Philippines, to the United States following the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In contrast, the compact Perry concluded with the Ryukyu Kingdom became a dead letter immediately after his departure, and the islands fell into the hands of another em-

⁷*Narrative of the Expedition . . .*, 495-96.

⁸Ryukyuan leaders, for their part, had tricked Perry: Shang Hiung-hiun, the regent, signed the compact in the name of the Superintendent of Affairs or prime minister but, officially, no such post existed in the palace.

pire, Japan. Before they did, however, Japan had a score to settle with China regarding sovereignty over the islands. The so-called Taiwan Incident of December 1871, in which native Taiwanese in southern Formosa killed fifty-four Ryukyuans shipwrecked off the coast, touched off a chain of reactions. The new government of Japan responded by unilaterally abolishing the Ryukyu kingdom and reconstituting it as a *han* (province) with the king as king of the *han*, bringing the *han* under the jurisdiction of its foreign ministry, and sending an expeditionary force to Taiwan under the pretext of punishing those who had murdered a number of "subjects of Japan." China conceded by acknowledging the propriety of Japan's undertaking, although at first it fell short of formally recognizing Japan's claims to all of the Ryukyu islands.⁹

Among the foreign envoys in Japan informed of its decision to assume responsibility for the kingdom, the United States minister, C.F. DeLong, warned that such unilateral action might raise some difficult questions, but the U.S. and all other interested powers subsequently accepted the Japanese position.¹⁰

The Ryukyuan royal government was not consulted on any part of the process. The Ryukyu court did not believe that it had actually submitted itself to Japan. When Japan's Home Minister Toshimichi Okubo visited the Chinese capital in 1874 to resolve the Taiwan incident, he learned that tribute envoys from Okinawa had also come to Beijing, with obvious Chinese approval, while he was there. This would have dire consequences for the Ryukyus.

The following year, the Japanese government demanded that Okinawa break off all communications with China and carry out legal, social and educational reforms that would fully integrate its people into the empire. But the Okinawan court authorities would not listen. They even sent a secret mission to China to request support and intervention. And, here, General Ulysses S. Grant, former President of the United States, played an indirect, though significant role. Grant was scheduled to visit China and Japan in early 1879 while on a world tour. Fully expecting him to be asked to mediate in the dispute, Japan decided to pre-empt his arbitration by announcing formal annexation of Okinawa and thereby unilaterally "solving" the problem before Grant arrived in China.

Finally, Japan confronted the Okinawan court with an armed ultimatum: in March 1879, a mission accompanied by a large staff of civil aides, 160 policemen, and some 300 soldiers arrived and forced the court to accept, in no ambiguous terms, the government's decision to abolish the monarchy and create a *ken* or prefecture in its place. The tiny 500-year-old kingdom was "formally" disposed of by force, annexed and made an integral part of the Japanese Empire as the last of its newly instituted forty-seven prefectures or *ken*.¹¹ China, not happy, appealed to Grant and brought the issue to the negotiating table. In the course of negotiations, both the Japanese and Chinese governments treated the islands like pawns on a chessboard. Japan proposed dividing the Ryukyus in two; it

⁹An agreement signed at Tientsin on 31 October 1874. See Toshihiko Mouri, *Taiwan Shuppei: Dai-Nippon Teikoku-no Kaimaku-Geki* (Tokyo: Chuo Koron-sha, 1996), Masao Gabe, *Meiji Kokka to Okinawa* (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1979), 130-168, and Charles S. Leavenworth, *The Loochoo Islands* (Shanghai: North-South Herald, 1905), 27-8.

¹⁰George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: History of an Island People* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1958), 364

¹¹The new government in Japan, instituted in 1868 with the Meiji Emperor replacing the Tokugawa Shogunate, abolished the feudal domains and in 1871 established a system of prefectures throughout the main islands. The "disposition" of the Ryukyu kingdom completed its territorial integration under the new imperial regime.

