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KICHI MONDAI (THE MILITARY BASE PROBLEM): A STUDY OF HOW AMERICAN BASES IN OKINAWA ARE PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS IN HISTORY

BY

MARK CARNEY

SUPERVISED BY

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ABSTRACT

Media representations play a role in how one perceives a particular space. The American media presented the American military bases in Okinawa during the period of American civil administration (1945-1972) as necessary and beneficial for the Okinawan people. Because the media linked the bases and the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) as dependent upon one another, the media considered the benefits brought to Okinawa by the existence of USCAR a result of the bases as well. Despite Okinawan resistance to both USCAR and the military bases, the press presented the Okinawan people as actually wanting the United States presence in Okinawa. The press represented protesters as the minority. As United States changed its policy towards Okinawa over the course of the existence of USCAR, the media changed the representation of the military bases to meet the new American policy.
THIS THESIS PROJECT MEETS IN MAGNITUDE AND QUALITY THE DEPARTMENT'S STANDARDS FOR HONORS IN HISTORY.

JOHN L. GORDON, JR.
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When one writes, talks, or reads about Okinawa today, it is virtually impossible to avoid the topic of the United States military bases on the islands. The military bases have become an integral part of the historical narrative of Okinawa and have been since their inception after the end of World War II. Throughout the period of United States governance of the islands, to the reversion of the islands back to Japan in 1972, to the end of the Cold War, on through to today, the media representation has helped to change the way in which the military bases are viewed and utilized within the historical framework.

What is presented here then is not a history of the actions and events of a people or nation, but rather, in a sense, a documentation of how peoples and nations have located the military bases within their own interpretations of Okinawan history. Also, while more common histories of the military base presence on Okinawa document the thoughts and perceptions of the governments involved (the United States, Japan, or Ryukyu) or the Okinawan people, little attention has been paid to the presentation of the Okinawa problem outside Okinawa.

I will, therefore, focus my history on the presentation of the debate surrounding the United States military bases on Okinawa within The New York Times. The New York Times has been chosen because it is considered a national newspaper, so the audience is large. Secondly, it is generally considered to be a prestigious newspaper, so the views and debates within it can be assumed, with a certain amount of error, to represent an average of what other media is presenting. The period of United States civil administration of Okinawa will be the primary focus. Though the United States’ military bases have remained in place well
beyond the reversion of Okinawa back to Japan, the period of American civil administration provides a smaller frame of time to allow for a closer examination of the media representation.

As Akio Watanabe notes in his discussion of the Japanese press over the same time period in *Okinawa Problem*, the media plays a large role in how public opinion within a space is formed. It is certainly not the only contributing factor, but it does offer a good idea of what the Japanese public is exposed to regarding certain issues and debates. Watanabe’s argument centers around the creation of the anti-base movement in mainland Japan and, thus, how the media represents the military bases and the United States as undemocratic, a colonial presence, and so on.¹ In the United States, many people only know where Okinawa is because of the Battle of Okinawa, and there has been no political movements in the United States associated with the Okinawa problem. The United States public could be said to be apathetic in many respects. The question then must be how did the press help to maintain or enhance those feelings of apathy? Okinawa was essentially an American colony for twenty seven-years. At least two United States policy makers referred in private to Okinawa as a colony: Edwin Reischauer, the Ambassador to Japan from 1961 through 1966, and George Ball, the Undersecretary of State for John F. Kennedy.² One might think that a democractic society such as the United States would have some apprehension over their involvement in Okinawa, yet this was not the case.

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¹ Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem* (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University, 1970), 150.
It is necessary to clarify terminology. Okinawa was once the independent kingdom of the Ryukyus. The Ryukyus, therefore, is the technical name for the entire group of islands. The largest island in the grouping is named Okinawa. However, when the Japanese made the Ryukyus a prefecture in 1879, Japan renamed the islands Okinawa Prefecture. During the United States civil administration, the United States again called the islands Ryukyu, but since reversion to Japan, the name was changed to Okinawa Prefecture once more. Thus today, the names Okinawa and Ryukyu are treated as synonymous. I am predominantly using the name Okinawa, but when discussing specific matters pertaining to United States policy during the period of the civil administration, I will also refer to the islands as the Ryukyus. Thus, the two terms are synonymous for my purposes as well.

Okinawa is mainly known to the American people because of the Battle of Okinawa in World War II. It is widely said that the battle was one of the largest and bloodiest of the war. The Okinawan civilian population suffered more casualties in the battle than either the American or Japanese armies with an estimated 150,000 killed of a total population of around 500,000.\(^3\) Despite the fact that the Americans were the invaders, the Okinawans typically place the blame on the Japanese and the Japanese army for the majority of the civilian deaths. Masahide Ota's essay "Re-examining the History of the Battle of Okinawa" is primarily aimed at comparing the roles of the American and Japanese militaries in the battle, and through this comparison, noting the extreme

contrast between the preparedness of the American military and its treatment of Okinawan civilians to the lack of preparation of the Japanese military and its mistrust of the Okinawan civilian population.

The relative good light in which the Okinawans held the Americans did not last for long, however. On April 1, 1945 Admiral Chester Nimitz suspended Japan’s authority over Okinawa. The Potsdam Declaration in July of 1945 left Okinawa’s status ambiguous. While Japan was to be considered the “islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we [United States, Britain, Soviet Union, and France] determine,” whether or not Okinawa was to lie within the minor islands to be determined was not made clear. However, in November of 1945, the decision of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff on the administration of the Ryukyus was that it was to remain separate from the administration of Japan, primarily because the United States already had a military government established in Okinawa prior to Japan’s surrender. Also, during the Battle of Okinawa, the American military propaganda directed at the Okinawans was meant to separate Okinawa and Okinawans as distinct from the Japanese. The Americans painted the Japanese as economic and political exploiters of Okinawa. During the battle, the propaganda was meant to serve to unite the Okinawans with the United States against the Japanese. Following the battle, the United States government persisted in thinking of the Okinawans as distinct from Japanese. While there was some debate between the Joint Chiefs of

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5 Watanabe, 20.
Staff and the State Department regarding Okinawa’s status, in the end, the military considerations prevailed.⁶

While the decision to separate Okinawa’s administration from that of Japan’s occurred in 1945, the decision to turn Okinawa into a permanent military installation was not made until 1949. Several things led to the United States making this decision. There was a communication from the Emperor of Japan in 1947 that expressed his desire that the United States continue their administration of the Ryukyu Islands. The Emperor’s gesture was “in exchange for the peace settlement [an end to the United States occupation of mainland Japan].”⁷ While the United States was not immediately interested in the Emperor’s offer, since the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not yet ready to end the occupation of the Japanese mainland, the offer granted the United States a way to maintain control of the Ryukyu Islands while not offending the Japanese government, which the United States needed as an ally in the quickly building Cold War.⁸ The coming Communist threat in China served to spur the United States to action in regards to the building of permanent military installations on Okinawa.⁹

