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The University of Kansas International Programs presented an academic panel on "The Okinawan Bases and East Asian Security" on September 29, 1997. The event was sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Rex Niswander of New York. Dr. Terry M. Weidner, Associate Director of the Programs, recruited Dr. James Auer of Vanderbilt University and myself as speakers. He asked me to "take a generally critical view of the US bases on Okinawa." Dr. Auer was asked to "take a more supportive view." I spoke from the paper presented below. The script has since been revised.

Also included in this issue is a charming vignette by Dr. Ingelise L. Lanman on the administration and civic life in the most basic unit (aza) of Ryukyuan/Okinawan community centering around its civic hall (kōminkan). The desk received it some time ago, but its publication has been delayed by scheduling and other difficulties. With apologies to the author and regrets to the readers who have been deprived of the opportunity to read this interesting contribution, we herewith present it for everyone's enjoyment.

The Problem of the US Bases on Okinawa

by Koji Taira

The question of the greatest concern to Okinawans today, more than half a century after the end of the Second World War and the Battle of Okinawa, is why the United States armed forces are still occupying one-fifth of the Okinawa Island and vast air and sea spaces around it. The governments of Japan and the United States have proffered many devious reasons for the prolonged military occupation of Okinawa. Given this track record of ingenuity of both governments, it is entirely possible that new excuses will be found for keeping the US troops in Okinawa throughout the 21st century. The prospect of life under military occupation for another century horrifies Okinawans. They want the troops out NOW!

I will argue that Okinawans' demand is right and just and that the continued U.S. military presence in Okinawa is strategically misguided, humanistically deplorable, and economically inefficient. A counter-argument I am fully

aware of is that this same demand by Okinawa is an irrational emotionalism and that the U.S. military presence in Okinawa is motivated by the noble aspirations to world peace and security, maintained by a sound geopolitical strategy and economically beneficial to Okinawa.

(1) Economic inefficiency

An easy topic first. It is economically inefficient to lock up 20% of the land space of the Okinawa Island for uses yielding less than 20% of the island's output. The U.S. bases add income to Okinawa through land rents to Okinawan landowners (paid by the Japanese government), local expenditures of the military personnel and their dependents, and wages (paid by the Japanese government) to Okinawan employees on the bases.

These contributions of the bases to the Okinawan economy are estimated to be about 5% of the Okinawan GNP, one fourth as much

as the proportion of Okinawa's land taken by the bases. In addition to the land they occupy, the U.S. forces have carved out vast sea and air spaces for their exclusive uses. This adversely affects fishing, air and ocean transportation, broadcasting, communication, recreation, tourism, and many other economic activities.

The military presence also creates pernicious side effects. Through training exercises, poor community relations, accidents, and crimes, the military presence inflicts physical and psychological damages on Okinawans. Especially those who live in areas adjacent to the bases suffer enormously.

The air force training, conducted day and night, produces unbearable noises, often at levels far exceeding the limits of environmental standards of any decent society. Sleep disorders, hearing difficulties, disruptions of community life, etc. have resulted.

The artillery training, using live ammunition, destroys the natural environment. When it rains, dug-up soil runs off to the sea and extinguishes marine life that depends on clean water and healthy coral reefs. Highways are strewn with rocks, trees, and metal fragments blown up by the artillery exercises. Weapons of all kinds are fired into forests and burn them down.

The sonic booms and earth tremors from bombardments distress the nearby communities and disrupt social and personal routines. Loose canon balls sometimes stray into civilian residential areas. Add to that the spectacle of troops in full combat gear filing out of the bases for conditioning hikes on civilian highways. Okinawans are reminded of the Battle of Okinawa and cringe with horror.

Further, add civilian casualties and fatalities from accidents of all kinds arising from military operations as well as the conduct of off-duty military personnel. Airplanes fall and explode on school yards. Military trucks run

up on the side walks filled with pedestrians. Soldiers fresh from the U.S. drive on the wrong side of the road and run head-on into Okinawan cars. Drunken off-duty personnel run amok in crowded night spots. Crimes against persons or properties are frequent. These accidents and incidents kill or maim people and spread fear far and wide. Peace and safety, more than half a century after World War II, still elude Okinawans.