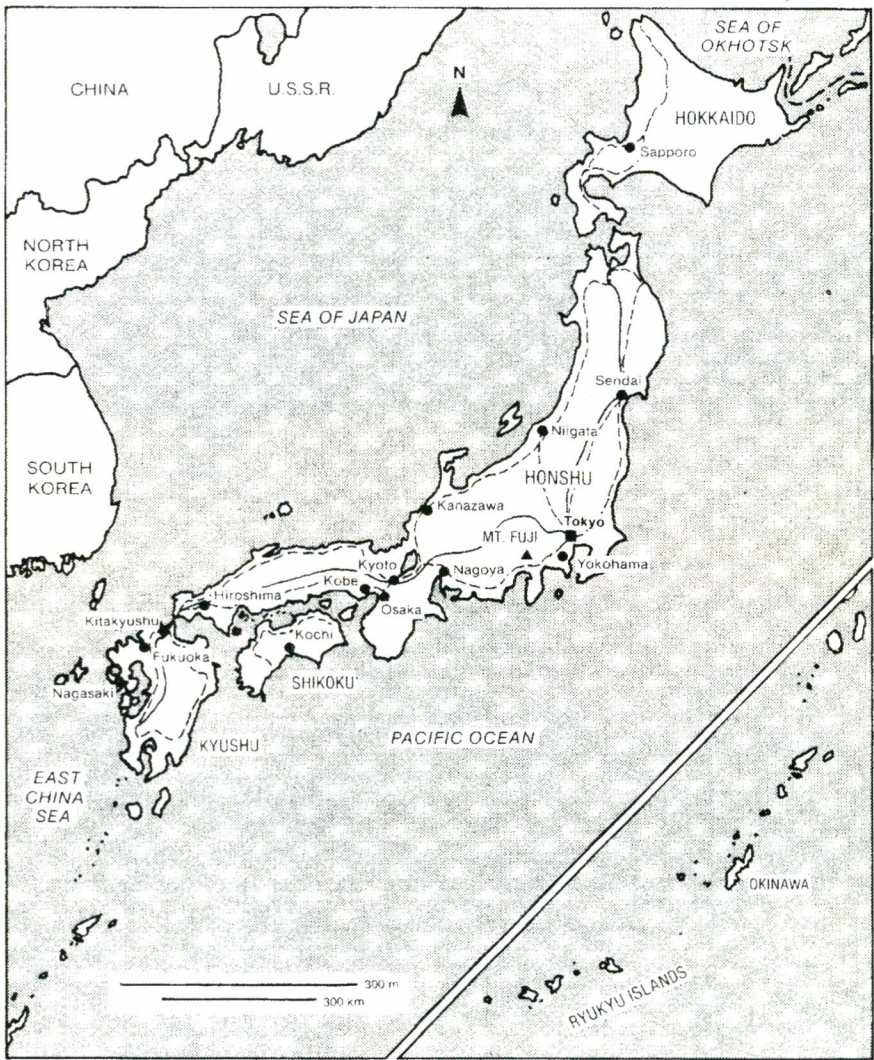
would take the islands of Amami and Okinawa while ceding to China the southern islands of Miyako and Yaeyama near Formosa in exchange for trading rights in interior China. China, for its part, said it would acquiesce in partition of the archipelago into three parts: Miyako and Yaeyama to China and Amami to Japan, with the Ryukyuan king retaining Okinawa and its coastal islands. China, its foreign minister Li Hung-chang later told his Japanese counterpart, had no territorial ambitions; it only wished to see the kingdom reinstated. It acceded to the Japanese proposal, but refused to sign the agreement when the border question with Russia along the Ili developed in its favor. The Chinese defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 finally resolved the territorial dispute over the Ryukyus.¹²

In the meantime, Tokyo imposed on Okinawa a number of radical social, cultural, political and economic reforms in attempts to wipe out even vestiges of the kingdom, "modernize" its institutions, and mould its people into loyal and patriotic subjects of the Emperor. The central government appointed a governor as its administrative agent for Okinawa.