The construction boom on Okinawa began in 1949. Permanent military installations were being built, and in October the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the “Directive for United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands.” General Douglas MacArthur issued the directive in December of the same year. USCAR for short, the new civil administration of the Ryukyu Islands established the long term presence of the American military. USCAR’s stated goals were

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⁶ Yoshida, 18-19.
⁷ Yoshida, 26.
⁸ Yoshida, 26.
⁹ Watanabe, 22.
humanitarian in nature: establishing a standard of living equal to that before the war, establishing a civilian democratic government run by the Okinawan people. However, USCAR also made sure that the United States military command was truly where the buck stopped. General MacArthur, in his role as Commander-in-Chief of the Far East, was the “governor” of the Ryukyus. The Commanding General of the Ryukyu Command (RYCOM) was made the “deputy-governor.” The Governor’s authority was supreme and absolute.\(^\text{10}\)

In the time between the start of the American occupation of Okinawa in 1945 and the formation of the USCAR, the island had become known as the “forgotten island.” It was where the United States military sent military personnel who were considered bad eggs, or unwanted elsewhere.\(^\text{11}\) The local population also suffered because of the confusion over the status of Okinawa, and many had to resort to stealing military goods, or selling scrap metal left over from the battle in order to survive.\(^\text{12}\) The adoption of USCAR was meant to correct many of the problems associated with the military garrison of Okinawa. However, while administratively Okinawa could be said to have begun to recover (more funds were given to Okinawa in the fiscal year 1950 than in any other year of the American occupation and the 49 million United States dollar total was double the amount for the previous year) the continued occupation of Okinawan land by American military bases remained a source of distrust and resentment among the

\(^{10}\) Yoshida, 42.

\(^{11}\) Ota, 204-205.

Okinawan people. In 1951 the beginnings of the reversion movement were formed. The reversion movement advocated the immediate return of Okinawa to Japan and an immediate end to the United States occupation of the islands.

The debate between the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff over how Okinawa should be treated politically and militarily was largely responsible for the United States delay in beginning construction of the permanent facilities on Okinawa. Even after the institution of USCAR, the Department of State remained concerned about the Okinawa situation. For instance, Robert G. J. McClurkin, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, worried about what effect the American military government of Okinawa would have on the “American conscience.” On June 5, 1957, the President issued executive order 10713 to deal with the worries of the State Department. The order abolished the positions of governor and deputy-governor, creating the position of High Commissioner instead. The High Commissioner was to be appointed by the Secretary of Defense after consultation with the State Department and approval of the President. The High Commissioner was vested with supreme powers in certain areas of government. He was able to veto any bill, promulgate laws or ordinances, annul any law, remove any public official from office, grant reprieves, pardons, or commutations, and assume “in whole or in part, the exercise of full authority in the islands.” The High Commissioner was not considered wholly supreme because of his requirement to report to the Secretary

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13 Toriyama, 403.
14 Toriyama, 404.
15 Yoshida, 76.
16 Yoshida, 78-79.
of Defense and in turn the Secretary of State. However, his powers in practice were virtually absolute. Also, High Commissioner “was the usual title for ‘the chief officer of a colonial territory or dependency’ or ‘the head of the British diplomatic mission (the High Commission) in a Commonwealth country.’”

The executive order served to provide the State Department a more explicitly defined role in the governing of Okinawa, but the order did not address the problems the Okinawans were concerned with. The military bases remained, and the High Commissioner’s powers were such that the thought of calling Okinawa a democracy seemed laughable.

While the State Department was concerned about the image the United States was projecting to other nations, particularly in East Asia, by turning Okinawa into what was essentially a United States colony, the aims of the State Department were never to eliminate or prevent the building of permanent military installations in Okinawa. The Primary reason for the United States presence in Okinawa was always strategic. The aims of the State Department were rather to project a more favorable image of the United States presence in Okinawa, in order to more easily maintain a valued military asset. While USCAR was set up with humanitarian goals explicitly stated (returning the economy to its pre-war level, establishing a democratic government), if Okinawa were not considered a key strategic outpost in the Pacific, Okinawa would not have had a United States presence after the war whatsoever. At the very least, the United States would have treated Okinawa as a part of Japan and equal with every other prefecture on mainland Japan.

17 Yoshida, 79.
18 Yoshida, 77.
In order to better understand the kind of position laid out by the articles found in *The New York Times*, it is useful to have something else to compare them to. In 1961 the Department of Defense published *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa* as a means to orient troops stationed in Okinawa. The *Pocket Guide* and its later revised version from 1968 are important to understanding the representation of the military bases in Okinawa because they exhibit the representation of Okinawa that the United States military hoped its troops would accept. The military’s preferred image of Okinawa was largely a product of United States political policy towards its relationship with Okinawa.

*A Pocket Guide to Okinawa*’s location of the military bases within the historical narrative is presented in three different ways. First, the Department of Defense presents an orientalized view of Okinawa to the troops. In so doing, it establishes the Okinawans not only as the exotic cultural “other” to the United States, but also as uncivilized, unadvanced, and unable to develop themselves. Second, the Department of Defense paints Okinawa as a key part of United States defense against Communist aggression in all of Asia, including Japan and Okinawa. Lastly, the Department of Defense attempts to address the discontent of the Okinawan people towards the United States. The primary target of the *Pocket Guide* is the land issue. In addressing the land issue directly, the Department of Defense was hoping to deflect any criticism the Okinawan people had against the United States policies. For the sake of the morale of the troops stationed in Okinawa, it was important that the legality of American bases in Okinawa was assured and understood.
One does not have to look very far within the *Pocket Guide to Okinawa* to discover examples of all three types of arguments, which the United States military uses in order to make its points. For instance, within the first page one can find statements such as:

But the Ryukyus have much to offer, not the least of which is the natural beauty of a varied landscape. And wherever you go, you will find the Ryukyuans friendly and hospitable. These winning traits of the people have earned for Okinawa such titles as ‘Land of Courtesy’ and ‘Isle of Smiles.’ Even the most glum visitor will enjoy the good-natured smiles and laughter of the Okinawans.¹⁹

Obviously, in many ways the military is attempting to sell Okinawa to its troops, but in doing so it is orientalizing the Okinawans such that they become the exotic, unnaturally happy “other.” Orientalism is used here as meant by Edward Said who states:

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident.” Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind,” destiny, and so on.²⁰

The United States fits very neatly into the category of imperialist administrators in the case of Okinawa, and thus the exoticization of Okinawa by the Americans is not only a means to pique the interest of the troops stationed in Okinawa, but also a means to construct the idea of Okinawa as inferior to the United States.

