

Chapter VII: Okinawa at the Turn of the Century

Economic Benefits and Cultural Identity

Reversion has turned out to be a mixed blessing for most Okinawans. They have regained their international status as Japanese citizens with their rights, freedoms, and privileges guaranteed by the Japanese constitution. A bilateral treaty and several agreements now restrain United States forces, who no longer exercise absolute, final power over them. Economically, Okinawans are much better off than they were under American occupation. They now receive the full benefits of Japan's education, social security and medical systems, but an undercurrent of discontent with Japan and the status quo persists. There are even stirrings of support for political independence among some intellectuals.

To anyone familiar with pre-reversion Okinawa, the landscape has been transformed beyond recognition. Naha sprawls to the south, east and north for miles. The island is now home to a new airport building, seaports, many highways and bypasses, a prefectural government complex, tourist hotels, golf courses, public hospitals, civic and convention halls, office buildings, apartment complexes and school buildings.

Highway One, the old military road, now renamed Route 58, still serves as the north-south axis of the main island, and has been extended and equipped with greenways in places as well as sidewalks. An eight-mile-long monorail linking the airport to downtown Naha and Shuri, the ancient capital, is under construction, to be completed by 2003.

Shuri Castle, destroyed during the 1945 Battle of Okinawa, has been restored, along with its finely-chiseled stone walls, on the old hilltop commanding views of Naha and the East China Sea. The Cornerstone of Peace at the Memorial Park, with the names of more than 250,000 people of all nationalities killed in the Battle of Okinawa inscribed on granite, now stands, along with its attached museum, on a cliff in the southernmost part of the island. This is where the last and bloodiest fighting took place.

Sub-tropical trees and flowers line most streets and decorate city and tourist parks built and developed since the reversion. Drive-in suburban shopping centers have replaced most of the small family shops and old downtown shopping streets. In the absence of railways, streets are usually congested with buses, taxis and privately owned cars. Okinawa is so motorized, in fact, that people rarely walk to work or shop.

Along the central part of the east coast of Okinawa huge oil storage and refining complexes proliferate. The Okinawa Terminal Co., successor to Gulf Asian Terminals, is equipped with eighteen crude oil tanks on Henza Island off the tip of the Katsuren Peninsula that can store 11,680,000 barrels (1,740,000 kiloliters). On the same island, the Okinawa Sekiyu Seisei (Refinery), a 100-percent subsidiary of Idemitsu Kosan, maintains eighteen tanks with a total capacity of 11,730,000 barrels and facilities capable of refining 110,000 barrels a day. Okinawa CTS (Central Terminal Station) Corp., owned by Nisseki Ryoyu Engineering and Construction, a 100-percent subsidiary of the Mitsubishi Oil Corporation, and Cosmo Oil, has forty-seven crude oil tanks with a storage capacity of 28,300,000 barrels on reclaimed land connecting Henza with the neighboring island of

Miyagi.

Each of these three complexes is linked to an off-coast docking station for crude oil carriers from which oil is piped to the appropriate storage tanks. Nansei Sekiyu, 75 percent owned by General Oil, maintains on the main island coast of Nishihara thirty-six tanks holding 6,000,000 barrels of crude oil and 3,590,000 barrels of petroleum products. The company is capable of refining 100,000 barrels of crude oil a day. The oil is either trans-shipped to various refineries in mainland Japan or locally distilled into products such as liquefied petroleum gas, naphtha, kerosene, light oil, liquefied carbon dioxide and dry ice for consumption in Okinawa, mainland Japan and other Asian countries.

So much land has been reclaimed from the sea and or leveled by bulldozers for residential, industrial and recreational areas over the last three decades that the coastline and topography of the main island of Okinawa has been transformed. Okinawa's standard of living, which remained pathetically below American and Japanese levels during the U.S. occupation, has advanced phenomenally since reversion. Even so, Okinawa still ranks at the bottom of Japan's standard of living in many respects, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Under consecutive ten-year Okinawa Development Plans, Tokyo has poured in huge amounts of money, adding up to ¥6,400,000,000,000 over the last three decades for various projects to develop transportation networks, public utilities, education, public health and agriculture and to improve the people's welfare.¹ In 2000 alone, ¥343,000,000,000 (roughly \$3 billion) was projected for government expenditures in Okinawa. In addition, the Defense Facilities Administration Agency has subsidized municipalities and individuals with expenditures amounting to ¥14,000,000,000 to ¥16,000,000,000 annually in recent years, to alleviate problems caused by their proximity to U.S. facilities, such as helicopter and jet-plane noise, land erosion and electronic disturbances. The government also provides grants to municipalities whose financial resources are adversely affected doubly, by military occupation of large areas of public land and exemption of U.S. forces, personnel and dependents living off base from property taxes and public utility charges. These grants totaled ¥6,200,000,000 in 1997 alone.²

These financial transfers from the national government, reaching ¥1,200,000,000,000 in 1996 or 53 percent of all external revenues, have helped to power a 5-percent annual increase in Okinawa's real gross expenditure since reversion. The economy has grown more than 6 percent annually in real terms, or twice the national average. This has brought per capita income in Okinawa up from less than 50 percent of the national average before reversion to nearly 70 percent by March 1998.

In spite of such massive injections of cash, per capita income has continued to languish at the bottom among all the prefectures of Japan and the economy remains fragile. Remote from mainland Japan, lacking essential resources for industrial development and accustomed to a service-oriented economy, Okinawa has been heavily dependent on base-related revenues and, since reversion, public works financed by the national government. Instead of engendering capital-intensive, growth-generating industries, the huge financial assistance has given a boost to the labor-intensive construction industries and government administrative services and thereby only stimulated consumer spending. Farming and fishing have continued to decline in importance, with many bays giving way to reclama-

¹For government subsidies and grants, see Okinawa Kaihatsu Cho [Development Agency], *Okinawa no Shinko Kaihatsu* (Tokyo: Okinawa Kaihatsu Cho, 2000) and Okinawa Prefectural Government, *Okinawa no Beigun Kichi* (Naha: Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1998).

²*Okinawa no Shinko Kaihatsu*, 229

tion for new towns and resorts and farmland to roadways, communities and athletic grounds. Major corporations from the Japanese mainland have bought up farmland for resort development, built tourist hotels and shopping centers, and extended their networks of chain stores and fast food outlets to Okinawa. Construction companies from mainland Japan have also undertaken many of the largest public works projects.

The industrial structure is skewed extraordinarily toward the tertiary, or service, sector which earns 81 percent of the gross prefectural product (against the already high Japanese national average of just below 70 percent) and employs 73 percent of the labor force (against 63 percent in all of Japan). The service sector includes medical facilities, lodgings, restaurants, bars, laundries and barber and beauty shops, insurance associations, daycare centers, educational institutions, service stations and auto repair shops.

In contrast, the goods-producing secondary sector comprises only 20 percent of the gross prefectural product and hires 20 percent of the labor force in Okinawa, far below the respective but not overly high Japanese national averages of 34 percent and 32 percent.³ In spite of the magnitude of their operations, the oil companies that maintain storage facilities near their refineries on the east coast of Okinawa contribute only a little to the local job market. Nansei Sekiyu, for example, has less than 180 people on its payroll, Okinawa Sekiyu Seisei about 220, and Okinawa CTS about sixty.

With few products to export, Okinawa had a trade deficit of ¥123,000,000,000 in 1998. Exports, mainly to Taiwan, China and other Asian countries, were largely limited to petroleum refined from imported crude oil, and totaled around ¥65,000,000,000. Imports, worth ¥187,000,000,000, consisted largely of oil from the Middle East, food and timber. Okinawa Sekiyu Refinery (initially established by Gulf Oil, but now 100% owned by Japan's Idemitsu Oil) and Nansei Sekiyu (established by Esso and now partially owned by its subsidiary, General Oil) import crude oil from Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran, refine it into a variety of products and re-export them to Asian countries. Free trade zones, established before and after reversion, have not been successful.

Tourism, considered an export industry, more than makes up for the trade deficit. The number of tourists attracted to the subtropical climate, Shuri Castle and other historic sites, beaches and coastline, war memorials, and souvenirs, has been steadily increasing since reversion, reaching 4,127,000 visitors in 1998, nearly 97 percent from mainland Japan and most of the rest from Taiwan. Some come to Okinawa to attend conferences, seminars, workshops, business seminars, exhibitions, and cultural festivals, held at the Okinawa Convention Center and many other venues. Generating ¥440,000,000,000 in revenues, nearly fourteen times the level at reversion, tourism now accounts for 11 percent of Okinawa's gross domestic product or 17 percent of all its outside income. In comparison, rents for the land used by U.S. forces, raised several times since before the reversion, totaled ¥74,000,000,000 in 1999.⁴

With little money reinvested in the local economy, Okinawa remains among the poorest regions in all of Japan. The unemployment rate in 2000 ranked roughly twice the national average. With new employment opportunities being scarce, unemployment is especially high among young (ages 15-24) people. The even more scarce job opportunities in

³*Okinawa no Shinko Kaihatsu*, 59, and John C. James and Terunobu Tamamori, *Okinawa: Society & Economy*, revised and updated (Naha: Bank of the Ryukyus International Foundation, 2000), 14-15.

⁴Okinawa Prefectural Government, *Okinawa no Beigun oyobi Jieitai Kichi* (Naha: Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2000), 45.

the more remote islands have caused a population concentration on the main island of Okinawa; 1,200,000 of the 1,300,000 people in the Ryukyu Islands live on the island, which accounts for 53 percent of the total land area. Within the island of Okinawa, many people—mainly younger ones—have deserted the towns and villages, particularly in the north, to live in Naha and its sprawling suburbs.