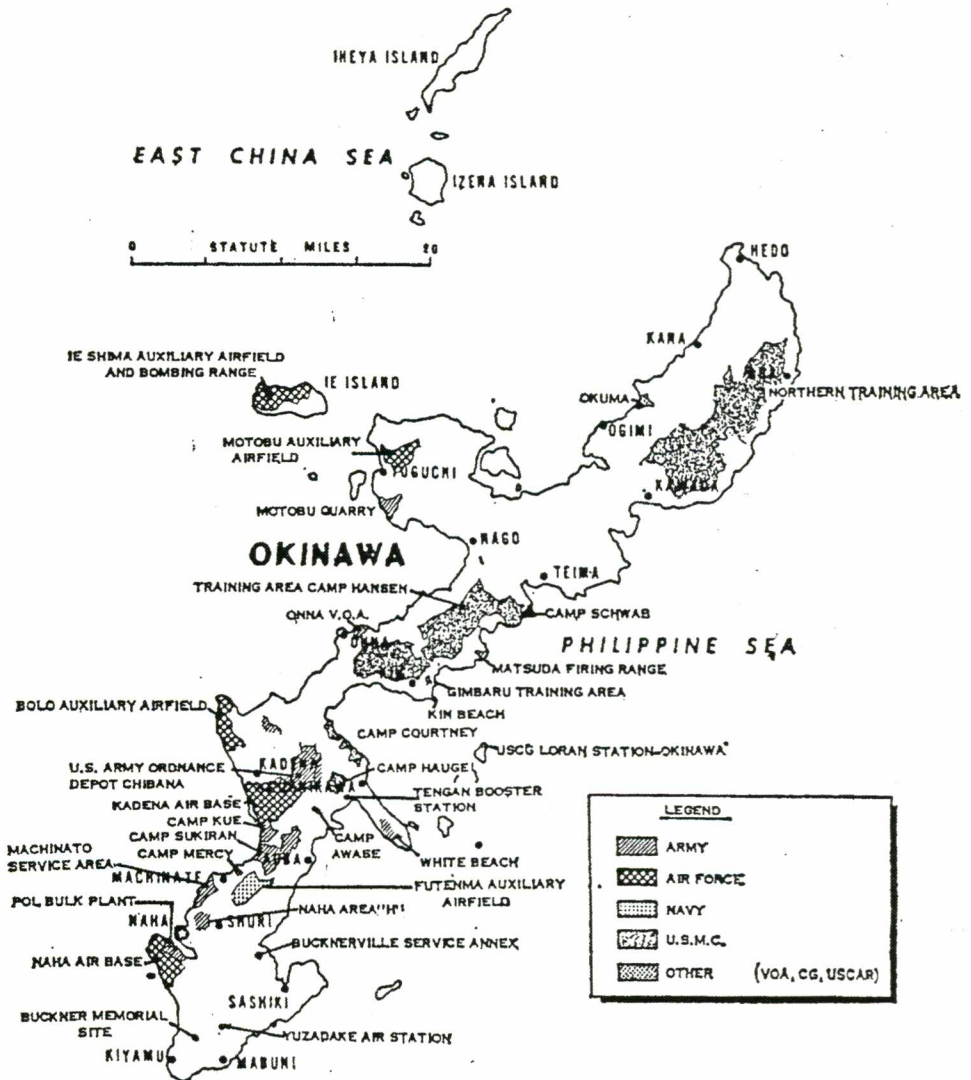
The integration was no easy task. Okinawans remained substantially poorer than the mainland Japanese, their culture continued to be distinct, and most people continued to speak the Okinawan language or one of its variant dialects. In general, they felt that they were being treated as inferior, or even uncivilized, country cousins; they, in turn, remained distrustful—sometimes resentful—of Japan and its people. An economic development plan instituted in 1938 to rescue the islanders from a serious famine was so drastically curtailed in order to support Japan's massive military buildup that the *ken* government had to recruit and send thousands of emigrants to the Philippines, Singapore and such mandated Japanese territories as the Marianas, the Carolines, and the Marshalls. In schools, use of the Okinawan language was explicitly discouraged and often punished. Students were ordered to respect and be wholeheartedly loyal to the Emperor.

By the time the war broke out in the Pacific in 1941, an intensive propaganda campaign and extreme wartime pressure had hammered a nationalistic spirit into many of the islanders. But, at heart, most people remained "Okinawans," as distinct from "Japanese," more loyal to their own traditional ways of life and beliefs than to the emperor, or to either the Shintoism or the militarism which were still foreign to them.