These negative externalities of the American military presence, and many more one can cite, are the notorious "burden" or "impact" of the U.S. military bases on Okinawans many seem to love to mention but do nothing about. The U.S. and Japanese governments, far away from Okinawa, pay only lip service. If the cost of this burden or impact is charged against the pecuniary gains the bases yield, the result will be a great net loss of well-being on the part of Okinawans.

(2) Injustice and unfairness

In addition to the cost of economic inefficiency, the American military presence in Okinawa represents deplorable moral and legal injustices that derive from the dark underside of *Realpolitik* and the imperial arrogance of the Japanese and U.S. governments. The Okinawa Island, barely 0.3% of the whole territory of Japan, accounts for 75% of the land used by the U.S. armed forces stationed in Japan.

That is, Okinawa is forced to give up its land in the order that is proportionately 25 times as large as the rest of Japan does. The numbers suggest a criminal scale of discrimination against Okinawa. These staggering numbers could not have resulted from mere absent-mindedness. There should have been a clear intent to discriminate against Okinawa.

Furthermore, in terms of population density, the Okinawa Island is more crowded than any

prefecture of Japan except for a few most industrialized centers such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Aichi. Knowing this, the Japanese government has nonetheless expropriated 20% of Okinawa's scarce land for military bases, further squeezing people's *lebensraum*.

The U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, the notorious ANPO, stipulates that Japan should provide the U.S. armed forces with areas and facilities. The Treaty does not make a special mention of Okinawa as a site for such areas and facilities. Why, then, are the American bases sited predominantly in Okinawa?

The history of the U.S. occupation of Okinawa (in full up to 1972 and in part since then) is condemnable from the standpoint of the human, civil and political rights of Okinawans. This sordid history is a product of an unwritten U.S.-Japanese agreement that Okinawans are an inferior people unaware and unworthy of the kinds of rights and liberties that the Americans and the Japanese enjoy under their respective constitutions.

This racism is morally reprehensible and legally unacceptable. Of course, no government has put it quite like that. But it can be inferred from documents and practices of the Japanese and U.S. governments in Okinawa. Naturally, neither the U.S. nor the Japanese government has admitted the moral and legal wrongs that they have committed against Okinawans.

(3) The U.S.-Japanese military alliance

The refurbished U.S.-Japanese Anpo regime, for which new guidelines were announced in September 1997, is built on ill-defined abstractions: crises, contingencies or emergencies in areas surrounding Japan. In the post-Cold War world with rising expectations for peace dividend, these words sound hollow.

The undefined abstractions allow the forward-deployed U.S. forces to be stationed in Japan, ready for further forward

deployment. In emergencies, the U.S. forces will be supported by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in practically all military activities except for actual combat on the battlefield. Scenarios of perfect coordination for war are being developed. But who is the enemy? "Don't ask; don't tell."

But ordinary people know the answer: China. The Chinese are also suspicious. They have little use for abstraction on matters of war and peace impinging upon their own life and death. At the minimum, the Chinese leaders want to be assured that the crises, etc. and the areas surrounding Japan do not imply China or its action toward Taiwan across the Taiwan Strait. The Japanese government has given its word to China to that effect, but the U.S. still remains ambiguous, hoping that the nebulous wording affords desired flexibility.

The United States cannot keep lying to China forever. It is no secret that after the end of Cold War, the U.S. needed a new adversary to give a proper focus to its foreign policy. With no good reason, the U.S. picked China for that role. At the same time the U.S. embraced Japan more lovingly as a companion in a newly conceptualized environment of tension and insecurity which would guarantee the continued stationing of the U.S. forces in Japan.