Wages are 30 percent lower in Okinawa than the national average and working hours are 10 percent longer. Average household savings in Okinawa are the lowest in the country and the debt to savings ratio is 20 percent higher than the national average. The average home's floor space is 18 percent smaller than the national average. Water shortages, caused by overpopulation, urbanization and inadequate forests and reservoirs, remain a chronic problem. Nevertheless, tap water is available to 99.8 percent of the families, slightly above the national average, but adequate sewage systems are less common.

Okinawans are now covered by universal health, unemployment and medical insurance, and receive government funded old-age pensions. Medical care, far inferior to that in mainland Japan before reversion, has also improved significantly. The numbers of physicians, dentists, nurses, nurse practitioners and pharmacists have increased substantially since reversion; spread over 42 inhabited islands, however, Okinawa prefecture still has fewer doctors, dentists and nurses in proportion to its population than the country as a whole.

Okinawans have more children and live longer on average than other Japanese. Twenty-two percent of the population is under age 14, the highest figure in Japan. Men's lifespan, 77.22 years in 1995, was the fourth longest in Japan while women led the country at 85.08 years. This longevity is attributed to the warm climate, the easygoing disposition of the people, and their balanced diet of low-fat, low-salt pork, kelp, *tofu*, fish, and vegetables. The new lifestyles—consuming high-calorie fatty foods and carbonated drinks, driving to work and to shop, and exercising little—are, however, taking their toll; Okinawa has the highest incidence of diabetes in the country.⁵

Educational and cultural development has also been significant. The quantity of school facilities has caught up with, or even exceeded in some cases, the national average, although superannuated buildings remain and swimming pools are inadequate at some elementary and junior high school levels. The University of the Ryukyus is now a national university located on a 330-acre campus in central Okinawa (with an additional 800-acre forest in northern Okinawa and a 930-acre tropical biosphere research center), with more than 8,000 students in six faculties, a junior college, and graduate programs. In addition, there are a prefectural university of arts and a nursing university, three private universities and two junior colleges. Some 30 percent of high school graduates proceed to university, well below the Japanese national average, with roughly an equal percentage going on to vocational school. Most of the rest seek employment in Okinawa or elsewhere in Japan, many, at the turn of the millennium, without success.

The huge government expenditure in roads, public buildings, parks, social security and education, often described as the "carrot" to win people's support or acquiescence to the military burden, has not entirely succeeded in its other goal of remolding the Okinawans into "Japanese." They retain so distinct a sense of historical and cultural identity as Okinawans that, nearly thirty years after reversion, many still feel somewhat uncomfortable about identifying themselves with Japanese symbols such as cherry blossoms, Mt. Fuji, the national flag and the national anthem, the Emperor, Shintoism and the Yasukuni

⁵Okinawa Sogo Jimukyoku, *Okinawa-ken Keizai-no Gaikyo* (December 1999), and *Ryukyu Shimpo*, 3 December 2000.

Shrine dedicated to the soldiers who fell in war. Even Japanese folk songs, folk dances, folk festivals, religious rites and traditions still appear foreign to many Okinawans.

Okinawan culture is thriving. U.S. administrators during the occupation encouraged the people to appreciate their distinct history, arts and traditions. Music played on the three-string *sanshin*, the performing arts, and arts and crafts (pottery, fabric weaving and dyeing, lacquer ware) not only survived the war but were revitalized. *Sanshin* instrumental and vocal music became standard fare on radio and television. Ryukyuan dance and drama, accompanied by the *sanshin*, drums and other instruments, were regularly performed in theaters and at festivals. Artisans hand-printed the *bingata* cloth, elaborately dyed with colorful designs of trees, flowers, streams, snow and grasses, and wove the vegetable-dyed *jofu* from hemp fiber and *bashofu* using a fiber made from the multi-layered coats of banana trees. *Bingata* cloth, once worn exclusively by noble or rich families, and *jofu*, the high-quality fabrics which were formerly presented to the Ryukyuan court as a tax, were now appreciated as souvenirs, as outfits for older people on special occasions, and for wear by Ryukyuan dancers. The coarser, simpler-patterned *bashofu* cloth, once common among rural people, found its way into manufacture of accessory souvenir items as well as dancing costumes. Potters produced household tools such as bowls, cups and pots, and lion-like *shiisaa* figures for roofs.

Religious traditions, marked by nature and ancestor worship, were practiced widely in spite of government's attempts to eliminate some of their aspects as superstitious. Equally persistent were people's dietary habits. They favored glutinous rice, *chamपुरu* (a combination of stir-fried vegetables, pork and *tofu* slices, of *tofu* and sliced bitter melon, and of fine noodles and pork slices), pork, seaweed or *tofu* soup seasoned with dried bonito shavings, *soba* (noodle soup topped with pieces of pork and *tofu*, chopped green onion and other condiments), and kelp, and drank *awamori*, a clear liquor distilled from Thai rice.

Okinawans continue to celebrate their cultural traditions despite having been reintegrated into Japan's educational system and its mass communication networks. Animistic worship of indwelling spirits and ancestors remains central to people's lives, although perhaps not so scrupulously observed as before. Many still believe in the presence and supernatural power of spirits in both heaven and natural phenomena, and in places such as the sea and other bodies of water, the house-pot and the hearth.⁶ They also believe that their ancestors remain close to their worldly dwelling-places and descendants, observing their lives. People go to great lengths to show their respect for the supernatural spirits and for their ancestors, who are believed to have the power to mete out punishments and rewards in response to maintenance of proper ritual ties and prayers. Each village has *utaki* or sacred groves and every "origin house," or "parental house within the patrilineage"⁷ has ancestral tablets for rituals and prayers. A *Yuta* (shaman) is often hired to communicate with the ancestors in ceremonies or in case of serious misfortune, which some people still believe is caused by insufficient prayer. On important occasions, people pay homage at their family tombs, the most conspicuous of which are turtle-back-shaped constructions which still dot the landscape.

Although most houses are now built with reinforced concrete and a flat roof, some are hip-roofed with traditional reddish tiles. Almost ubiquitous are the *shiisaa* (or *shiishi*) pottery or stone lions on the roof and, sometimes gateposts as well, and the *ishigantuu*, a

⁶For Okinawan religion, see William P. Lebra, *Okinawan Religion: Belief, Ritual, and Social Structure* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1966).

⁷*Ibid.*, 221.

stone or pottery plate placed at a crossroads, both believed to ward off evil spirits.

Many people still speak the Okinawan language, particularly in the countryside, although it is losing out to Japanese, the language of education and the mass media. The rural culture—folk songs and dances, rock music, food, lifestyles, beliefs, language, literature, architecture, karate—remains distinct. The “Okinawa corner” of bookstores carries titles in areas as diverse as ancient, wartime and postwar history, military bases, and economic development, women, literature, folktales, arts, language, flora and fauna, and tourism.

Sanshin folk songs—rhythmical, lively, plaintive, touching, mostly in the Okinawan language—are played regularly on the local radio and television, and sung at gatherings, festivals, karaoke bars or at home. Most record shops carry tapes and CDs featuring local *sanshin* musicians, along with international and mainland Japanese folk and rock albums. The slow and solemn classical court music played on *sanshin*, *koto* and drums, the *kumiodori*, classic Ryukyuan theatrical performance combining dramatic action, dance, recitatives and *sanshin* music, and the more folksy dramas attract fans to concert halls, theaters, and to television.

Some music and dancing groups and drumming groups have performed elsewhere in Japan, on nation-wide television and radio, and in other Asian countries, the United States, Latin America and Europe. Several *sanshin* folk singers have made the national hit charts and are popular in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries as well. The *kumiodori* and classical Ryukyuan music have been designated by the national government as “important intangible assets” and two classical *sanshin* players and two *kumiodori* actors have been named “living national treasures.” The midsummer *obon* festival features an “*eisa*,” in which young men and women in costume dance and jump to the dynamic beating of drums and rhythmic utterances of “*eisa, eisa*” in the streets or open fields, sometimes attract tens of thousands of spectators. Parties, weddings and celebrations usually end with men and women standing up for improvised “*kachaa-shii*” dancing to tunes played by *sanshin* and drums backed by loud whistling.

Okinawan pottery continues to be in high demand among tourists and connoisseurs as well as glass and lacquer ware. The pottery, in particular, is appreciated for its unique figures and glazing and artistic quality. Costumes and accessory items made of *bingata* and *bashofu*, and Miyako-jofu are highly appreciated for their quality and designs. Miyako-jofu has also been designated as an intangible national cultural treasure. A potter, a *bingata* artist and a *bashofu* weaver are Okinawans holding the title of living national treasure.

Okinawan artistic talent is not limited to the indigenous culture for expression. Local musicians are well known for jazz, rock, and Latin music. Several Okinawa-born singers have made successful careers in popular music on the competitive national scene. Okinawan novelists such as Tatsuhiro Oshiro, Eiki Matayoshi and Shun Medoruma have won national prizes. The prefecture has also produced well-known painters, sculptors, and architects.

Champuru, *soba* and a variety of pork dishes remain the most popular meals, and *awamori* continues to be the most favored spirit. These are distinct from typical mainland Japanese meals and *sake*. *Champuru* has even become a popular keyword to describe the multi-blended Okinawan society and culture.

The people’s pride in their heritage was enhanced in 1992 when the main hall, eastern and western halls and stone walls of Shuri Castle were restored. Originally built in the early fifteenth century, the Castle became the residence of successive kings of the Ryukyu dynasties until the kingdom was taken over by the Japanese government in 1879. The

halls and the stone walls were destroyed at the beginning of the Battle of Okinawa. The castle, a favorite tourist spot, is a reminder of a glorious past when Ryukyu was an independent kingdom trading with China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asian countries. At its entrance stands the Shurei-no Mon, or Gate of Courtesy.