¹² See Li Hung-chang's letters and dispatches, particularly Nos. 36-43, in Leavenworth, *The Loochoo Islands*.



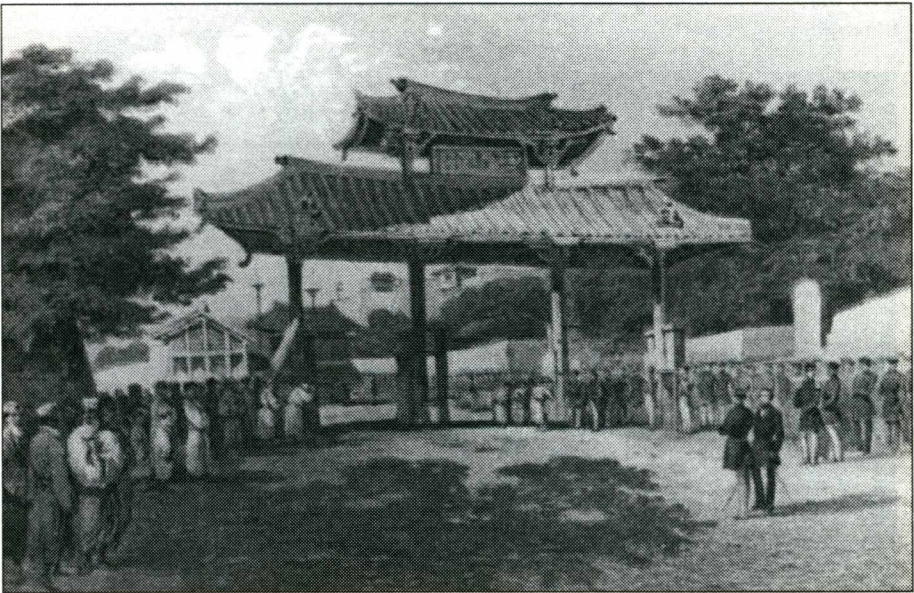
1. Okinawa, the principal island in the Ryukyu chain, is strategically located off the western coast of China and between mainland Japan and Taiwan. (*Maps on File*. NY: Facts on File, 1981)



- In 1964 U.S. military installations and facilities occupied nearly a fifth of the island of Okinawa. (*Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, Senate, on Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1964*, 30 July 1964, 555)



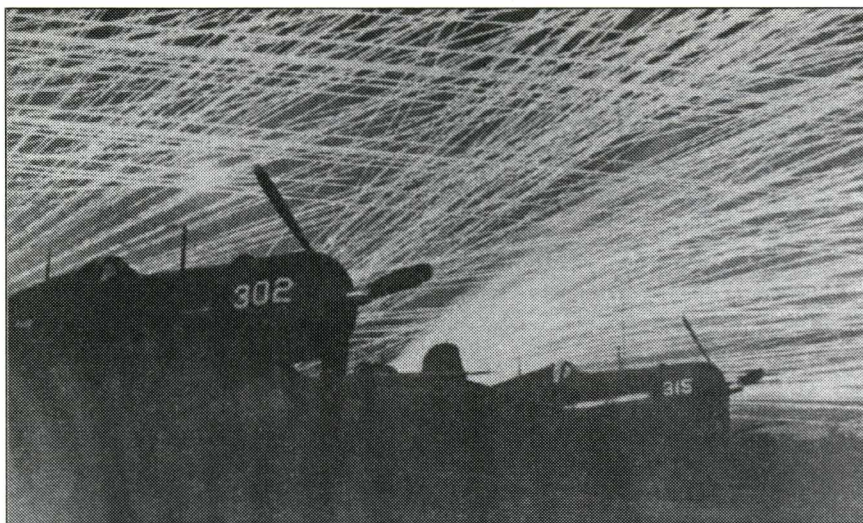
3. A verdurous Okinawan hill overlooking Naha in 1853, by Eliphalet Brown and William Heine, the photographer and the painter traveling with Commodore Mathew C. Perry (Reprinted from *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron...*)