If the U.S. dislikes the above interpretation, it should denounce it officially and declare, clearly and openly, that the crises, etc. in the U.S.-Japan security guidelines have nothing to do with China or Taiwan and that the areas around Japan do not include the Taiwan Strait. Short of such clarification, China will continue to assume that the U.S.-Japan alliance presumes China as a principal target.

When Japan gave China the denial it wanted, Japan may have lied, but to the extent that there was some truth in it, the Japanese action caused the U.S. some worries. That is, Japan might refuse to go along with the U.S.,

should conflict erupt between the U.S. and China.

Actually, the suspicion of Japan's unreliability as an ally has always been present in the U.S. Asian policy. It is due as much to this suspicion of Japan as to other "noble" ideals that the U.S. has kept its troops in Japan. Knowing this, Japan puts up Okinawa as a "security" for the alliance (as for a loan contract). In the worst case, Japan would forfeit this "security," in which case the U.S. would take over Okinawa in full again. Thus Okinawa is forced to suffer the brunt of the immoral alliance game between the U.S. and Japan.

The above may sound too convoluted as an interpretation of how the U.S.-Japanese relations are playing out in the post-Cold War Asia. To be convincing, one needs much more time and space to develop the idea. At any rate, a new Cold War is on and the new adversary for the U.S. is China. To win the new Cold War, the U.S. believes that it needs the combat-ready U.S. marines close to potential flash points. Okinawa is regarded an ideal location to station the marines. So the popular cry among geo-politicians is "location, location, location!" But they are wrong in their premises, in their reasoning, and about the consequences of the whole strategy they espouse.

There is no locational rationale for a permanent stationing of troops anywhere in the age of revolutionary changes in the technology of war and defense. Since the last war, there have been vast improvements in tactical mobility and cruise missiles as well as anti-missiles. Stationed troops are sitting ducks for missile attacks, and the missile technology keeps improving by leaps and bounds. This was pointed out in *The Economist* some time ago (March 8, 1997).

What is frightening to Okinawans is this: "Since defenses against missiles are unlikely to

be fool proof, ports and air bases (indeed fixed sites of all kinds) will be increasingly vulnerable" (*ibid.*, p. 22). If the U.S.-China Cold War heats up, the Chinese missiles will be capable of destroying much of Okinawa. Given the population density of Okinawa, casualties will be astronomical. Yet U.S. and Japanese geo-politicians have not thought about the tragic human side of their war games. (Remember the Battle of Okinawa? History repeats itself.)

If they do not care for Okinawans' safety, they should at least care for their own people: i.e., it should be prudent for the U.S. to avoid putting its troops in harm's way. That means that the U.S. forces for their own good should quit Okinawa and move to safer places. The governor of Hawaii offers his state for hosting the returning U.S. forces. Some Americans are on record suggesting the U.S. mainland. The basic constraint to keep in mind is: Americans in general would not allow their young men and women killed in Asian war yet again.

Better warfare technology is not the answer, however. I argue for the elimination of the risk of war. What is needed is not a U.S.-Japan military alliance, but a U.S.-China compact of peaceful co-existence which will obviate the need for the American military presence in Okinawa, or in entire Japan for that matter. Why can't the U.S. and China be good friends? That is the ultimate question. All the U.S. strategy designs which pursue the goal of winning a war with China are misguided, dangerous, and ultimately self-defeating.

Ironically (or one might say, fortunately), the Japanese government is already undercutting the rationale of the U.S.-Japan security alliance against China. Under Chinese prodding, the Japanese government is repeating its promise that China is not the target of the U.S.-Japanese alliance. Ordinary Japanese then ask: why all this fuss about the new Anpo guidelines and related measures

which go to great lengths on crises, emergencies, or contingencies in areas around Japan?

If someone says "Korea," there will be a big yawn. Korea is no issue any more. Surely not an issue that South Korea and the U.S. cannot handle under the existing bilateral arrangements. A larger issue is how to achieve the North-South unification efficiently. The new Anpo guidelines which would automatically draw Japan into the Korean theater of conflict are looked on suspiciously by South Korea, which has already served notice on Japan not to act without its prior approval.