Most recently, at the end of 2000, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized nine cultural properties in Okinawa as world heritage sites. All dating back to the heyday of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, they are the remnants of Shuri Castle and the castle ruins at Nakijin, Katsuren, Zakimi and Nakagusuku, the Shikina-en royal garden, the Sonohiyan-utaki stone gate and royal mausoleum near Shuri Castle, and Seefa-utaki on a steep ridge along the southeast coast of Okinawa. Seefa-utaki, the place where, according to legend, Amamikyo, the creator of the Okinawan people, settled after having descended from heaven to the nearby island of Kudaka.

Okinawan identity, resurgent as a result of an underlying feeling that the islands have fallen victim to Japanese political discrimination, has even bred "independence for Okinawa" minority factions. Such groups existed shortly after the end of the war and immediately before reversion, but never enjoyed large public support.⁸ The most recent campaign for independence occurred in 1997, the 25th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan, amid discussions between Japan and the United States on new security arrangements and on the American military presence in Okinawa.

In February, Kosuke Uehara, a member of the House of Representatives for Okinawa, asked the government what it would do "if Okinawa wanted independence." In March, Chojo Oyama, former chairman of the special land committee of the GRI Legislature and once a leader of the reversion movement, published a book calling for a declaration of Okinawa's independence.⁹ Oyama stated that Japan had discriminated against Okinawa simply because it was not part of Japan. "Okinawan people have been avoiding reality," he wrote. "We should now recognize that our Okinawa does not belong to Japan and we should proudly declare that we Ryukyans are different from the Japanese."

In May, a group of intellectuals organized a two-day session to debate Okinawa's independence. The panelists argued the need for Okinawa to stand on its own feet and stop being subordinate to political, psychological and economic control from Japan.¹⁰ Writing in 2000, Masahide Ota, governor of Okinawa from 1990 to 1998, recalled that an Okinawan immigrant to Hawaii had argued in 1951 in favor of self-determination for the Okinawan people, including a plan leading to independence from Japan, and lamented the lack of a "spirit of independence" among contemporary Okinawans.¹¹

In the same year, Akira Arakawa, often regarded as the ideological "guru" of anti-reversion sentiment for his continued discourse on the subject since the early 70s, called for resisting the forces for integration into the Japanese state. For Arakawa, the anti-reversion argument "does not advocate a political movement for independence. It is a search for irreplaceable intellectual deposits" rooted in Okinawa to counter integration

⁸On Okinawa's independence, see, for example, Koichiro Yoshiwara, ed., *Okinawa: Hondo Fukkin no Genso* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobo, 1968); Tsutomu Takenaka, *Ryukyu Kyowakoku* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobo, 1972); *Shin-Okinawa Bungaku*, No. 18 (December 1970) and No. 19 (March 1971); Koji Taira, "Okinawa's Choice: Independence or Subordination," Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Island* (Cardiff, Calif.: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999), 171-185.

⁹Chojo Oyama, *Okinawa Dokuritsu Sengen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shorin, 1997).

¹⁰"Ryukyu Dokuritsu-no Kanosei-wo Meguru Gekironkai," Jikko Iinkai, ed., *Gekiron: Okinawa 'Dokuritsu'-no Kanosei* (Kyoto: Shisuiikai Shuppan, 1997).

¹¹Masahide Ota, *Okinawa: Kichi-naki Shima-eno Dohyo* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2000), 17-18.

into Japan as a state. It is also a minority's statement of the right to live and the right of self-determination against a majority.¹²

U.S. Bases Remain an Irritant after the Cold War Ends

Most of the big American bases have remained, together with the problems associated with them and without any guarantee that they will be significantly reduced in size or eventually removed. In spite of the end of the Cold War in 1989 and a thaw on the Korean peninsula, U.S. forces in Okinawa continue to be a formidable presence, claimed to be essential for world security and for defense of the Japan-United States alliance.¹³

U.S. military facilities still occupy nearly 20 percent of the island of Okinawa, or 10.5 percent of the entire prefecture including the remote southern islands. Not only do these bases represent 23.5 percent of the entire land space rented to the U.S. forces in Japan, but the United States uses almost all of them exclusively, unlike in mainland Japan where it shares a large proportion of its bases with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. The result is that 74.8 percent of the entirely U.S.-controlled facilities in Japan are concentrated on an island which accounts for only 0.5 percent of Japan's total land space. Of the approximately 100,000 U.S. troops present in the Asia-Pacific region at the end of the 1990s, about half of them were in Japan, and almost 30,000 of these were stationed in Okinawa.

Moreover, the United States maintains air traffic control over Okinawa as it did before 1972. All planes flying at an altitude of less than 20,000 feet within a radius of fifty nautical miles from Kadena Air Base and less than 5,000 feet within a radius of thirty nautical miles from Kume-jima Airport are regulated by the radar and approach control (RAPCON) at Kadena. This enables the U.S. Air Force not only to give its aircraft the right of way in these areas but also to maintain at Kadena its only air mobility training center, for the training of C-5, C-17, C-141, and KC-135 pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, and boom operators in the skies over Okinawa.¹⁴ Inevitably, civil airliners approaching Naha Airport must fly low through an often windy airspace "tunnel" called "Naha RWY 36," which many pilots find alarming.¹⁵ Accidents and breakdowns within the RAPCON system instantly affect airline schedules. In November 1999, a radar breakdown forced 150 airliners to cancel flights, delay arrivals and departures or maintain holding patterns in the air.¹⁶

When President Bill Clinton visited Okinawa in July 2000 to participate in the Summit conference of nine world leaders, he made a point of speaking to the Okinawan people from the Peace Park. After referring to the Cornerstone of Peace monument, which he said reminded "us of our common responsibility to prevent such destruction from ever

¹²Akira Arakawa, *Togo to Hangyaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2000), 147.

¹³Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa wrote in 1998 that it was "egotistical for Americans to believe that the United States has done Japan a favor by defending it all these years by stationing its forces within the country." He described Okinawa as "one of the islands least vulnerable to Soviet attack during the Cold War," stating that the U.S. kept marines there not for Japan's defense but for possible deployment in the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. "Are U.S. Troops in Japan Needed?: Reforming the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, 77:4 (July/August, 1998), 2-4, 5.

¹⁴"97th Operations Support Squadron," <http://www.altus.af.mil/pgoss.html>, accessed 20 December 2000.

¹⁵Tetsuo Maeda, *Zainichi Beigun Kichi-no Shushi Kessan* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2000), 267.

¹⁶Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced in March 2000 that the United States would return the RAPCON to Japan when and if the operational requirements of U.S. forces are met.

happening again,” he remarked: “Over the past fifty years, our two nations have come together in this spirit, to meet that responsibility. The strength of our alliance is one of the great stories of the twentieth century. Asia is largely at peace today because our alliance has given people throughout the region confidence that peace will be defended and preserved. That is what alliances are for, and that is why ours must endure. Of course, Okinawa has played an especially vital role in the endurance of our alliance.”

President Clinton obviously realized that this was not what the Okinawan people wanted to hear from the leader of a country which for half a century had imposed on them responsibilities they considered unfair, unwarranted, excessive and contrary to their wishes to return to a peaceful life without the bases. “Okinawa did not ask to play this role—hosting more than 50 percent of America’s forces in Japan on less than 1 per cent of Japan’s land mass,” President Clinton conceded, adding that the United States was in the process of consolidating its bases on the island and that “we will continue to do what we can to reduce our footprint on this island.”

U.S. forces in Okinawa are under the Pacific Command and are organized into a headquarters and four component commands (Army Pacific, Pacific Fleet, Marine Forces Pacific and Pacific Air Forces). The main components include the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) at Camp Courtney and Camp Hansen, a Marine Corps training base, and the 1st Marine Aircraft and 18th Wings, the 390th Intelligence Squadron, the 353rd Special Operations Group and the 82nd Reconnaissance Squadron at Kadena.¹⁷ The 18th Wing of the Air Force, with F-15 all-weather tactical fighters, E-3 AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) for surveillance, command, control and communications and KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft, is complete with operations, logistics, support, civil engineer and medical groups. III MEF, headquartered in Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, maintains a ground infantry division, an aircraft wing, service support group and a command element on Okinawa.

In addition, the Navy keeps Kadena Naval Air Facility to command fleet activities in the area while the Army maintains an in-theater Army special operations force (airborne). Mountainous northern Okinawa provides facilities for live firing and amphibious training exercises, artillery live fire exercises, helicopter operations, ship-to-shore movement training, embarkation training, AV-8 Harrier aircraft take-off and landing exercises, parachute training, and jungle training. The military units are supported by auxiliary airfields, ammunition storage areas, ordnance handling facilities, a naval hospital, a logistics base, and communications centers.