4. Okinawans and Americans at the "Gate of Courtesy," an entrance to the royal palace, apparently waiting for Commodore Perry to appear. But his wishes to have an audience with the young king or the queen mother were thwarted by the regent. (Reprinted from *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron...*)



5. Battle of Okinawa: cartoon. "Okinawans are not warlike, and they resent the high and mighty ways of the Japanese from the big islands to the north," reported an illustrated pocket guide for Americans sent to fight the battle of Okinawa. "But, by and large, they are still loyal to Japan... All they know about Americans is what they get from Tokyo propaganda, so you can expect them to look at you as though you were a combination of Dracula and the Sad Sack—at first anyway." (*Nansei*, 6. Illustration on page 13.)



6. Battle of Okinawa: U.S. forces bombard the island of Okinawa prior to their landing on April 1, 1945. In what was called a "typhoon of steel" that raged for three months, U.S. forces fired more than 120,000 tons of ammunition into Okinawa from the sea and air. (U.S. government photo)



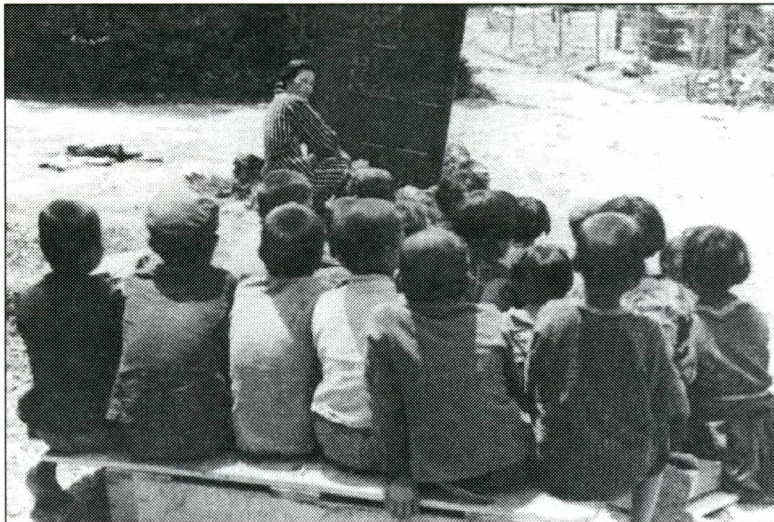
7. Battle of Okinawa: A battle-scarred tree and half demolished church near Shuri City.



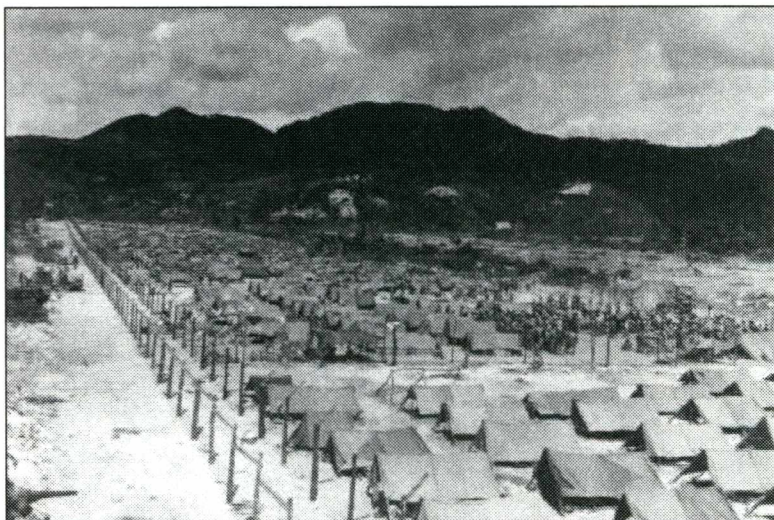
8. Battle of Okinawa: Naha, the capital of Okinawa, was devastated beyond recognition, as was the rest of the island. (U.S. government aerial photo)



9. An early post-war refugee camp. The civilian population was collected and interned in tent camps before being allowed to return to their villages. (U.S. government photo)