One right approach to East Asian security is the complete withdrawal of the U.S. military forces from Okinawa and Japan. This will force the hands of Japan to show that it is true to its pacifist ideal explicitly stated in its own Constitution. The pacifist Japan would cut the military budget (which has already begun) and shrink the Self-Defense Forces. The idea that the American withdrawal would induce an arms race in Asia would be proved false.

In this process of eliminating war potential from Japan, Okinawa should be the right starting point. De-militarize Okinawa! That is, both the U.S. forces and Japanese Self-Defense Forces withdraw from Okinawa and

other Ryukyu Islands. The process of disarmament should continue in the Japanese mainland and in the United States. International efforts for mutual disarmament and demilitarization are not entirely unthinkable in light of the mutual de-nuclearization going on between the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R. In a bit of sloganeering, one might say: Away from MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction); Go for MAP (mutually assured prosperity).

Conclusion

The enormity of the burdens borne by Okinawans for hosting the U.S. military bases is the primary reason why these bases have to go. In addition, there are global imperatives. The perspectives on East Asian security that perpetuate the U.S. military presence in Japan and Okinawa derive from an unfounded fear and mistrust of China. Friendly relations between the U.S. and China would deprive Japan's Anpo regime of its *raison d'être* and render the U.S. military bases in Japan and Okinawa unnecessary. It would be a tragedy if the U.S. chose to remain hostile to China to provide an excuse for keeping its troops in Japan and Okinawa.

Okinawa's Unique Community Centers: *Aza-Kōminkan*

by Ingelise L. Lanman

The *Aza-Kōminkan* is the smallest unit of the community administration in Okinawa to continue since the Ryukyu Kingdom. It is still the heart of activities in each district including meetings and cultural events along with sports and even marketing presentations. Social education takes place here making the *Aza-Kōminkan* central to daily life in the community.

The words *Aza Kōmin Kan* mean "central

meeting facility for the community" and are combined with area names; for example, *Aza Kadena, Kadena Town* or *Aza Shimabukuro, Kitanakagusuku Village*.

The *Aza-Kōminkan* emerges from the framework of Okinawan history. Nearby in the past and sometimes in modern times could be found an open space for public events called *Nā*. Usually the *Nā* was a holy festival place, therefore making the Okinawan *Aza-*

Kōminkan unique in Japan.

The *Aza-Kōminkan* appeared in Okinawa as early as the 18th century where it is mentioned in certain records. However, it may have existed even earlier. Historically, then, it was designed as an integrated organization to help manage and protect the tiny administrative area called *Mura* or *Shima* under the main office, *Magiribansho*, during the Ryukyu Kingdom.

The traditional *Aza* meeting hall had several different names: *Murayā* until the end of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1879, *Aza* or *Ku Jimusho* later from 1880 to 1972, and *Aza Kōminkan* after reversion in 1972. During all periods, the maintenance of the *Aza Kōminkan* was taken care of by all the residents of that particular community. Only those residents shared the land and buildings, not the government itself which had other municipal offices.

These community centers were located in a prominent spot often with beautiful big trees surrounding the area. These can be Ryukyu Pines or Gajimaru (Chinese Banyan trees) or

some other native ones. The *Aza-Kōminkan* would open onto small, winding streets not a major thoroughfare making it easy for the local citizens who would pass by daily. It was a simple wooden structure with a kitchen and hall with a stage. There were no enclosed rooms.

In modern Okinawa, new *Aza-Kōminkan* buildings may be built of concrete in the cities with many rooms. The *Nā* can be small or just an entrance way. The beauty of the simple wooden structures surrounded by elegant old trees is diminished but the social functions continue to take place just as they did in the past.

The importance of understanding the unique *Aza-Kōminkan* lies in the political structure, owned and maintained by the people of each small community, and providing an identity for that area for centuries. Wandering through a country *Nā* and leaning on an old tree gives one a sense of strength in belonging to the land, the earth itself.

Publications (XXVI)

We gratefully acknowledge the following gifts of publications.