The orientalization of Okinawa becomes most obvious within the brief section of the *Pocket Guide* dedicated to Okinawan history. The history of

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Okinawa is divided into several sections, each categorized by which power was ruling Okinawa. Beginning with Chinese influence, moving through Japanese, and ending with America’s current presence on the island, the historical narrative is literally split into categories of subjugation.²¹ Some references are made to the “Golden Era of Ryukyuan history,” but those references are within the context of subservience to China. The implication of a nation’s “Golden Era” occurring under the foot of another power gives the impression the Okinawans are dependent upon foreign powers. The impression is one that relates well with the United States’ desire to legitimize their administration of the islands.

When dealing with Japanese rule under the Meiji, the Pocket Guide clearly portrays Ryukyu as the exotic, backward, and uncivilized other. The Meiji are given credit for introducing “well-developed cultural advantages” to Okinawa, such as “literature, music, sports, styles, and eventually radio broadcasts and motion pictures.”²² Not only are the Westernizing Meiji portrayed as a kind of cultural savior for Okinawa, but Okinawa is represented as a willing and happy recipient of these so-called great advances.

In so representing Okinawa, the authors of the Pocket Guide are laying the groundwork for providing positive reasons for the United States’ own presence in Okinawa. Clearly, the argument follows that the Westernizing influence of the Meiji Japanese can be furthered and brought to fruition with the presence of the United States. Indeed, in discussing the United States presence on Okinawa the authors state that:

In the short span of years since then [World War II], Okinawa has staged a remarkable comeback with the assistance of Americans stationed there

and financial and technical aid from the United States. . . . As a result of these measures and the hard work of the Okinawans, most Okinawans are far better off today than they were before the war. 23

Furthermore, because the United States claims democracy as the eventual goal of its presence in Okinawa, the authors portray the United States as a much more advanced influence than the Meiji prior to the United States. 24

When examining articles in *The New York Times* from the 1950s and 1960s, one can find that although the paper reports on more specific incidents in Okinawa, the overall goals of the articles and slant is fairly consistent with that found in the United States military’s *Pocket Guide*. Okinawans are again orientalized as the primitive and backward people who are benefiting from the United States military presence. While *The New York Times* does address such things as protests against the bases, military training on the islands and the reversion movement, those participating in these protests and movements are most frequently portrayed as leftist radicals or Communists.

On January 13, 1959 *The New York Times* published the article “Ryukyu Islands Enjoy Stability.” The article details the change from the former Ryukyuan currency of the “B Yen” to a totally American dollar based economy. While economically speaking, the dollar was certainly a stronger currency than the “B Yen” at the time, the designation of the previous Ryukyuan currency as the “B Yen” makes it blatantly obvious how its value was judged in relation to both the dollar and the Japanese Yen. Again, the Americans are the saviors of the Ryukyus, just as in the *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa*. The military presence itself as well as the change in the monetary standard is cited by the article:

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24 United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 34.
“approximately 75 per cent of the islands’ income [is] derived in some way from the United States, with direct sales to the military accounting for about half the total.”25

“Okinawa Key Post in U.S. Defenses,” published in The New York Times on April 28, 1955, also notes the benefits coming to the Okinawans because of the United States presence. Touting improvements to the island such as the modernization of its towns (in contrast to the rural housing in areas of Okinawa, which the article states are “still grass thatched huts”), the author presents the United States as a modernizing force, while also acknowledging the large amount of work still to be accomplished.26 The United States’ relationship with Okinawa is clearly that of a dominant parent figure, teaching a child. The article even contains a section titled “U.S. in Complete Control,” which details the benefits of the military bases being located within a space where the United States has ultimate authority. Many Okinawans were further incensed by the paradoxical idea of the United States being in complete control, while also espousing the creation of a democratic government in Okinawa.

Finally, in regards to “Okinawa Key Post in U.S. Defenses” it is important to note the author’s reference to the improvement in Okinawan schools. While it is true that the United States helped fund and build permanent typhoon proof school buildings for Okinawa by 1956, the United States ignored this need for at least 5 years after the end of World War II. According to Matthew Allen, USCAR did not make the rebuilding of schools a priority until the early 1950s,

and did not complete the rebuilding of schools until 1956.\textsuperscript{27} Clearly, within "Okinawa Key Post in U.S. Defenses," the claims of educational benefits gained from the United States are overstated when one considers it took eleven years to provide Okinawa with even temporary facilities for the schooling of Okinawan children.

It is important, however, to note a difference of opinion to Matthew Allen's interpretation of the United States response to the building of permanent schools following the Battle of Okinawa. Kensei Yoshida in Democracy Betrayed: Okinawa Under U.S. Occupation claims that education was a rare exception of focus for the United States military government in Okinawa. Yoshida notes that as early as May 4, 1945 playground facilities were built in Ishikawa and that an elementary school was also soon opened. However, while Yoshida believes his examples to demonstrate a positive sign of education development, they could just as easily be shown to display a lack of interest on the part of the United States. The largest and most in-depth example Yoshida provides is the construction of the playground, which, while enjoyed by children, was hardly an adequate facility for schooling. School supplies such as books, pencils, notebooks, etc. are described as having arrived from American charities in Hawaii. While this aid might have come from Americans, it would be wrong to imply that charity aid arriving in Okinawa is equal to the military government taking an active and early interest in education in Okinawa.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} Matthew Allen, Identity and Resistance in Okinawa (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002), 113.  
\textsuperscript{28} Yoshida, 34.
The orientalization of Okinawa in both the United States military’s orientation materials for troops and in the press served to provide both the United States troops and the civilian population with humanitarian goals of providing aid to a needy under-privileged people in the exotic East. Both the exoticization of the location and the stated humanitarian goals of their presence served to excite the troops and civilian populations of the United States about their involvement or stationing in Okinawa. Also, by appealing to a more humanitarian sensibility, the article was able to divert attention away from the issues that Okinawan reversionists cited as reasons for their opposition to the United States military.

While the United States military’s goals, as has been noted, were to orient its troops for their stay in Okinawa and to boost their morale for their mission, the military does acknowledge some of the most basic problems surrounding their presence in Okinawa. However, these acknowledgements downplay those problems and present simplified explanations for why the perceived problems are not really problems when viewed with a wide angle lens.

The most obvious problem with the military bases is the land issue surrounding them. In practically every text about Okinawa, the percentage of Japan’s total land mass represented by Okinawa is compared to the percentage of land in Japan used in Okinawa for military bases: as of 1996, Okinawa was .6 percent of Japan’s total land mass, while 75 percent of the United States military presence in Japan was based in Okinawa.29 Given that Okinawa is smaller in land

29 Withdraw U.S. Bases!: Appeal from Okinawa, Produced by Japan Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee, 1998, 20 min., VHS.
mass than the state of Rhode Island, this statistic clearly demonstrates just how much of Okinawa is taken up by the military bases.\textsuperscript{30}

In recognizing the land problem in regards to the military bases, the \textit{Pocket Guide} notes only that the military bases take up space, a valuable commodity in Okinawa.