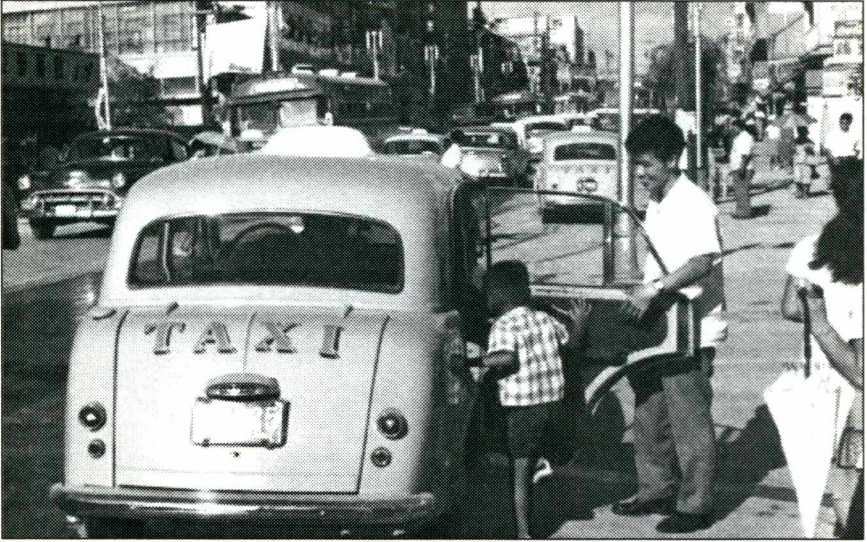
10. Open-air classroom typical of those established in refugee camps in 1945.



11. A tent village established to collect refugees.



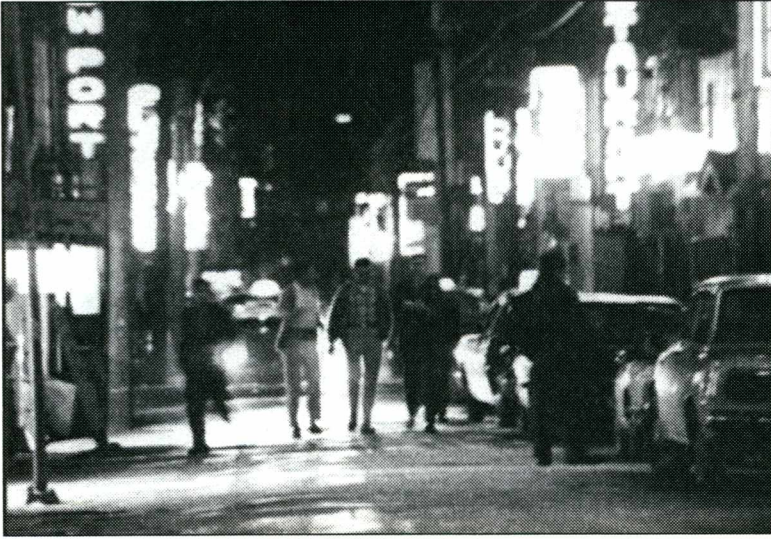
12. Base development. Coastal farmland is bulldozed and leveled into Futenma airfield in 1955.



13. Kokusai (international) street in Naha, 1960. This stretch was called the “miracle mile” because of its rapid development. (Okinawa Times photo)