The Pacific Command, which is responsible for over a half of the earth’s surface from

¹⁷In April 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II electronic warfare (VQ) and reconnaissance aircraft that had taken off from Kadena was forced to make an emergency landing on China’s Hainan Island after colliding in mid-air with a Chinese fighter jet, creating diplomatic tensions between the two powers. The aircraft was on a six-month deployment with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1) from Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Washington, whose 181st Military Intelligence Detachment was based at Misawa in northern Japan. Nicknamed the “World Watchers,” the planes and personnel of the squadron were responsible for Navy electronic reconnaissance from the east coast of Africa to the west coast of the United States. The EP-3E, carrying devices capable of gathering a wide range of electronic transmissions, was believed to be engaged in routine surveillance missions. Tokyo chose to make no official statement on such U.S. activities from Okinawa. For information on the incident, see Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (<http://www.naswi.navy.mil/vq-1/welcome.html>), and the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) Intelligence Resource Program (http://www.fas.org/irp/program/collect/ep-3_aries.htm, and http://www.fas.org/irp/program/collect/docs/man-ipc-ep3_aries-010403a.htm).

the west coast of the United States to the Indian Ocean and from the Arctic to the Antarctic, is assisted by functional commands. Its Special Operations Command conducts civil affairs and psychological operations in support of military operations. The Space Command is in charge of the military satellite systems used for communications, navigation, weather, surveillance, and ballistic missile attack warning information. The Strategic Command controls the strategic nuclear force structure. The Transportation Command provides airlift, aerial refueling, sealift, and land transportation to deploy forces to crises, exercises, and other peacetime engagements.¹⁸

Many Okinawans feel that this amounts to a disproportionately heavy burden on Okinawa for the sake of the security of the United States and Japan, a burden which has been borne too long, and hope that the U.S. will reduce and then withdraw its forces and close down its bases on the island. Some progress was made between 1973 and 1990. For example, the United States agreed to return some 14,000 acres of land, including Naha Naval Air Facility, Naha Air and Naval Auxiliary Facility, Machinato Housing Area, Naha Port Facility, and portions of the mountainous Northern Training Area, Camp Hansen, Camp Zukeran and Kadena Ammunition Depot. By March 1999, the 70,790 acres held by the United States in 1972 for military purposes had shrunk by 17 percent to 58,700 acres, and the number of facilities had dropped from eighty-seven to thirty-eight.¹⁹

Yet most Okinawans believe that the continued massive U.S. presence, a constant reminder of the Battle of Okinawa and the subsequent American occupation, is in conflict with their love of peace and constantly involves them and their islands, however indirectly, in wars and conflicts near and far. It is also a source of crimes, accidents and environmental pollution. And the bases are increasingly viewed as detrimental to Okinawa's economic development.

Once considered the economic pillar of an island lacking natural resources and exportable goods, the bases have significantly declined as a source of income. Rental rates for the land used by U.S. forces were raised phenomenally after reversion, bringing the total amount from ¥12,600,000,000 in 1972 to ¥74,300,000,000 in spite of the reduced area.²⁰ Salaries of local employees working on base increased during the period from ¥24,000,000,000 to ¥53,000,000,000 and the expenditures of American military personnel, government employees and their dependents from ¥41,000,000,000 have risen to ¥56,000,000,000. But the U.S. forces, once the largest single employer in Okinawa, with 56,000 local workers on their payrolls, now hire only 8,400. Total U.S. military-related receipts have dropped from over 50 percent of the gross domestic expenditure at their pre-reversion peak to 15.6 percent in 1972, and to a mere 5.2 percent by March 1998, mainly as a result of the drastic depreciation in the value of the U.S. currency from ¥360 to approximately ¥120 to the dollar.

In some respects, the bases are actively detrimental to economic development as they are frequently located in areas where they restrict communications, urban planning and commercial, agricultural and industrial activities. In order to address this problem, the prefectural government prepared in 1993 a blueprint for phasing out the military bases by

¹⁸“U.S. Pacific Command at a Glance,” <http://pacom.mil/about/pacom/htm>; “United States Pacific Command: Area of Responsibility,” <http://www.pacom.mil/about/aor.htm>, both accessed 27 October 2000.

¹⁹*Okinawa no Beigun oyobi Jieitai Kichi*, 1-3. During the same period, U.S. bases in mainland Japan were reduced in size by 60%.

²⁰So much is paid in rents, including for land that has little intrinsic value, that many landowners are opposed to any reduction in the number and size of U.S. bases.

2015 and converting them into industrial, residential and recreational zones.²¹ The mountainous Northern Training Area, for example, would be turned into a wildlife refuge and forest park, Okuma Rest Center into a resort and recreational zone, Kadena Air Base and Marine Corps Air Station at Futenma into major urban development areas, the Kadena Ammunition Storage facility into a nature conservation, urban and agricultural zone, and Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield largely into a commercial district. Naha Port facilities would be developed into an urban and harbor area linked to Naha airport and the downtown.

While none of these projects has been realized, the merits of the conversion are obvious, according to the Okinawa Prefectural Government's reports.²² The former Hamby Marine Corps airfield in central Okinawa, for example, has been transformed into a popular shopping and amusement town with a campsite for a Japanese professional baseball team, movie theaters, major shopping centers, a Ferris wheel, and restaurants. The base used to employ about 100 local workers and provide tax revenues of less than \$10,000, but the new businesses now generate some 10,000 jobs, \$24,000,000 in sales and the equivalent of roughly \$140,000 a year in property taxes. Landowners receive three times as much as they would have from the base, even considering the subsequent post-reversion rent increases.

Likewise, a former U.S. communication site in the city of Gushikawa which used to employ only four local workers, is now a town with a population of 5,000 and the seat of the municipal government. The air and naval auxiliary facility near Naha airport has been turned into a residential and commercial district, with sales of nearly \$500,000,000 and which is home to several schools and large parks. It is estimated that the 1,200-acre Marine Corps Air Station at Futenma, which is eleven times larger than the former Hamby airfield and currently employs only 170 Okinawans, would become a major residential and commercial town bringing immeasurable economic benefits to the area.

Irritation at the lack of progress on the closure and conversion issue has been compounded for many by Japan's financial support for the U.S. military presence. Japan pays for not only the local workers who "render labor services" to the U.S. forces under an agreement signed in 1960, but also for a number of other items from what is known in Japan as the "*omoiyari*" (sympathy) budget, initiated in 1978 in consideration of the dollar crisis in the United States.²³ The *omoiyari* expenditure, provided outside the security treaty requirement, accounts for roughly 40 percent of Japan's host-nation support for maintaining forward-deployed American forces in Japan. As the U.S. State Department stated in June 2000:

Japan's Host Nation Support (HNS)—roughly \$4.5 billion—is the most generous of any U.S. ally and, in spite of its present fiscal difficulties, Japan has put a high priority on maintaining current funding levels. The Government of Japan's payments in support of U.S. forces generally approach three-quarters of total U.S. basing costs in Japan.

Under the terms of the bilateral Special Measures Agreement (SMA) . . . Japan pays the costs of local Japanese labor employed by U.S. forces and public utilities on U.S. bases. Under the separate Facilities Improvement Program (FIP), Japan voluntarily provides substantial funding for quality-of-life projects, including housing, community support and recreation fa-

²¹Okinawa Prefectural Government, *The Basic Plan for the Site Utilization of the Lands Currently Used by the U.S. Military in Okinawa* (Naha: Okinawa Prefectural Government, May 1993).

²²Quoted by Masahide Ota in his *Okinawa: Kichi-naki Shima-heno Dohyou* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2000), 166-167, 213-214.

²³The *omoiyari* budget is translated into English as "facilities implement project" and "labor cost sharing."

cilities, and utilities upgrades. Japan has also shown increased flexibility under the FIP in constructing direct operational facilities, such as hangars and hardened aircraft shelters.²⁴

Under the latest cost-sharing arrangements approved in 1995,²⁵ Japan pays not only the regular salaries and fringe benefits, language bonuses, year-end allowances and retirement allowances of the Okinawans employed on U.S. bases, but provides facilities to accommodate American military personnel, such as post offices, service stations, clinics, schools, libraries, day care centers, theaters, gyms, and pays the bills for public utilities used by U.S. forces and their families.²⁶ The *omoiyari* program is so generous that Secretary of Defense William Perry and former Assistant Secretary Joseph Nye "have often argued that one reason the U.S. military should remain in Japan is because the Japanese Government pays for over seventy percent of the basing costs."²⁷ Or, in the words of a Senate resolution, "Japan's host nation support is a key element in the U.S. ability to maintain forward-deployed forces" in Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan.²⁸

Of the approximately 80,000 Americans in Okinawa, nearly 30,000 are active-duty military personnel from all four branches of the armed forces. The remainder include 1,400 Department of Defense civilians, 700 teachers and staff at DOD dependents schools, and 25,000 family members. While some of them live off base, many are accommodated at more than 8,120 military family housing units—multiplexes, duplexes, apartment blocks and single family homes—in nineteen areas.

Kadena Air Base, sprawls across some 4,900 acres with an adjoining munitions area of 6,300 acres. This base alone accommodates 7,000 active-duty personnel, 10,500 dependents and 4,500 civilian personnel. In addition to day-care centers and before- and after-school programs, there are four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school on base with nearly 5,000 students; the high school possesses a large gymnasium, a fifty-meter outdoor swimming pool, a football field with a 400-meter track, outdoor lighted basketball and tennis courts, and a soccer field.²⁹

"Opportunities to begin and complete secondary certificates, as well as associate, baccalaureate and masters' degrees are available at the various colleges and universities of-

²⁴ Fact sheet, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State, 26 June 2000. http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/japan/fs-japan_hostnat_000626.html.

²⁵ Agreement between Japan and the United States of America Concerning New Special Measures Relating to Article XXIV of the Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, regarding facilities and areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan," signed on 27 September 1995 in New York.

²⁶ In fiscal year 1997, Japan's "burden-sharing payments" totaled \$4.9 billion: \$712 million for land leased for U.S. military use; \$1.7 billion under the Special Measures Agreement for the costs of local national labor employed by U.S. forces in Japan, public utilities on U.S. bases, and the transfer requested by Japan of American military training from U.S. bases to other facilities in Japan; \$876 million in indirect costs such as rents foregone at fair market value and tax concessions; and \$1.7 billion for new facilities, vicinity improvements, relocation construction and other costs. The United States General Accounting Office, "Report to the Honorable Duncan Hunter, House of Representatives [on] Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the U.S. Military Presence on Okinawa" (GAO/NISAD 98-66), March 1998, 16. Japan's contribution may be compared with Italy's \$1.1 billion (1998), Germany's \$957 million (1998), and Britain's \$127 million (1998). For the *omoiyari* budget, see Maeda, *Zainichi Beigun-Kichi no Shushi Kessan*, 147-240.