Aharen, Shoichi (ed.) 1996. *Okinawa no kichi mondai* (Okinawa's Problem with the Military Bases). Ginowan: Border Ink. 314 pp. Y1,500. Volume 4 of collected public lectures delivered in the spring and summer of 1996 by various speakers under the auspices of the Okinawa International University. The editor leads off with a lengthy review of Okinawa's problems with the US military bases. Other lecture topics are: crimes committed by the American troops, anti-war/pro-peace landlords, right to peaceful existence, decentralization of government, land rents from the bases, Japanese politics and Okinawa's bases, the

Mutual Security (*Anpo*) System, the proposal for international city formation, and conversion of the bases to urban land use. Some lectures are highly technical.

Asahi Shinbun. 1998. "Tsurumi Shunsuke no sekai" (The world of Tsurumi Shunsuke), February 5, evening edition. After lamenting a dearth of statesmen and the decline of citizens' movements in Japan, Tsurumi refers to Okinawa as follows: "We find in Okinawa the ability to build the future. When Japan boasted readiness for a decisive battle in the Japanese mainland [in the last war], Okinawa was the only place that really fought. After the war, Japan abandoned Okinawa and prospered. However we see it, it is very hard to justify. What had we better do? We should pay reparations to Okinawa and ask it to become independent, while

transferring the American military bases to the Japanese mainland. We then ask Okinawa to become a pilot for Japan and to help Japan go out and join the world. By doing so, we may be able to have in common the world's anguish as our own. If we consider Japan as a piece of land we have on sufferance of the world, there is a future for Japan in the long run."

Hawaii United Okinawa Association. 1997.

Uchinanchu (newsletter), No. 60

(July/August) & No. 61

(September/October). 12pp. each.

Japan Echo. 1997. Vol. 24, No. 1. An article, translated from the *Chūō Kōron* of December 1996, offers some rumbling comments on the US-Japan mutual security arrangements and the US military bases in Okinawa. It expresses some sympathy for Okinawa's desire to have the bases removed. On the whole, the article defends the status quo, saying that the Okinawa bases should be seen as "a long term issue."

JPRI Critique. 1998. "Okinawan Activists in Their Own Words," Vol. 5, No. 3 (March). Undiluted views of three Okinawan anti-base activists: Mr. Miyagi Yasuhiro, leader of the anti-base referendum in Nago; Ms. Takazato Suzuyo, member of Naha City Council, and Prof. Arasaki Moriteru, spokesperson for the One-tsubo Landlords.

Justice. 1997. A special issue on Okinawa, titled *Okinawa mimei* (Before dawn in Okinawa), Current [No.] 03. 206 pp. The journal is a Tokyo-based periodical on the spirit, idea and technique of law. The Okinawa special commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of Japan and the 25th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan, not by jubilation but by sadness about the less-than sovereign Japan which is still under the [partial] occupation of the US military. The lead article is contributed by Okinawa's foremost activist lawyer, Kinjo

Chikashi, "50 years of the Constitution and the state of law in Okinawa." The rest of the issue is a collection of numerous short essays broadly classified into "In Search for Peace," "Continuing Occupation," "A Quarter Century of Lawsuits and Courts," "Toward a New Okinawa," and "Columns." Of special value are the articles on how Okinawans have used the law and courts in search for relief from harm done to life, safety and health by the US bases.

Meio University Library. 1997. *Hiroba* (Agora), No. 7 (December), not paginated.

A number of short essays by various faculty members on research activities.

Millard, Mike. 1998. "Okinawa, Then and Now." *JPRI Occasional Paper No. 11* (February). 6 pp. "Then" was 1967, when the author was shipped from San Diego to a small utility squadron based at Naha. "Now" is 1995 and on out. Between then and now, there has been the author's personal, intellectual, and professional growth. The latter half of the article is an illuminating commentary on recent geopolitical and local political developments concerning issues of the US military bases. Comments on Governor Ota ("Ota's Grassroots Federalism") are particularly insightful.