14. Troops await to be transported to Vietnam aboard C-130 carriers in 1965. (Okinawa Times photo)



15. A “GI town” in the city of Koza (now Okinawa City). (Courtesy, the Ryukyu Shimpo)



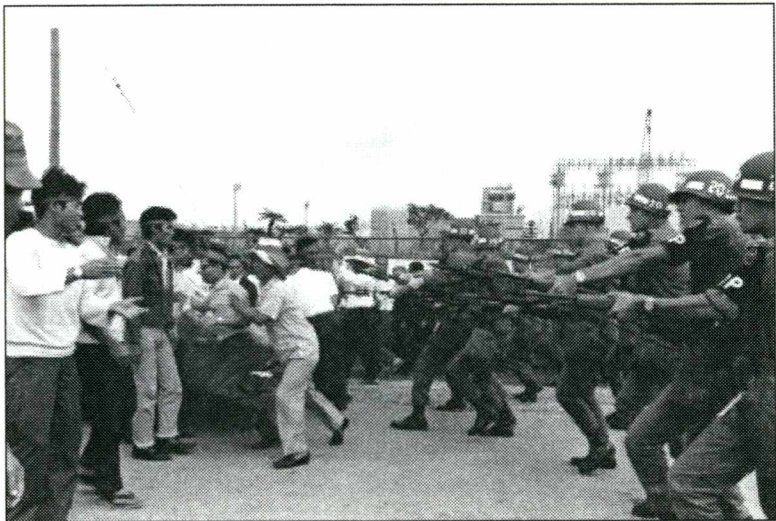
16. Eisaku Sato, the Japanese prime minister, is welcomed by flag-waving crowds during his 1965 visit to Okinawa. “I fully recognize,” he stated, “that, as long as Okinawa’s *fukki* to the fatherland remains unrealized, ‘the postwar period’ will not have ended for our country.” (Okinawa Times photo)



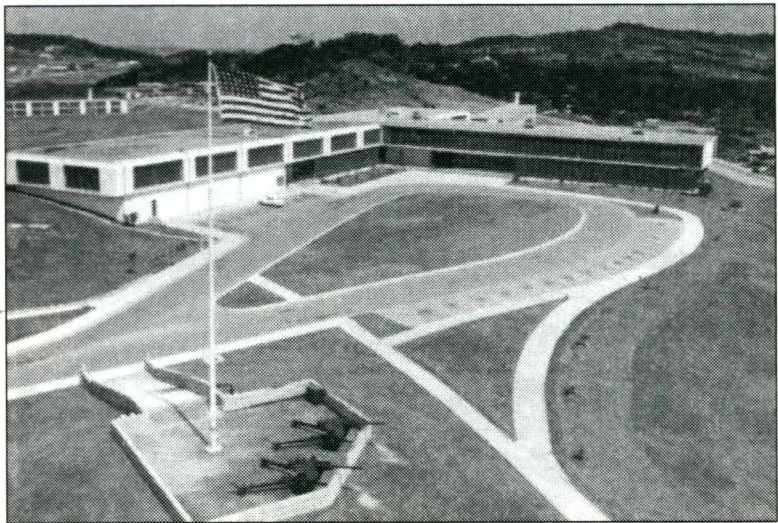
17. In an unprecedented rampage, some Okinawans vent their pent-up anger at the U.S. occupation forces in 1970 by overturning cars with military license-plates and setting them afire. (Okinawa Times photo)



18. B52s flown from Guam to Kadena in 1972 to avoid a typhoon, caused concern among many Okinawans that this might involve Okinawa in a war or lead to expansion of U.S. bases on the island. (Okinawa Times photo)



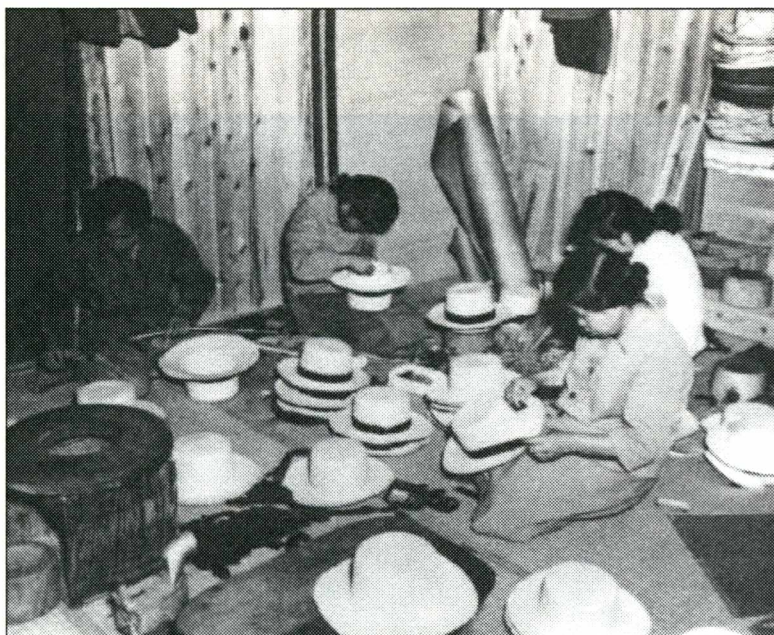
19. MPs in 1969 try to disperse picketing Okinawan military workers at bayonet point. (Okinawa Times photo)