²⁷ See Robert Hamilton, "An Idea That Just Won't Float," *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1997, 43.

²⁸ Senate resolution 306, 30 September 1996. *Congressional Record*, 1995, S12000.

²⁹ <http://www-02.kadena.af.mil/current/18pa/PublicAffairs/dodds.htm>, accessed 12 December 2000.

fering on-base programs," the base homepage states.³⁰ The institutions mentioned are Central Texas College, University of Maryland Asian Division, University of Maryland-College Park, Troy State University, Michigan State University and the University of Oklahoma. Enlisted members of the Air Force are also able to complete requirements for job-related certificates or associate of applied science degrees through the Community College of the Air Force.

On-base quarters for officers look like urban apartments. "Kadena is on line to have one person in each dorm room by the year 2002," its on-line homepage boasts. "Immediate plans include more microwaves, new furniture, large refrigerators and postal boxes. Kadena has the largest permanent party, unaccompanied housing contingency in the Air Force. Kadena has 203 apartment-style quarters in seven buildings which meet standards for officers and civilian equivalents. Each apartment consists of a living room, bedroom, private bathroom and kitchen. Apartments are fully furnished, carpeted and have central air conditioning. There are 370 rooms designated as unaccompanied NCO quarters, which have private bathrooms and central air conditioning. All unaccompanied members are assigned private rooms."³¹

Kadena has a medical clinic, a bowling center, an eighteen-hole golf course, a football field, a roller blade rink, and a separate 120-acre recreation area. Okuma Recreation Area, an island forty-five miles north of Kadena, offers "fifty-two air conditioned cabanas, plus three large camp site areas for both single people and families. Facilities include everything from a surfside restaurant, bar and lounge, to an indoor theater, miniature golf course, nine-hole golf course, recreation center as well as boating and diving facilities."³²

Camp Zukeran, which serves as the Marine Corps Bases' Okinawa Headquarters and the U.S. Forces Japan's Okinawa Area Field Office, and houses weapons and equipment maintenance facilities, accommodates a residential area with a golf course and other amenities. In December 1996, the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed to consolidate the U.S. housing areas in Camp Zukeran and neighboring Camp Kuwae and to return the land thereby freed by March 2008. The single-family homes there will be replaced by new high-rise apartments.

Accidents and incidents involving U.S. forces continue to be serious.³³ Between 1972 and 1999, military aircraft accidents numbered 142, ninety-five of them outside military bases, leaving twenty-six people dead, a further twenty-four missing presumed dead, and twenty-three others injured. Military exercises were blamed for nearly 400 forest and other fires which laid waste to more than 7,000 acres. There have been serious pollution problems caused by chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) released from transformers; PCB, cadmium, mercury, lead and arsenic residues which were detected at a military sewage treatment plant, and chromium (highly poisonous hexavalent chrome) leakage from a logistics facility.

It was also learned in 1997 that U.S. forces had tested depleted-uranium incendiary shells on an islet near Kume Island, in violation of internal regulations of the U.S. forces

³⁰ <http://www-02.kadena.af.mil/current/18pa/PublicAffairs/services.htm>, accessed 12 December 2000.

³¹ <http://www-02.kadena.af.mil/current/18pa/PublicAffairs/moving.htm>, accessed 12 December 2000.

³² <http://www-02.kadena.af.mil/current/18pa/PublicAffairs/services.htm>, accessed 12 December 2000.

³³ See *Okinawa no Beigun Kichi*, 191-201.

in Japan. Radiation from depleted-uranium used in shells and tank shielding is suspected to be one of the causes of "Gulf War Syndrome" from which some of the troops who served in the Gulf War and in the Balkans have suffered gastrointestinal dysfunction, severe fatigue, chronic headaches, joint aches and memory loss. The United States subsequently cleaned the islet, but 85 percent of the spent depleted-uranium shells are believed still unrecovered.³⁴ Since Okinawa is so crowded,³⁵ many of the bases are inevitably located in close proximity to civilian communities. Consequently, Okinawans are exposed to intense levels of noise from military aircraft and bombing exercises, as well as to pollution spilling over from bases, and accidents involving aircraft and automobiles.³⁶

Although the numbers of crimes committed by U.S. forces and their dependents have been declining in recent years, 4,800 Americans committed nearly 5,000 crimes including 520 "atrocious," 970 "violent," 2,500 larcenous and fifty "moral" offenses since reversion.³⁷ "Atrocious" crimes include murder, armed robbery, rape and arson. "Since 1988," Chalmers Johnson writes, citing an article in the *Dayton Daily News* based on facts obtained by invoking the Freedom of Information Act, "Navy and Marine Corps bases in Japan have had the highest number (169) of courts-martial for sexual assaults of all U.S. military bases worldwide. Since there is a big Navy base at White Beach and a Navy contingent at Kadena and the Marines have twenty different bases spread all over Okinawa, Japan for all intents and purposes here refers to Okinawa. This rate was 66 percent more cases than the number two location, San Diego, with 102 cases but with more than twice the personnel."³⁸ Johnson states that the incidence of reported rape at the American bases in Okinawa, eighty-two per 100,000 people, is twice that in the United States.

U.S. authorities now warn military personnel and their dependents to respect Japanese laws and customs. "The Status of Forces Agreement doesn't give one immunity from prosecution," a Kadena homepage reminds military personnel.³⁹ "In fact, the SOFA is just the opposite and is what enables the Japanese government to arrest, to investigate and to prosecute you. In addition, some people think the SOFA gives them the same constitutional rights they enjoy under the U.S. constitution. That is not true either and cases are not thrown out because some U.S. constitutional rights were violated."

Such warnings, however, are far short of adequate in the view of many Okinawans, including former Governor Ota and his conservative successor, Keiichi Inamine, in guarding the safety and welfare of the Okinawan people against the U.S. forces. On numerous occasions, they have pointed to shortcomings of the Status of Forces Agreement, which governs the U.S. bases and troops in Okinawa as elsewhere in the country, and called for its amendment. In particular, they are troubled by the way in which "extraterritoriality" provisions have been used to shield suspects wanted for interrogation by prefectural police. Over the twenty-nine years since reversion, the Okinawan police have asked the U.S. authorities to hand over nineteen suspects for serious crimes such as mur-

³⁴*Ibid.*, 201.

³⁵Compare the island of Okinawa (460 square miles, including offshore islets, 1,200,000 people) with Guam (210 square miles, 150,000 people), Oahu (590 square miles, 850,000 people), Rhode Island (1,200 square miles, 1,000,000 people), Cyprus (3,570 square miles, 770,000 people).

³⁶For statistics on U.S. bases and military personnel in Okinawa, see *Okinawa no Beigun oyobi Jieitai Kichi*, 12-20.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 68-84.

³⁸*Okinawa: Cold War Island*, 114-15. As discussed elsewhere, there have been many serious crimes committed by Americans. A six-year-old girl was raped in 1955, thirteen bar hostesses were killed between 1961 and 1974, and taxi drivers were killed in 1965 and 1967. It is believed that there have been many unreported rape cases.

³⁹<http://www-02.kadena.af.mil/current/18pa/PublicAffairs/legal.htm>, accessed 12 December 2000.

the U.S. authorities to hand over nineteen suspects for serious crimes such as murders, robbery, rapes and arsons; they have succeeded in securing only one.

A twelve-year old school girl was kidnapped on September 4, 1995, on her way back from a community stationery shop in northern Okinawa by two Marines and one seaman in a rental car. She was then bound hand and foot with duct tape, and raped. The Okinawan police had identified the suspects by September 8 and issued warrants for their arrest. However, the U.S. authorities did not hand them over until September 29, after the commander of U.S. forces in Japan, Ambassador Mondale and President Clinton apologized for the rape. Okinawans were so angered by what they viewed as an appalling crime, and by the high-handed attitude of the military police, that teachers, parents, students and others estimated at between 50,000 and 85,000 took to the streets to protest in the largest demonstration held in Okinawa since the reversion.

The incident had driven home to them again the sad reality that, twenty-three years after the American occupation had ended, they were still living in the midst of foreign military forces. The commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Admiral Richard C. Macke, added fuel to the flames in November when he commented that the servicemen "could have had a girl" for the price of their rental car. The two Marines and the sailor were eventually sentenced in a Japanese court to six and a half to seven years in prison, and Admiral Macke was forced into early retirement.

Okinawan protests forced the Japanese and American governments to agree to make operational changes to the agreement whereby the United States would give sympathetic consideration to surrendering suspects before they were formally indicted in murder, rape and other particular cases. But what these "other cases" involved was left to the discretion of the U.S. authorities, with the result that they refused to hand over American suspects in a fatal hit-and-run and a serial arson case.

In August 2000, the prefectural government again called on Tokyo to amend the agreement, so as to require U.S. forces to surrender pre-charged suspects to Japanese police and for their personnel to be made liable for compensation for traffic or other accidents resulting in injury, death or property damage, to pay automobile taxes at a rate equivalent to those levied on Japanese citizens, and to restrict military use of civilian air and sea ports to times of emergency. Tokyo was also asked to add pollution clauses to the agreement which would permit Okinawan government officials to enter military bases for on-the-spot inspections for possible environmental damage and require the United States to clean the polluted areas.

The rape of the school girl triggered more than an island-wide protest: demonstrations also took place in mainland Japan, the United States and elsewhere (e.g., in Beijing where Okinawan representatives raised the matter at the Fourth U.N. World Conference on Women). The incident drew greater attention to the base issue as it occurred during the year commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa, and one year after Japan and the United States had initiated a review of their security treaty arrangements.