United States military installations on Okinawa require considerable space, some of it arable land. When you consider that only 27 percent of Ryukyuan land is arable and how highly the possession of land is prized, you can easily understand why the land occupied by Americans has been a source of discontent.\textsuperscript{31}

The above quote from the \textit{Pocket Guide} ignores several other key factors in the land issue; the glossing over of these facts served to significantly downplay the importance of this problem in the Okinawa. The much larger and unacknowledged land problem centers on the means of requisitioning the land by the United States military. Most of the land was procured without consent of the owner, and later legalized by proclamation of the Occupation Authority.\textsuperscript{32} During the Battle of Okinawa, the United States military interned the civilian population of Okinawa in camps. When the people were allowed to return to their homes (sometimes a year to two years after the end of World War II), they found their land occupied by United States military installations. Many of these people were allowed to continue to farm their land and live on it until 1950, when they were forced off of it for the purpose of constructing permanent military bases.\textsuperscript{33}

Masahide Ota, in his book \textit{Essays on Okinawa Problems}, states that the discontent

\begin{footnotes}
\item[30] United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 5.
\item[31] United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 39.
\item[32] Ota, 143.
\end{footnotes}
of land owners was heightened by the fact that the United States procured the majority of the land its bases were located on by seemingly illegal means: in violation of "the Hague Rules of War that protect private property rights (Article 41) and prohibit confiscation and plundering (Article 46)." Ota does not give a more specific name for the international law that he refers to. However, the "Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land" ratified on July 29, 1899 and signed by the United States says in Article 46: "Family honors and rights, individual lives and private property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated." I assume that Ota is referring to this law, but Article 41 does not correspond to what he has cited.

While *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa* does not recognize many of the legal arguments against the bases as part of the "land issue," it does address some of these legal questions.

Since 1950, when military government by the United States ended, the land used by American forces has been rented from the Okinawan owners. The destruction of land ownership records during the war has made it difficult in some cases to determine just who owns what land, but on the whole the rental arrangement is considered fair by all concerned.

One must wonder what the United States military meant by "all concerned?"

While the land leases were technically held by the Okinawan land owners, the treaties that arranged for the forced leases were negotiated with Japan and not

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34 Ota, 143.
36 United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 39.
with the Okinawan people. And it is certainly no surprise that Japan considered the arrangement “fair,” given that Japan was able to keep residual sovereignty of Okinawa and keep the main islands free of the majority of American military installations. More importantly for the United States though was that under the terms of the peace treaty signed with Japan and 47 other nations on September 8, 1951, the Okinawans “lost their legal basis to press the United States for compensation for the use of their land prior to April 28, 1952.” Under the terms of this treaty the Okinawans were essentially forced to consider the terms “fair” by the United States and Japan.

The mistruths and omissions of the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the land on which their military bases were built are certainly no surprise coming from the United States military. The troops who were the audience for *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa* were being oriented in order to not question the military and to believe in the ultimate good that would arise from their presence in Okinawa. Also, the branding of the Okinawan population as so naturally friendly that their island was frequently called the “Isle of Smiles” and “Island of Courtesy” combined with the presentation of “all concerned” with the land issue as considering the arrangement “fair” automatically placed those who did not consider the arrangement “fair” on the periphery in the minds of the troops reading the booklet.

The intended perception of those who found the land arrangement unfair is explicitly stated in *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa*: the extremist left parties are the only parties that advocate immediate Okinawan reversion to Japan. Because the

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37 Yoshida, 41-58.
38 Yoshida, 51-52.
military bases remained when Okinawa reverted to Japan in 1972, it is easy to think of reversion and military withdrawal as two separate issues; however, within the text of A Pocket Guide to Okinawa reversion is considered equal to “immediate departure from Okinawa.” The Pocket Guide’s presentation of those who advocate the immediate removal of the United States presence in Okinawa as extreme leftists of course links them to Communism and socialism. As has already been stated, the humanitarian aspect of the United States military’s presence in Okinawa was to modernize the island’s facilities, strengthen the economy, provide better education opportunities, and spread democracy. Since extreme leftists advocated the immediate removal of the United States from Okinawa, they were portrayed as also opposing modern facilities, the strong economy, superior education, and most importantly democracy. Those who took issue with the alliance of the United States and Japan were portrayed as enemies of the state. After all, one of the primary goals of the location of military bases in Okinawa was to aid in preventing the spread of Communism throughout Asia. It does not take a gigantic leap to determine what the United States military wanted to say about those who sought immediate reversion to Japan when it associates them with the extreme left movement.

While the military, again, is expected to attempt to orient its troops in such a manner as to maintain the highest possible morale, one also finds a similar usage of the land issue narrative within the press, just as with the orientalization of the island and its people. The New York Times coverage of Kamejiro Senaga’s election as the mayor of Naha, the capital of Okinawa, in 1956 provides an

39 United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 41.
40 United States Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, 9.
excellent example of how the paper parallels *The Pocket Guide* in its message about American land use on Okinawa.

Kamejiro Senaga was the leader of the Okinawan People’s Party, which the United States considered to be of Communist orientation. Senaga’s election in 1956 was not the first time he had caught the attention of the United States government. Senaga had played an active role in the political landscape since at least 1952, and in 1954 was arrested and sentenced to two years hard labor for harboring two men active in the reversion movement who had been expelled from Okinawa. Directly after Senaga’s release in 1956, he ran for election as the mayor of Naha. While Naha was only one city, the United States government and media considered the mayoral election as a referendum on the United States Civil Administration. The Americans viewed him as a “Communist” threat, but the Okinawans saw Senaga as “a folk hero fighting for their cause defiantly and almost single-handedly against powerful foreign authorities.” Senaga won the election, but he would not be able to enjoy his victory for very long.

The election of a Communist in a democratic election under the supervision of the United States was very damaging to the perception of USCAR and its aims. The United States struggled to find ways to oust Senaga as soon as he took office. The Bank of the Ryukyus, controlled by USCAR, froze all financial assistance to the Naha government. Also, around 300 local business leaders initiated a policy of non-cooperation with the Senaga government. The

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41 Yoshida, 59.
43 Yoshida, 81.
44 Watanabe, 157.
C.I.A. also “began funneling money to pro-U.S., anti-Senaga politicians.”