20. Headquarter U.S. Army, Ryukyu Island (USARYIS), from which the high commissioner ruled the Okinawan people and coordinated all U.S. military on the islands. (Courtesy, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



21. An American military housing area



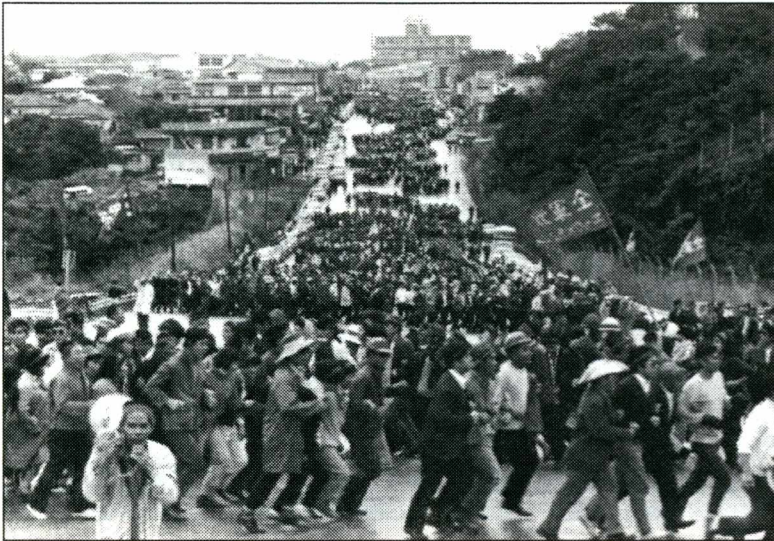
22. Women making "Panama" hats, a nascent postwar industry. (USCAR photo)



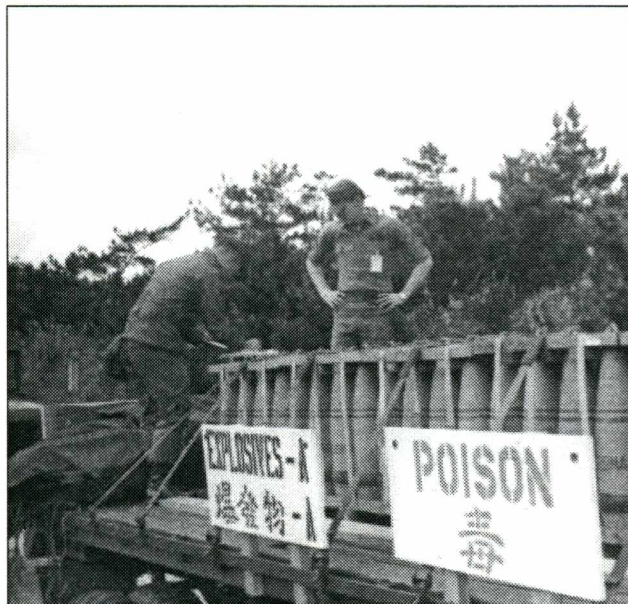
23. Ryukyuan police and armed MPs push back demonstrators calling on President Eisenhower to “return Okinawa” and not to “nuclearize” U.S. bases on the island. (Courtesy, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



24. Chobyo Yara, who had spearheaded the reversion movement since the early 1950s, was elected chief executive of the Government of the Ryukyus in 1968 in the first public election for the position. (Courtesy, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



25. Members of the All-Kinawa Military Employees' Union, increasingly resentful of their status and apprehensive over their future, fill a highway to demonstrate against reductions-in-force and the restrictive labor law. (Courtesy, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



26. In 1971, 13,000 tons of mustard and nerve gas was removed from Okinawa to Johnston Island. (Courtesy, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)