In 1994, the two governments had begun examining the basis of the alliance through a year-long U.S.-Japan security dialogue. When Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and President Bill Clinton met in January, they promised mutual efforts to reduce and realign U.S. bases in Okinawa. But Okinawan hopes for reduction and eventual removal of U.S. forces were dealt a blow in February when the Department of Defense issued a report which committed the United States to maintain the "continued forward deployment" of about 100,000 troops in Japan and South Korea "for the foreseeable future" to counter

post-Cold War threats in the region.⁴⁰

This meant that the status quo for U.S. forces in Okinawa would continue for an indeterminate period.

Governor Ota raised an objection and, during his visit to Washington in May, requested the immediate resolution of what he called "three priority issues": the return of Naha Port Facility, termination of parachuting exercises at Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield and the return of land occupied by the airfield, and the termination of live firing exercises over a highway near Camp Hansen. He also demanded the return of Futenma Air Station, certain sections of coastal zones and some air space restricted to U.S. military use, and the Okuma Rest Center and several other institutions occupying municipal land, and asked that U.S. forces reduce aircraft noise pollution, enforce measures to prevent environmental problems, and impose strict discipline on military personnel. In September, Ota refused to take action which would force some landowners to continue to lease their land to the Japanese government for use by American forces under the 1952 Law on Special Measures for Land for the U.S. Military.

When government representatives from the U.S. and Japan held the twentieth Security Consultative Committee meeting in New York on September 27, 1995, they agreed to make President Clinton's scheduled visit to Japan in November "an historic opportunity to reaffirm the central importance of the U.S.-Japan security alliance for both nations" and signed a new five-year special measures agreement on cost-sharing programs.⁴¹

Specifically with regard to Okinawa, they "pledged to work intensively together to solve the three priority issues as soon as possible, . . . deeply deplored the recent serious incident in Okinawa, and recommitted themselves to work cooperatively and intensively in the Joint Committee Study concerning the implementation of criminal jurisdiction procedures under the Status of Forces Agreement." In November, the Japanese government adopted a new "National Defense Program Outline," which underscored the idea that the Japanese defense forces should play appropriate roles in the security environment after the Cold War through close defense cooperation with the United States.

In the same month, the two countries established the Special Action Committee on Facilities and Areas in Okinawa (SACO) under the auspices of the Security Consultative Committee, "to effectively achieve consolidation, realignment and reduction of those facilities, while seeking to maintain harmony with the objectives of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty." On April 15, 1996, the Security Consultative Committee adopted an interim report submitted by SACO. Two days later, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and President Clinton confirmed that the Japan-U.S. security relationship "remains the cornerstone for achieving common security objectives, and for maintaining a stable and prosperous environment for the Asia-Pacific region as we enter the twenty-first century."

The agreement was based on the premise that while "the possibility of global armed conflict has receded," the Asia-Pacific region remained unstable and uncertain. "Tensions continue on the Korean Peninsula," they stated. "There are still heavy concentrations of military force, including nuclear arsenals. Unresolved territorial disputes, potential regional conflicts, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery all constitute sources of instability."⁴² With respect to Okinawa, the two leaders "reconfirmed their determination to carry out steps to consolidate, realign, and

⁴⁰*East Asian Strategy Report 1995.*

⁴¹"Joint Announcement Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee," signed in New York on 27 September. The President's visit was postponed.

⁴²"Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security—An Alliance for the 21st Century," 17 April 1996, in Washington D.C.

"reconfirmed their determination to carry out steps to consolidate, realign, and reduce U.S. facilities and areas consistent with the objectives of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security," and their commitment to conclude the SACO process by November 1996.

SACO recommended in its final report, and Washington agreed, that the United States should:

1. return some 12,400 acres [about 20 percent] of U.S.-held land in Okinawa to Japan, including a major portion of the Northern Training Area,⁴³ an auxiliary airfield, a communications site and portions of camps by March 2008;
2. implement changes to training and operational procedures, such as by terminating artillery fire-training over Highway 104 and relocating parachute drop training to Ie-jima;
3. implement noise reduction initiatives, such as by limiting night flight training operations, building noise reduction baffles, relocating aircraft operations away from a residential area, and removing KC-130 transport aircraft to mainland Japan; and
4. improve changes to Status of Forces Agreement procedures, such as by attaching number plates to all U.S. forces vehicles, providing investigation reports on U.S. military aircraft accidents and making efforts to insure timely notification of local officials and the Japanese government of all major accidents involving U.S. forces' assets or families, and facilitating visits to U.S. facilities and areas.⁴⁴

In one of the initiatives, the United States agreed to "move all artillery firing off Okinawa." "By doing so," Kurt Campbell, deputy assistant under-secretary of defense for Asian and public affairs, stated, "we had to rotate units through live-fire areas in both Japan and, to a certain extent, in Korea. This puts some inconvenience on U.S. forces undeniably, and I occasionally hear some grumbling about it . . . from my military counterparts, particularly the Marines. However, we believe that that inconvenience is worth it in the sense [that] it removes an inconvenience on the people of Okinawa. So we are constantly searching for ways in which U.S. forces can make less of an intrusion on the day-to-day lives of people in the region as a whole."⁴⁵

Indeed, the measures recommended by SACO, if put into effect, would resolve many of the Okinawan people's irritants for the moment. As of April 2001, however, none of the SACO recommendations for the return of facilities has been implemented except for the 1,185-acre Aha Training Area which has been released from joint use by the U.S. and Japanese Self-Defense forces. SACO called on the United States to vacate a 9,850 acre portion of the 20,000-acre Northern Training Area and relinquish its joint use of certain reservoirs (390 acres) by March 2003 on condition that Japan provide enough land to ensure access to the ocean and relocate seven helicopter landing zones to the area from elsewhere on the island. An ecological survey, however, could delay the process.

For various reasons, return of other facilities included in SACO's agenda for return, such as the 149-acre Gimbaru Training Area (originally scheduled for March 1998), the 471-acre Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield, the 132-acre Sobe Communication Site, and the 151-acre Senaha Communications Station (March 2001), are not likely to be realized on schedule. With regard to Naha Naval Port, which the United States in 1974 agreed to relinquish if Japan provided alternative facilities elsewhere in Okinawa, some seventy acres have been returned, but 140 acres remain under U.S. control. SACO recommended

⁴³It was renamed Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC) in March 1998.

⁴⁴"The Final Report of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa," 2 December 1996.

⁴⁵A briefing at the USIA Foreign Press Center in Washington, D.C. on the 1998 East Asia Strategy Report, 23 November, 1998. <http://www.fas.org/man/docs/98112410.htm>

"best [joint] efforts to accelerate" its return and the relocation of its facilities to a nearby pier area.

Still, there has been much progress in the implementation of changes recommended in the SACO final report.⁴⁶ By March 1998, the United States had implemented all three changes in training and operational procedures. The 3rd Marine Division's artillery live-fire exercises over Highway 104 in the Central Training Area were relocated to training ranges in mainland Japan.⁴⁷ Parachute jump training was moved from the Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield to the auxiliary airfield on Ie-jima, and the Marine Corps transferred "conditioning hikes" on off-base public roads to roads within bases.

Washington has also implemented aircraft noise abatement measures at Kadena Air Base and MCAS Futenma, although nighttime missions and training flights are still permitted. SACO also called for noise-abatement initiatives at U.S. bases in Okinawa, but that had to await Japan's construction of facilities for Navy aircraft and MC-130 operations and construction of noise reduction baffles, both at Kadena Air Base. More than 5,000 residents of six municipalities near Kadena Air Base have sued the Japanese and U.S. governments, demanding the termination of early-morning and nighttime flying and payment of ¥6,200,000,000 (\$56,000,000) in damages for the physical and mental harm caused by aircraft noise.

As part of what the U.S. forces call a "good neighbor policy," Status of Forces Agreement procedures have been changed to insure timely reports to Japanese authorities of military accidents, increase public exposure of joint committee agreements, and make it easier for people to visit their land, ancestral tombs or sacred sites within bases. New procedures also require the U.S. forces to attach number plates to official vehicles, including tactical vehicles and have members of the forces purchase supplemental insurance for personally owned vehicles.⁴⁸

"So Long As Conditions of Threat Exist . . ."

A particularly contentious issue which remains unresolved concerns the relocation of the Marine Corps Air Station in Futenma, retained "to maintain and operate facilities and provide services and materials to support Marine aircraft operations."⁴⁹ It is the home of the 1st Marine Air Wing which serves as the air component of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force, the wing's Marine Air Group-36 flying about seventy tactical fixed and rotary wing aircraft such as CH-46 and CH-53 helicopters and KC-130 aerial refueling airplanes.

Occupying the central 25 percent of Ginowan City, surrounded by 80,000 residents and sixteen schools, the 1,200-acre station with a 9,000-foot runway and parallel taxiway has not only been a source of various environmental problems but also a major hindrance to surface transportation and the area's commercial and housing development. A number

⁴⁶"Report to the Honorable Duncan Hunter, House of Representatives [on] Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the U.S. Military Presence on Okinawa," 42-45.

⁴⁷Japan agreed to pay transportation costs to the mainland artillery ranges and offered to transport the units aboard its commercial airlines. *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁸A working team representing the national, prefectural and municipal governments, U.S. forces and food and entertainment businesses decided in December 2000 that the American authorities would make an "alcohol check" on GIs at each gate, instead of keeping local bars "off-limits" to them from midnight to 5 a.m.

⁴⁹"Report to the Honorable Duncan Hunter . . .," 27.

of helicopters and observation planes have crashed upon or just after takeoff from the station, killing at least six crewmembers and leaving fourteen others missing in the sea. A fuel tank once fell on the university campus abutting the base.