Senaga was finally forced from office when General James E. Moore, the High Commissioner of the Ryukyus, amended the Local Government Act and Local Election Act. The first changed the quorum requirement for the city assembly so it could vote no-confidence in the Mayor more easily. Thus, the city assembly was able to simply dismiss him. The second law amended by General Moore prevented anyone convicted of a crime to run for office. Senaga, of course, would thus be disqualified from running again, because of his former arrest and jail time. However, General Moore’s actions may have only further strengthened the People’s Party, since the election for Senaga’s successor was won by yet another People’s Party backed candidate, Saichi Kaneshi.

Robert Trumbull, a foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, often wrote articles on Okinawa. Between 1950 and 1972 he wrote no less than 40 such articles that predominantly dealt with the “Communist threat” both within and without the Okinawan islands. One such article, “Okinawa: ‘Sometimes Painful’ Lesson for Us,” discusses the election of Kamejiro Senaga as the Mayor of Naha in 1956. Senaga was the leader of the Okinawa People’s Party, the left-most party in Okinawa. While the election of Senaga common-sensically suggests that those located on the far left had popular support, Trumbull wrote the article to maintain the representation of leftists as few and far between; the same view found in *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa*. Trumbull’s article reads like an excuse for why the Okinawan people elected a Communist: they were duped and did not

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45 Yoshida, 82
46 Yoshida, 82 and Watanabe, 157-158.
actually desire what Senaga desired. Trumbull’s primary goal was to produce an argument that would allow him to not contradict the thought that the vast majority of Okinawans understood the benefits brought to Okinawa by the United States. The argument also needed to maintain that Okinawans did not desire the immediate removal of the United States presence. Finally, the argument had to explain how, despite both these previous points, the city of Naha could elect a Communist whose election campaign slogan was “Yankees, Go Home!”48

In order to maintain the idea that Okinawans did not really feel unsatisfied with the United States military bases located on their islands, Trumbull presents the contrasting images of the standard of living enjoyed by the American forces and the standard of living enjoyed by the Okinawans. Trumbull’s argument centers on the fact that while the Okinawans enjoyed a standard of living much higher than that of the pre-war period they were embittered because they were constantly subjected to the sights of the highest standard of living in the world. According to Trumbull, “the Okinawan knows he is better off than he was before the Americans came. . . .”49

Also, Trumbull after establishing this fact, even blatantly states the view that the majority of Okinawans do not desire the immediate withdrawal of the United States: “the Communists and their supporters, however, differ from the others [political parties] in demanding that the Americans get out right now. Few Okinawans appear to be serious about this.”50 Considering Trumbull previously noted in his article that Senaga campaigned on the platform of “Yankees, Go

Home,” Trumbull obviously feels he has vanquished the notion that Okinawans actually support Senaga. Indeed, Trumbull implies Senaga’s victory is nothing more than “Communist-led exploitation of Okinawan grievances and frustrations.” Finally, in order to complete his argument, Trumbull presents how the Okinawans actually feel, since they apparently do not actually support Senaga.

It is widely said by Okinawans as well as Americans that continual agitation for reversion to Japan would abate if Washington were to say that abandonment of the Ryukyus would not be considered for a stated number of years. Many also think that Washington should initiate a thoughtfully conceived, long-range program for economic and social development to replace the more or less limited and uncertain operation that has been in effect since 1945.

Trumbull’s words are very clear in meaning: Okinawans do not want immediate withdrawal by United States forces, instead they simply desire a timetable for eventual reversion to Japan and, moreover, if the United States makes their development plans clearer to the Okinawans, the Okinawans would be less likely to be exploited by the Communists.

By using such an argument, Trumbull accomplished the establishment of the American presence as a benefit to the Okinawan people, but also made use of the same orientalist strategy previously discussed. The Okinawans, after all, were the people who had allowed themselves to become embittered despite the benefits they had gained from the American presence. Trumbull’s argument suggests the United States did not really do anything wrong, but instead, the United States was not clear enough in its actions for the Okinawans to have truly understood how good they have it.

One of the few exceptions to Trumbull’s argument that the United States’ actions had not been the source of the problem was his apparent belief that the United States should allow the Okinawans to elect their chief executive by popular vote. Until 1968, the chief executive was appointed by the deputy-governor and governor (after 1957 by the High Commissioner of the Ryukyus). For Trumbull, using the lack of democracy within Okinawa as one of his few points of contention against USCAR only strengthens his position as a forward thinking and civilized authority on the issue. Seeing that Trumbull often uses the first person plural when referring to the United States, it would seem that Trumbull’s attempt to place himself as a righteous person looking out for the interests of the Okinawans would also reflect on the United States as well. In some sense then, Trumbull’s stance against United States policy presents the United States in a better light. The point seems contradictory, but Trumbull was out-democratizing the United States; therefore, it was an acceptable point of dissension.

Though Trumbull feels the United States should allow the Okinawans to elect their own chief executive, very clearly he intended for that executive to remain pro-United States. Trumbull does note after all (presumably because Okinawa democratically elected a Communist) that Okinawa is “far” from a showcase of democracy.\(^53\) If Trumbull advocates democracy (which Communists are excluded from), then he must expect that democracy to be pro-American (at the very least acceptable to USCAR).

Trumbull also believed that a pro-American, non-Communist would be elected as chief executive because Trumbull presents the Okinawan people as eager to learn the advantages of democracy. The implication is that the institution of democracy, rather than the removal of the military bases, would solve Okinawa's problem(s). Trumbull, of course, already had established the representation of the military bases and the United States presence in Okinawa as beneficial. In fact, without the military bases and the United States, the Okinawans probably would be incapable of a democratic government, according to Trumbull's representation. Also, because the deputy-governor and governor (after 1957, the High Commissioner) would still hold near supreme power in Okinawa even if the chief executive were popularly elected, how much more democratic Okinawa would have become from such an amendment is debatable. Trumbull's view of the United States as the agent of democracy and social betterment in Okinawa also led to Trumbull's skewed view on the likely Okinawan reaction to possible reforms made by the United States.

By Trumbull's argument, Okinawans are represented as unable to discern the traps set by Communists in order to gain the support of the Okinawans. Because of this fact, the United States needed to increase, rather than decrease, its vigilance over the islands by being clearer in its actions, so the Okinawans could more easily grasp the greatness of the United States presence in Okinawa.

Trumbull's argument achieved all of the goals necessary in order to maintain the consistent view that is also laid out in *A Pocket Guide to Okinawa*. The United States military presence is established by both Trumbull and the

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4 Trumbull, "Okinawa: Sometimes Painful Lesson for Us," 225.
Pocket Guide as necessary for the exotic, backward Okinawans to develop both economically and culturally.