Miyakojima no kami to mori wo kangaeru kai (Society for the Study of gods and woods of Miyakojima). 1997. *Kusa no kanmuri* (Crown of Grass), No. 10. 4 pp. Substantial space is devoted to the revival of the activities of the traditional priestesses in Ikemajima.

Notre Dame Seishin University. 1996. *Annual Report of the Research Institute for Culture and Cultural History*, Vol. 10. Okayama. 190 pp. Contains three articles, in Japanese, on Ryukyu/Okinawa-related topics. Masaharu KATO, "Ghost Marriages in East Asia: Okinawa, Taiwan, and China." Manabu YOKOYAMA, "Frank Hawley and

His Editing of Kenkyusha's 'Simplified English Dictionary.'" *Idem*, "Arrest and Detention of Frank Hawley Described in 'Traveler from Tokyo' (by John Morris)." All text in Japanese.

Nozaki, Shiro (ed.) 1996. *Josei kenkyū no tenbō to kitai* (Women's studies in perspective and expectations). Naha Suppansha. 262 pp. Y1,500. 3rd volume of collected public lectures at the Okinawa International University. The first four lectures are on far-flung topics: e.g. Nobel laureates and women, images of women in English literature, images of women in American South, strategies of women writers in modernizing Japan. The fifth is on Okinawan women with reference to labor and employment. The sixth is a report on interactive activities of a workshop on how women are treated in school textbooks.

Okinawa International University. 1992-97. *Nantō Bunka Kenkyūsho Shohō* (Report of the Institute of Ryukyuan Culture), Nos. 36-42. 8 pp. each. Each issue features a lead essay, activity report, and a column "kuhwadisa." No. 38, for example, leads off with "Economic Independence of the Northern Marianas" by HIGA Teruyuki. In "kuhwadisa," an essay on "Possibilities of the Rise of Okinawagaku (Okinawanology)" by KIKUGAWA Hiroshi.

Sakihara, Mitsugu. 1996. *US Higher Education, Minorities, and Okinawa*. Okinawa International University. 54 pp. Japanese-language text of a public lecture.

Tokyo Okinawa Keizai Kenkyukai (Okinawa Economy Study Society, Tokyo). 1997. *Bunka tsūshin*, No. 65 (July), No. 66

(September), No. 67 (December). 4pp. each. No. 67 features colorful scenes from performances of Okinawan dances in Frankfurt, Germany.

University of Okinawa. 1997. *Chiiki Kenkyūsho Shohō* (Report of the Institute of Regional Research), No. 15. 65 pp. 500 yen. Five articles. Among them, the most relevant to Okinawa's urgent policy issues is Takara Mamoru, "Toward the establishment of Okinawa's new free trade zone" (text in Japanese). The author supports the idea of a free trade zone encompassing the whole prefecture. He criticizes an alternative idea that the free trade zone should be limited to a small area within the prefecture. Vigorous controversy has arisen lately between the proponents of these different ideas.

Yuimaaru Seminar (ed.) 1997. *Okinawa: Onnatachi wa Ima* (Okinawa: Its Women Now). Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan. 200 pp. Y1,545. Ten chapters by ten women. The overarching theme: How do women see Okinawa? Japan? The world? These women are angry, frustrated, dissatisfied, or generally critical about what they see in Okinawa, Japan, and the world. Is Japan our motherland? Okinawa, a keystone for whom? Okinawa's divorce rate, Japan's Number One: Why? Sexual violence, NO! Are working women still poor? The ocean is the mother of life, and what are we doing to it! What about endangered species in Yanbaru? Our own children? But Okinawa is not hopeless. It may even have a great future. We have stood up to be counted and to do something. The book overwhelms.

The Ryukyuanist, a quarterly newsletter on Ryukyuan/Okinawan studies, is edited by Koji Taira at the University of Illinois Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations (504 E. Armory Ave., Champaign, IL 61820, USA.) Subscription: individuals, \$10; institutions, \$20