After numerous demands by the prefectural and municipal governments to close the station, the United States accepted a SACO recommendation to vacate it and return the land to the Japanese government which has leased it from about 2,000 private landowners. This agreement was, however, not unconditional: SACO had suggested in April 1996 that Futenma Air Station be returned within the next several years "after adequate replacement facilities are completed." The station's "critical military functions and capabilities" would be maintained, the interim report stated, by constructing a heliport⁵⁰ on other US facilities and areas in Okinawa, developing additional facilities at Kadena Air Base, transferring KC-130 aircraft to Iwakuni Air Base in mainland Japan, and conducting "a joint US-Japan study on emergency use of facilities in the event of a crisis." Subsequently, SACO came up with three specific alternatives to Futenma: 1) incorporate the heliport into Kadena; 2) construct a heliport at Camp Schwab; and 3) develop and construct a sea-based facility (SBF).

Predictably, the plan met with opposition on Okinawa. The town council of Kadena, the municipality already 83 percent occupied by military facilities, including the huge air base and an ammunition depot, protested against the recommendation and asked the United States, through the Japanese government, to be excluded from consideration. The city council of Nago,⁵¹ which includes Camp Schwab on the east coast, also declared itself against the construction of a heliport there. People in Nago, Kadena, and Yomitan, Chatan and Kin, the towns also rumored to be candidates for the relocated facility, held rallies to demonstrate their opposition.

Nevertheless, on December 2, 1996, the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee approved the SACO recommendation to opt for the sea-based facility to be located off the east coast of the main island of Okinawa.⁵² "Compared to the other two options," the final SACO report stated, "the sea-based facility is judged to be the best option in terms of enhanced safety and quality of life for the Okinawan people while maintaining the operational capabilities of United States forces. In addition, the sea-based facility can function as a fixed installation during its use as a military base and can also be removed when no longer necessary." The facility, the report said, would be about 1,500 meters (4,900 feet) by 600 meters (2,000 feet) and equipped with a 4,200-foot Instrument Flight Rules (IFR)-

⁵⁰The name "heliport" is a political euphemism for a fully-equipped giant offshore airport, according to Robert Hamilton, a former U.S. Marine who served in Okinawa for two years in the late 1980s and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland School of Public Affairs. "In addition to the obvious landing areas required, hangar space for all helicopters is needed for maintenance and protection from the harsh salt water environment. Next, a lot of space is needed to store the large variety of parts and tools required to keep these highly complex machines in operation. And don't forget about storage space for aviation fuel, and also a guarded area for ammunition. Furthermore, every military air facility needs a fully stocked and manned medical facility on the premises, since accidents requiring immediate lifesaving services do occur. Also needed is a fire and rescue capability that requires considerable space . . ." "An Idea That Just Won't Float," *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1997, 42.

⁵¹In spite of its designation as a "city," the administrative jurisdiction of Nago consists of the namesake urban district on the west coast and forty smaller communities, mostly isolated mountain and coastal villages spreading across the mountainous northern part of the island. The total population in 1998 was 55,074.

⁵²"The Final Report of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa," 57-58.

compatible runway. It would also provide direct air operations support, and indirect support infrastructure such as headquarters, maintenance, logistics and personnel amenity functions, and base operating support.

It would be connected to the coast by a pier or causeway, and its design would be one of three that government engineers considered technically feasible: (1) a floating pier supported by a number of steel columns fixed to the sea bed, (2) a platform consisting of steel pontoon-type units, or (3) a semi-submersible platform supported by the buoyancy of a submerged foundation. It would be up to Japan to design and build the facility according to United States specifications and to provide it under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the Status of Forces Agreement.

In November 1997, Tokyo presented to the prefectural government of Okinawa and the municipal government of Nago a "basic plan" to construct the sea-based facility off the northeastern coast of the island. Public opinion in Nago was divided. Somewhat isolated from the main commercial and population centers in southern and central Okinawa with its development partly hampered by its mountainous terrain, the area has been economically depressed for a number of years. The mayor, conservative citizens and members of pro-business groups were in favor of the proposal which they hoped would boost the local economy. However, in a referendum conducted in December, despite Tokyo promising huge financial grants to Nago in case of a yes vote, only 46 percent of the eligible voters supported the proposed construction of the heliport within the municipality.

Although a majority voted no, the mayor of Nago visited Prime Minister Hashimoto soon afterwards, declared his support for the heliport project, and then resigned. The cabinet chose to respect his support more than the non-binding plebiscite. Two days before the subsequent mayoral election, Governor Ota made his position clear: he would respect the result of the plebiscite and oppose moving the Futenma station anywhere else in Okinawa. To approve its relocation within the prefecture, he declared, would be tantamount to authorizing the voluntary establishment of a new military base, something that had never before happened in postwar Okinawan history. Ota, instead, demanded that the station be moved elsewhere in Japan or to Guam, Hawaii or the continental United States.

By then, relations between Okinawa's Governor and the Tokyo administration had become severely strained. Ota, former journalism professor trained at the University of Syracuse, had already displeased Tokyo in 1995 when he declined to sign the documents that would authorize the central government to retain the land its owners had refused to lease for military use. Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama sued Ota perfunctorily, seeking a court order to force him to execute the duties delegated to him by the central government under the Local Autonomy Law. Ota lost the case when a high court ordered him to sign the leases by proxy but still refused to obey the order, upon which Murayama's successor, Prime Minister Hashimoto himself signed the documents by proxy.

The Governor appealed to the Supreme Court. "Anyone responsible for the administration of my prefecture," Ota recalled later, "would have found it difficult to accept further reinforcement and perpetuation of the bases. I could not, in conscience, agree to sign leases enabling the stationed military units to extend their coerced use of Okinawan land. . . . I believed the signing involved issues of basic human rights, such as constitutionally-guaranteed property rights, the right to live in peace, the right to self-rule. . . . In that sense, the base question was not just an Okinawan issue. It was an issue of Japanese sovereignty and the principle of democracy that concerned all Japanese."⁵³ The court,

⁵³Ota's speech to RAND in May 1998. Also See "Governor Ota at the Supreme Court of Japan," in *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, 205-214.

however, summarily dismissed his claim.

In a prefecture-wide referendum held in September, ten days after the Supreme Court decision, 89.9 percent of the respondents, or 54% of the eligible voters, favored realignment and reduction of the military bases and a review of the Status of Forces agreement, thereby giving moral support to Ota.

Five days later, however, the Governor disappointed many of his supporters by taking administrative steps which effectively cleared the way for the government to force use of its land expropriation process. In April 1997, the Diet passed, almost unanimously, a revision of the law on expropriating land for U.S. military use in Japan which many Okinawans felt was an insult to them. The revision was designed to make it legal for the government to hold on to some pieces of land in Okinawa during a period after the leases expired because of the owners' refusal to renew them prior to the Land Expropriation Committee completing its investigation on the appropriateness of the expropriation. In his public announcement, Akira Kioi, president of the Japan Confederation of Bar Associations, questioned the constitutionality of the revision, which applied retroactively and, for all practical purposes, only locally to Okinawa.⁵⁴

When Ota announced his opposition to relocating the Marine Corps air station to a site within Okinawa, Hashimoto thought that the Governor, who he believed agreed, at least tacitly, to the proposal, had betrayed him. Tokyo was so infuriated that it froze its statutory subsidies to Okinawa.

In the meantime, the SACO proposal for a sea-based facility had been questioned by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), the research and investigative arm of the U.S. Congress. In a sixty-two-page report, issued in March 1998, the GAO described replacing the Futenma station with a sea-based facility as "a major challenge."⁵⁵ It was estimated that it would cost \$4,000,000,000 to design and construct the facility and \$200,000,000 a year to operate and maintain it compared with the less than \$3,000,000 the United States pays annually to run the existing station at Futenma. In addition, the report suggested that the United States and Japan would face "major technological challenges, as no sea-based facility of the type and scale envisioned has ever been built" and "operational complications because the sea-based facility . . . would be insufficient to support all U.S. operating requirements and maintain maximum safety margins, as stated in a Marine Corps study."⁵⁶ The sea-based facility would have to withstand the severe typhoons that strike the region several times a year, and the occasional tsunami. It would have to be built in such a way as not to sink or capsize and to resume normal operations within a day or two after an aircraft crash or an enemy or terrorist attack.⁵⁷ Furthermore, "routine operations aboard the facility may inadvertently contaminate the nearby ocean environment, influencing coral reefs. Accidental runoff of fuels, cleaning fluids, and other substances for aircraft and base operations could also pose a risk."⁵⁸ It would take "up to ten years," instead of the "five to seven" estimated by SACO, to design and build the sea-based facility in accordance with U.S. operating and affordability requirements and to relocate.⁵⁹

⁵⁴Quoted in *Okinawa: Kichi-naki Shima-eno Dohyo*, 131-32.

⁵⁵"Report to the Honorable Duncan Hunter, House of Representatives [on] Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the U.S. Military Presence on Okinawa," 6.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 5-7.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 38.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 5-7.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 40.

In the election held in November 1998, Ota lost his bid for a third term as Governor to Keiichi Inamine, a business leader and Ota's ally in the massive demonstration denouncing the rape incident and calling for reduction of military bases. In his campaign, Inamine had committed himself to restoring a relationship of mutual trust with the central government and securing restoration of economic development funds from Tokyo. He also called for the earliest possible move of the Marine Corps air station from Futenma and proposed the construction of a new airport in northern Okinawa which would also accommodate the relocated air station. Expected to trigger industrial and commercial development in the surrounding areas, he said the new airport would be used as a joint civil and military facility for its first fifteen years and would then be turned over to Japan for civil purposes only.