Senaga's place within the American military bases extends beyond simply his election to the Naha mayoral office. One year after being elected, Senaga was forced from office; again the story appeared in The New York Times.\textsuperscript{55} Atsushi Toriyama, in his essay "Okinawa's 'Postwar': Some Observations on the Formation of American Military Bases in the Aftermath of Terrestrial Warfare," has interpreted the United States role in Senaga's removal as an attempt by the USCAR to persuade the Okinawan populace that only through America and democracy could Okinawa benefit.\textsuperscript{56} Okinawans on the other hand perceived the outcome of Senaga's administration as directly related to the progress of Okinawa.\textsuperscript{57}

In the election to replace Senaga it became virtually impossible for the United States to ignore the discontent of the Okinawans. However, while The New York Times articles did report on the discontent of the islanders, at no time does the role of the military bases within the grander scheme of Okinawan history change.\textsuperscript{58} The military bases remain the key to not only United States defense, but also to the progress and development of the Okinawan people.

Even while the United States involvement in the ouster of Senaga is noted, many statements within articles about Senaga both before and after his ouster suggest Senaga himself was the real problem in Okinawa. On November 24, 1957 The New York Times ran the article "Red Mayor is Urged to Quit in

\textsuperscript{56} Toriyama, 412.
\textsuperscript{57} Toriyama, 412.
\textsuperscript{58} Robert Trumbull, "U.S. Seen as Loser in Okinawan Vote," 17.
Okinawa.” The article began: “the pro-Communist Mayor of Naha, Kamejiro
Senaga, was under fire today to resign from office before he ruined the city.”
Having already noted the Communist, anti-United States stance of Kamejiro
Senaga in “Okinawa: Sometimes Painful Lesson for Us,” Robert Trumbull on
January 12, 1958 argued that Lieut. Gen. James E. Moore “had to change” the
quorum rules of the Naha City Assembly in order to solve the boycott “by the
twelve pro-Communist members.”

These articles’ placing of agency with the “Communist” or “pro-
Communist” Senaga (and his supporters), is important because it did not critique
the United States administration of Okinawa. The articles’ critical judgment was
reserved for the “Communist Senaga.” Because the Communists are presented as
the cause of the problem, General Moore’s actions become a necessary
consequence, according to Trumbull. Thus, it also serves to deflect criticism of
the United States’ role in ousting Senaga because Senaga is presented as ruining
the city.

The presentation of those branded as “leftists” or “Communists” by the
United States as political enemies is certainly not specific to Okinawa and was of
course a common feature of the Cold War. Indeed, in “Leftists in Japan Exploit
U.S. Step,” The New York Times published a piece which bemoaned the fact that a
particular military policy (namely the storage of atomic weapons on Okinawa)

59 “Red Mayor is Urged to Quit in Okinawa,” New York Times, Nov. 24, 1957, p. 2 [online];
available from ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2003); accessed April 10,
2006.
60 Trumbull, “U.S. Seen as Loser in Okinawa Vote,” 17.
provided political fodder for the “leftist opposition” in mainland Japan.\(^{61}\) The article specifically referenced “the Japanese Socialist party, the leftist student organizations and the Communist-tainted General Council of Trade Unions” as all having used the atomic bomb storage issue to attempt to influence the Diet elections in mainland Japan.

Through the establishment of the “Communists” as the political enemy on Okinawa both the military and press are able to prevent the need to admit fault with the United States military presence itself, and just as with the strategy of orientalizing the population of Okinawa itself, the ultimate solution is not removal of the United States bases, but instead a reformed policy for Okinawa that would in fact increase vigilance and interest in the islands on the part of the United States.

Akio Watanabe, in his book *The Okinawa Problem*, published in 1970, analyzes the portrayal of Senaga affair within the Japanese media, primarily the *Asahi Shinbun*. Unsurprisingly, while *The New York Times* maintained that the United States was a necessary and helpful father figure assisting Okinawa in setting up its own democracy, the *Asahi Shinbun*, according to Watanabe, referred to the United States presence in Okinawa as “‘colonial rule,’” and using “‘undemocratic methods.’”\(^{62}\)

The plight of the Okinawan people as caught between two super-powers is further highlighted by the press coverage of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in

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\(^{62}\) Watanabe, 158.
1972. The coverage of protesters in Okinawa and frequently Okinawans in general was meant to orientalize them as unready and unworthy of making decisions for themselves. They were infected by the Communist agenda and needed America’s help to get back on the correct course. By the late 1960s, the pressure on the Japanese government to address the Okinawa problem had reached the point that Eisaku Sato, the Prime Minister of Japan, made the reversion of Okinawa a key point in his agenda.63

As it became clearer to the Americans that the reversion demands of the Japanese would be hard to deny, the Japan/American relationship took precedence over the military strategic desires of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A 1966 inter-agency study group, established to review the reversion question, concluded that Okinawa should be returned to Japan by 1970 to prevent “a series of events in Japan and endanger the very existence of the U.S.-Japan security treaty due for renewal.”64

The admission that relations between Japan and the United States took precedence over the military bases also symbolically made Japan an equal to the United States. Sato noted that the return of Okinawa would represent the end of the post-war period for Japan.65 The implication, of course, being that Japan’s status in relation to the United States would thus cease to be that of the conquered and become equal to the United States. Japan would thus take Okinawa back. Okinawa, of course, remained the inferior, exotic, oriental being handed from one authority to another.

63 Yoshida, 136.
64 Yoshida, 138.
65 Yoshida, 136.
In 1968, the Office of Information for the Armed Services, Department of Defense published an updated version of the *Pocket Guide to Okinawa*. The 1968 version was revised to reflect the changing United States and Japanese perspectives on Okinawa, as well as to update more administrative issues such as the change from the governor/deputy-governor to the High Commissioner authority in USCAR.

Some of the key differences in how Okinawa was now portrayed to the troops was a drastic shortening and modification of the background history of Okinawa. While in 1961 the history of Okinawa was divided into three sections (Chinese influence, Japanese influence, World War II) which did not stress any necessary cultural links to Japan, the 1968 version of the *Pocket Guide* eliminated the separate Chinese influence section altogether. Japan also is no longer depicted as a foreign power exacting allegiance from the Okinawans. Instead of citing Okinawans as having descended from the Ainu, an ethnic minority which is thought to have populated Japan prior to the arrival of present day Japanese, the Okinawans are now depicted as “proud of their ties to Japan, which are centuries old.”

While the original 1961 document did note a particular folk tale that claims an inherent Japanese connection to Okinawa, what is stressed more is the importance of Okinawa as an intermediary between Japan and China. While it was subservient to both, it was depicted as decidedly independent from both. The 1968 version places a greater amount of importance on the folk tale simply by eliminating much of the other information that had previously accompanied it in the 1961 version. The 1968 version also now stressed the relative unimportance

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of China in modern Okinawa in favor of stating Japan’s “establishment of _de facto_ control over the Ryukyus by force in 1609.”

Japan was still portrayed as the agent of advancement and the Ryukyus as the backward prefecture that was unable to adopt the Western-like Japanese economic and technological innovations. However, much of the rest of the information regarding Japan’s rule of Okinawa once it was made a prefecture in 1879 was removed. References to ethnic discrimination by Japanese against Okinawans also were removed.

In describing the people of Okinawa, the 1968 version enhanced the image of a necessary and historical Japanese/Okinawan connection. Each version contains a section entitled “Meet the People.” A comparison of the opening sentence of each version illustrates the extreme difference in portrayal of the Okinawan people by the United States. The 1961 version states: “Traces of ancient Chinese culture and philosophy can still be found in the Ryukyus, but the Ryukyuans are more like the Japanese than they are the Chinese or any other people.” Seven years later in 1968 the opening has been changed: “The average Ryukyuan resembles his Japanese cousin in appearance.” The vast difference in intention and meaning of the opening sentence is apparent immediately. The lack of any reference at all to the Chinese influence in Okinawa is of course immediately striking and fairly self-explanatory. The use of the word “cousin” to denote the relationship between Okinawa and Japan is more interesting. The metaphor carries with it implications of a genetic relationship, which of course

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67 United States Office of Information for the Armed Forces Department of Defense, 12.
69 United States Armed Forces Office of Information and Education, 47.
70 United States Office of Information for the Armed Forces Department of Defense, 13.
would imply a necessary ethnic if not cultural link to Japan. The term cousin also allows for some distance between the Japanese and Okinawans. The United States must portray the Okinawans as inferior and subservient to Japan in order to maintain an orientalized image of Okinawa while accepting Japan as a political and economic equal.

With the need to maintain some distance between the Japanese and Okinawan identities, it is important to note that the 1968 version has not eliminated all traces of separating the Okinawans from Japanese in identity. In fact, later in the "Meet the People" section of the 1968 version it is stated that "Ryukyuans have always maintained their own identity."71 However, in order to maintain the Japanese as superior to the Okinawans, some element of separate cultural identity is necessary. If the Ryukyuans were equal to the Japanese and the Japanese are prepared and capable of having a self-governing democracy, the question of why Okinawa needs the United States or Japan would immediately become an issue. Again "Meet the People" in the 1968 version noted that Ryukyuans were the "cousin" of the Japanese, not a brother or any other more closely related familial relationship.

While Sato did push the United States to get a deal done on reversion from the time he took office in 1965, he did not push for removal of the United States military bases as many Okinawans hoped would coincide with reversion to Japan. In Sato's meetings with President Lyndon Johnson, the two men made it clear that the United States' and Japan's security issues must be taken into consideration along with any question of Okinawan reversion to Japan, the implication being

71 United States Office of Information for the Armed Forces Department of Defense, 13.
that reversion would not lead to the reduction of United States military bases in Okinawa. In November of 1967 Sato and President Johnson made reversion a goal to be reached "within a few years." In preparation for the reversion, in 1968 President Johnson amended Executive Order 10713 to allow the direct election of the Okinawan chief executive. Held in November of 1968, the election led to the selection of Chobyo Yara, a long time reversion activist, as the chief executive of the Ryukyus. Yara was backed by a coalition that included the Okinawan People’s Party (the same party that Senaga belonged to). The other opposition parties in the coalition were the Socialist and Democratic Socialist parties. All three parties stood in opposition to the Okinawan Liberal Democratic Party, the party preferred by the United States. Yara advocated the immediate and full removal of the United States presence in Okinawa. However, unlike Senaga in 1956, Yara was not branded a Communist by the United States, and in fact, the High Commissioner of Okinawa took a cooperative approach to the new administration. The United States’ cooperation with Yara is even more striking since USCAR and Yara had had political clashes in the past. In 1954, in response to a letter Yara had sent Major General David A. D. Ogden, then deputy-governor of Okinawa, USCAR made it clear that Yara’s position was considered a pro-Communist one: “It is regretted that your continuation of reversion agitation in Okinawa can result only in confusion for Ryukyuans and comfort to the

72 Yoshida, 136.
73 Yoshida, 140.
74 Yoshida, 141.
76 Yoshida 141.
communists. Later the same year USCAR refused to give Yara a passport, which he had applied for to pick up a charity collection of 60,000,000 Japanese yen for reconstructing schools in Okinawa. However, as chief executive in 1968, USCAR suddenly had a new view on Yara. Yara's election, unlike that of Senaga in 1956, was interpreted by the American administration to show the desire for reversion by Okinawans.

Several issues were sticking points in the debate over the reversion of Okinawa. Whether or not the United States would be able to continue to store nuclear weapons on Okinawa, and whether or not the United States' bases on Okinawa would be subject to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which would require the United States to ask Japan's permission before launching assaults from Okinawa, were two of the largest issues to stand in the way of reversion. In 1969 Sato and newly elected President Nixon were able to work out a compromise on the issues. The Japanese government agreed to pay $685,000,000 to cover the costs of the reversion and to purchase civilian assets that the United States had been funding, such as the electric power company. In return the United States agreed to remove all nuclear weapons, but their possible re-entry into Okinawa was allowed if the United States consulted with the Japanese government and could demonstrate a "time of great emergency." It was also agreed that the military bases would be subject to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

Sato was able to reach an agreement without nuclear weapons and without a special exception to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in large part because of the Nixon administration's Nixon Doctrine. The Nixon Doctrine asked that

77 Yoshida, 58.
78 Yoshida, 59.
79 Yoshida, 160.
allies of the United States take more responsibility for their own defense.\textsuperscript{80} The Nixon Doctrine was introduced because of the failures of the United States involvement in the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{81} Okinawa officially was returned to Japan on May 15, 1972.\textsuperscript{82}

\textit{The New York Times} coverage of the reversion follows the change in tone of the official American policy. The reaction to the election of Chobyo Yara, for instance, provides a stark contrast to the election of Senaga twelve years before. Of course, some articles maintained a perspective on the election similar to that on the election of Senaga. "Problem of the Ryukyus" by Emerson Chapin, for instance, discusses the strain that the election of a Communist might put on United States/Japanese relations.\textsuperscript{83} However, the extreme change of tone found in an article such as "A Tough and Dedicated Okinawan," which \textit{The Times} published on December 17, 1968, cannot be denied. In describing Yara, the article never accuses him of being a Communist, or radical extremist. In extreme contrast, Yara is said to be "gentle, courteous, a lover of orchids and dedicated to the profession of teaching."\textsuperscript{84} When the article does broach the topic of Yara's political affiliation, Yara is described as a reluctant candidate who could not "ignore his responsibility for service in his native land."\textsuperscript{85} Yara is also described as requiring that the parties that backed him to "not try to influence his campaign promises . . . [and] not interfere with his conduct of the office if he was elected."\textsuperscript{86}

Yara is depicted as a likable man of strong moral fiber, an ardent nationalist, and

\textsuperscript{80} Yoshida 158.
\textsuperscript{81} Yoshida 158.
\textsuperscript{82} Yoshida 163.
\textsuperscript{84} "A Tough and Dedicated Okinawan," 4.
\textsuperscript{85} "A Tough and Dedicated Okinawan," 4.
\textsuperscript{86} "A Tough and Dedicated Okinawan," 4.
a devoted family man. Senaga was dismissed out of hand as a Communist working for the downfall of the United States. The differences in depiction could not be any more drastic. Furthermore, the Pocket Guide and New York Times both previously exhibited a tendency to automatically label all extreme reversionists as a minority made up of radical left-wing supporters. Yara on the other hand is described by an “American” as “a pure reversionist . . . he has no interest whatsoever in ideology. He just wants Okinawa returned to Japan because he feels that Okinawa is Japanese.”