In this context, it was, perhaps, no coincidence that Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and his cabinet decided in April 1999 to hold the summit meeting of the G-8 (Group of Eight) nations in Nago in July 2000, a surprise not only to Japan's Foreign Ministry but also to the prefectural government. Meanwhile, Richard Armitage, soon to become Assistant Secretary of State under President George Bush, stated in July 1999 that the new station could be what he called a hybrid helicopter base, combining a runway and hangars on land but with some part of the facility offshore.⁶⁰

One year after Inamine was elected, the prefectural government reached the conclusion that the shore off Henoko, within the waters of the Camp Schwab Marine Corps base on the northeastern coast, would be the most appropriate choice for the new facilities. This, Inamine stated, would make it possible to realign and reduce the overall extent of American bases on the island, minimize noise for communities, and encourage regional economic development. Inamine, who supports the Japan-U.S. security treaty and believes it to be an important factor contributing to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region, said that while the "internal" relocation was not the "best choice," it was a more realistic solution for the problem at hand than to pursue removal of the station to some location outside Okinawa.⁶¹ The Governor attached four conditions that the central government had to meet before the relocation agreement could be finalized, including one that required the replacement facility to be a joint civil and military airport and another that its use by the U.S. forces would be limited to fifteen years. Mayor Tateo Kishimoto of Nago endorsed Inamine's position a month later.

Far from major population centers, Henoko is adjacent to the 5,000-acre Camp Schwab Marine Corps base for live firing and amphibious training exercises, and a 300-acre ordnance depot which is widely suspected of having stored nuclear weapons in the past. A "boomtown" during the Vietnam War and the "strong dollar" era, with hundreds of neon-lit bars, restaurants and brothels, Henoko is now a sleepy hamlet of 1,500 people, with dilapidated reminders of its boomtown past at its front and in the old village at its rear. Its inhabitants depend partly on agriculture (vegetables, fruits and livestock) and fishing, but mainly on wages from the military base (i.e., land rentals and employment), public and private construction projects, and small family stores. Its coral shore stretching out from a sandy beach is already used by the Marines for landing exercises while local fishermen set nets in the nearby waters where dugong, a rare and threatened herbivorous mammal species, have been sighted.

The people of Henoko and the neighboring small villages have been subjected for

⁶⁰ An interview with the Kyodo news service. The *Okinawa Times*, 24 July 1999.

⁶¹ Keiichi Inamine, "Kenmin-no Minasama-e," and "Futenma Hikojo-no Isetsu-nitsuite," 22 November 1999.

decades to the noise from low-flying helicopters and jet fighters, aircraft crashes, forest fires resulting from firing exercises, fears surrounding the suspected storage of toxic gases, and hazards from live-firing exercises across a highway. Environmentalists fear that an offshore heliport would pollute the coral sea waters, threatening villagers' livelihoods and the dugong's habitat. Caught between the possible economic benefits and hazards of the sea-based station, however, the residents of Henoko are divided on the issue of whether to accept the bulk of Futenma's facilities.

The Governor of Okinawa and the mayor of Nago have both insisted that, unless Japan and the United States commit themselves first to the fifteen-year limit to U.S. military use, the new Henoko base is unacceptable. Tokyo, however, has remained reluctant to pursue the Okinawan claim with the United States, while Washington for strategic reasons has resisted making the limited time commitment.

The Japanese government has presented to Okinawa possible construction plans for the airfield, to be built on a pile-supported pier, a floating platform, or on land reclaimed from the coastal sea inside, outside or on the coral reefs. The proposed airfield, with a 2,000-meter runway, is estimated to cost between \$1,200,000,000 and \$8,300,000,000 and take between eight and eighteen years to build.

That is where the issue stands five years after Japan and the United States agreed to close the air station at Futenma. The prolonged impasse will delay the implementation of a key SACO recommendation: construction of "a sea-based facility to absorb most of the helicopter operational functions of Futenma Air Station" and return the air station "within the next five to seven years, after adequate replacement facilities are completed and operational."

This means that the air station, along with its noise and hazards in the crowded center of an expanding city, will remain a serious political issue for years to come. Controversy over the proposed construction of the off-shore station also seems likely to linger in view both of opposition locally in Henoko and Nago, and also Okinawa as a whole and because of the technological, environmental and other problems identified in the GAO report. Japan and the United States are under pressure from those questioning the proposals to review the basic question of whether it will be feasible to meet the dual-purposed SACO mandate: reduce the U.S. military "footprint" in Okinawa and, at the same time, maintain the capabilities and readiness of U.S. forces in Japan.

The underlying problem is that Okinawa, long after Japan was defeated in World War II and nearly three decades after reverting to Japanese sovereignty, remained a pawn in international politics, with its voice largely neglected by Japan and the United States. In fact, the former deputy assistant secretary of defense who was heavily involved in the SACO negotiations, has admitted that the SACO process was "negotiated directly" between the American and Japanese governments. "We did not receive enough input from our Okinawan friends," Kurt Campbell, now senior vice president and director of International Security Programs, stated. "We have learned a lesson. We understand that, in the other phases of the dialogue, the Okinawans have to have a full voice in that process."⁶²

Campbell also noted that "it is neither smart nor stable for the United States to have . . . so many of our eggs in one basket on Okinawa. It is in our strategic interests to diversify, to be more flexible, and simultaneously, to reduce the burden on the people of Okinawa. It is absolutely critical that the United States be not seen as some sort of occupation force."

⁶²A lecture to the Ryukyu Forum, held on 13 December 2000 at the Naha Terrace Hotel in Naha, Okinawa.

More than four decades before, in 1957, General Lemnitzer had directed a "comprehensive review of all military requirements for land in the Ryukyus, with a view to reducing our existing requirements wherever possible and of limiting new acquisition to the absolute minimum."⁶³ For its part, the Japanese government has pledged, on numerous occasions, to work towards reducing U.S. bases in Okinawa.

Even if all the SACO recommendations were fulfilled, however, nearly 15 percent of the main island would continue to lie under American military bases and Okinawa would still be burdened with 70 percent of the total land area of the U.S. facilities used exclusively by the American forces in Japan. In 1953, Secretary Dulles stated the U.S. intention to "continue to exercise its present powers and rights" in Okinawa "so long as conditions of threat and tension exist in the Far East." If "the strategic location of Okinawa is likely to become more critical in the future [rather] than less . . . in terms of a complex relationship with China and the maintenance of peace across the Taiwan Straits," as Campbell predicted, Okinawans could not expect to be relieved of their military burden for the foreseeable future and even well into the 21st century.

In 1953, Ralph Braibanti noted that the "uneasiness arising from uncertainty" was "the most serious problem in the Ryukyus," causing "spiritual hopelessness" among the Okinawan people after eight years of American occupation.⁶⁴ More than five decades after World War II, and more than ten years after the end of the Cold War, "uneasiness arising from uncertainty" continues for them.

Many Okinawans hoped that the G-8 summit of the leaders of the Group of Seven (G-7) industrialized countries and Russia, held from July 21 to 23, 2000, at the "Bankoku Shinryo-kan" at the tip of a cape just across the island from Camp Schwab, might focus international attention on their problems. The summit adopted a number of official documents including a communiqué, a charter on the information society and statements on the global economy, regional issues and the Korean peninsula, but none of them referred to Okinawa.⁶⁵ Thousands of people encircled the Kadena Air Base, forming a human chain to demonstrate their opposition to the U.S. bases. Once the leaders, officials and the press corps had left, however, the once-in-a-lifetime event became history to most Okinawans as quickly as they were forgotten by most of the rest of the world.

If the so-called "Armitage report" is any indication of the strategic policy of the Bush administration toward the Asia-Pacific region, Okinawa could expect to remain an essential U.S. fortress for many years to come. "Major war in Europe is inconceivable for at least a generation, but the prospects for conflict in Asia are far from remote," the report stated. "The region features some of the world's largest and most modern armies, nuclear-armed major powers, and several nuclear-capable states. Hostilities that could directly involve the United States in a major conflict could occur at a moment's notice on the Korean peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait. The Indian subcontinent is a major flash-point. In each area, war has the potential of nuclear escalation. In addition, lingering turmoil in Indonesia, the world's fourth-largest nation, threatens stability in Southeast Asia."⁶⁶

⁶³"Statement of General Lemnitzer, Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, on the United States Land Policy in the Ryukyu Islands," 4 January 1957.

⁶⁴Ralph Braibanti, "The Outlook for the Ryukyus," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. XXXI (1953).

⁶⁵For documents of the summit, see http://www.g8kyushu-okinawa.go.jp/e/documents/image/t_docu.gif, or <http://www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/econ/g8okin/okg8bnr.jpg>.

⁶⁶"The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," *INSS Special Report*, 11 October 2000 (http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/sr_japan.html).

The report, prepared by Richard Armitage, then of Armitage and Associates, Joseph Nye, and other members of a bipartisan study group called for "continued consolidation of U.S. bases and rapid implementation of the terms" of the SACO agreement, including "broader and more flexible deployment and training options for the Marines throughout the region." At the same time, however, it emphasized the continued strategic value of Okinawa. "The U.S. Air Force base at Kadena provides a critical link to American power projection throughout the region. It is also crucial to the defense of Japan," it noted. "The III Marine Expeditionary Force provides a self-sustaining, joint forward echelon for rapid response to problems in the region, ranging from evacuation of noncombatant personnel to serving as cutting edge combat elements to enable large formations to defeat aggression."

In May 2001, Armitage, now Deputy Secretary of State, told a congressional hearing that the United States would not accept the Okinawan request for limiting the U.S. military's use of the relocated Marine Corps air station to fifteen years.