Two letters to the editor from late 1968 note the debate over the relationship of the Okinawans to Japanese. "The Okinawa Problem," by M. D. Morris, gives a typical example of an argument for the total separation of the Okinawan people from the Japanese mainland. Stress is placed within the historical narrative on the militaristic nature of Japan’s incorporation of Okinawa into its influence in 1609. Also, the past independence of Okinawa is also discussed at length. The opposing letter to the editor was written by the former Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer. Reischauer distances identity from history, and places importance on the Okinawans’ personal desires. Okinawans, he claims, want to be Japanese. Reischauer’s conclusion, however, stresses the importance of Okinawan reversion to the United States’ relationship with Japan, and has almost nothing to do with Okinawa. Since Reischauer’s argument for reversion is based solely on relations with Japan, the implication of course is that

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without Japan’s influence, the United States would have no reason to hand
authority of Okinawa over to anyone else, Japanese, Okinawan or otherwise.89

As the former ambassador to Japan, it is not surprising that Reischauer’s
argument follows the American political policies of the time, but his article’s
publication in The New York Times would have been unnecessary previous to the
change in American policy toward reversion. For most of the American rule of
Okinawa, Okinawa and Okinawans were represented by the American
government and in the articles from The New York Times as separate from the
Japanese. The 1961 Pocket Guide to Okinawa stressed the historical narrative in
almost an identical manner as M. D. Morris in his piece to The Times. With the
changing political climate The New York Times had become a means through
which the new government policy can be voiced and disseminated.

Reischauer’s argument notes the importance of Japan/United States
relations over the strategic military desires of the United States. As noted earlier,
the admission of the United States that it needed to diplomatically compromise
with Japan on the reversion question was presented as Japan’s coming of age in
the global world. Japan became an equal to the United States. James P. Brown’s
article “Japan – From Enemy to Protégé to Partner,” written December 8, 1969,
presents this very phenomenon, even stating bluntly: “President Nixon’s
agreement to return Okinawa to Japanese administration in 1972 removed the last
onerous symbol of Japan’s subservience after its defeat in World War II.”90

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p. 46 [online]; available from ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2003);
Brown goes on to point out the emergence of the powerful Japanese economy as a reason for allowing Japan to remove the last “symbol of [it’s] subservience.” Japan, Brown notes, has promised to “play a greater role in the economic development of Asia, consistent with [it’s] own economic growth.” The presentation of Japan as a kind of child of America that is now ready to leave the house and raise children of its own is very obvious here.

While Japan was now represented as the equal of the United States, the Okinawan people continued to be represented as inferior to the Japanese mainland within *The New York Times*. John K. Emmerson’s March 9, 1972 article, “Troubles Ahead for Okinawa,” details the seemingly perplexing situation that despite the fact that the reversion had been decided upon and Okinawa was set to become part of Japan once again, many Okinawans now opposed the reversion. Since the Okinawans had advocated reversion almost as long as the Americans had controlled Okinawa, Emmerson discusses why he feels the Okinawans had taken an anti-reversion stance. Emmerson’s article continues to represent the Okinawans as unable to grasp political situations. He presents them as hopelessly blinded by the thought that their protests make a difference:

> since the bases will go – sooner or later and not because of Okinawan protests but because of American policy – it is the dismay over return to Japan which may surprise Americans who for years heard pleas to release the Okinawans from long servitude under American domination.

There are several key things to note about the passage. Emmerson presents the Okinawans as unable to recognize that there is no need to protest because, as Emmerson puts it, “the bases will go – sooner or later.” Next, the emphasis on

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91 Brown, 46.
the confusing action of the Okinawans who advocated reversion for so long, but now that reversion is upon them, do not want it. Emmerson’s article represents Okinawans as an orientalized, child-like people who cannot make up their minds and cannot see what is best for them. Again, the representation of Okinawans as an inferior people is consistent with both the original and revised *Pocket Guide to Okinawa*. 

After the reversion, articles such as “Okinawa’s Reversion,” which appeared May 15, 1972, further highlights Okinawa’s inferiority to Japan and the United States. The article adopts a self-congratulatory attitude toward the reversion.

Few colonial renunciations in history have been wholly voluntary or altruistic . . . . Nevertheless, at this moment of bad conscience over Vietnam, Americans are entitled to take some pride in the enlightened self-interest that has brought about the return of Okinawa to Japan.  

The use of the word “enlightened” raises several issues. First, the United States, of course, is being represented in a very favorable light. It implies also that the United States knows best what is good for Okinawa. The status of the United States as “enlightened” also excludes Okinawa from being able to know best what is good for itself. Furthermore, the author notes at the end of the article the irony that many Okinawans are “having second thoughts about the transfer from Washington’s suzerainty to Tokyo’s under the centralized system of Japanese prefectural administration.” Combined with the previous representation of the United States as “enlightened” there is only one way to interpret the Okinawan’s

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94 “Okinawa’s Reversion,” 34.
hesitancy toward the reversion: the Okinawans do not know what is best for themselves, since they cannot see the “enlightened” way.

The representations of the Okinawan military base problem in *The New York Times* during the American civil administration of the islands have been shown to follow the policies of the United States government. The parallel has been shown in comparison to both secondary accounts of United States political policy and also in comparison to Department of Defense published manuals for the orientation of its troops posted to Okinawa. Despite changing policies towards the islands, ending eventually in the reversion of the islands to Japan, the presentation of the relationship between the United States and Okinawa was always maintained to be a dominant/subservient one. The orientalization of the Okinawans resulted in the presentation of Okinawans as inferior, unable to help themselves, unable to recognize the “enlightened” view of the United States and unable to grasp basic political issues. The United States on the other hand is consistently rendered as just the opposite. It is shown as a parent-like figure helping along the helpless and vulnerable Okinawans. The military bases themselves of course highlight the relationship as America the protector, Okinawa the protected. Beyond just the military bases though, Okinawans were represented as vulnerable to Communism and radical left-wing propaganda.
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