"Tokyo Discriminates Against Okinawa"

The discrimination narrative has a historical basis in past ethnic discrimination against Okinawans by mainland Japanese and in differential treatment of the prefecture at the hands of the central government. It reflects perceptions that Tokyo still does not act in the interests of Okinawans and treats them as second-class citizens. Okinawans look to Tokyo to address the question of why US bases must be concentrated in Okinawa rather than elsewhere. They also expect Tokyo to afford them respectful treatment and offer them measures to mitigate their base hosting. The discrimination narrative is about Okinawa's complex relationship with Tokyo and, therefore, is not likely to be countered by any direct action on the part of the United States.

**DESCRIPTION** The narrative reflects aspects of ethnic discrimination and, more generally, Okinawans' perceptions that Tokyo sees Okinawa as inherently less Japanese and, therefore, expendable for the benefit of the mainland. Three historical grievances with Tokyo underpin the narrative.

- **"THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT USED OKINAWA DURING WWII TO SAVE THE MAINLAND"** People on Okinawa often describe the way the island was sacrificed by Tokyo during WWII, saying Okinawa was a *suteishi*, or sacrifice stone in the strategy game of *go*. For example, the Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau -- a public-private organization promoting tourism since 1996 -- produced a textbook for tourist guides that said that the Japanese military's strategy during the Battle of Okinawa was to create a "protracted struggle" that would "delay the US military's attack on the mainland." 45

- **"OKINAWA WAS LEFT OUT OF POSTWAR ECONOMIC GROWTH"** The term "hondo nami" (parity with mainland Japan) expressed Okinawan hopes that reversion to Japan in 1972 would close economic and social gaps with mainland Japan. In the 1980s, then-researcher at Ryukyu University and future governor Masahide Ota attributed dissatisfaction with reversion to Tokyo's failure to bring economic prosperity. 46 Okinawan media have long investigated the gap with Tokyo in unemployment, average income, savings rates, and divorce rates, according to OSC's monitoring of press reporting over several decades.

- **"JAPAN PERMITS HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS OF US BASES IN OKINAWA"** Over time, Okinawa's central historical grievance with Tokyo has become the disproportionate share of US forces based in Okinawa. A symbol of this "burden" -- as Okinawans refer to it -- has
been the figure that about 75% of the land administered by the US military in Japan is located in Okinawa Prefecture.

The narrative remains current through history taught in the island's schools and is reinforced by popular accounts of Okinawa's history.

- An academic leader on Okinawa told the Ryuky Shimpō that nationally approved texts were "often incomplete" (28 September 2010). In his history guide for teachers, he emphasized the theme of discrimination against Okinawans for their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences following Okinawa's integration as a prefecture in 1879.

- Contemporary Okinawan novelist and winner of the prestigious national Akutagawa Prize, Shun Medoruma, has described Japanese suppression of Okinawan culture and language in his war-themed novels. For example, the character Uta resists participating in a nationally mandated radio exercise program by refusing to give up Okinawa's custom of morning tea.

- Okinawan textbooks, museum exhibits, and popular TV dramatizations have featured Japanese attempts to stigmatize Okinawa's language. Educators in Okinawa Prefecture used "dialect tags" (hogen fuda) to shame Okinawan students into using standard Japanese in schools -- an example of contempt for Okinawa's distinctive language -- in the prewar period and, at some locations, in the 1960s as well.

WHAT'S IN A WORD? "UCHINANCHU" The discrimination narrative has historic roots in stories about ethnic discrimination, but today ethnicity is a point of pride for many in Okinawa. The term "Uchinanchu" is a word in the local dialect that can describe someone from Okinawa or someone identifying as Okinawan. It connotes pride in Okinawa's heritage and is positively associated with the island's identity. The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, for example, is an occasion for Okinawa's emigrants and residents to gather on the main island and celebrate their heritage. It has been celebrated every five years since 1990.
NARRATIVE IN ACTION. Local leaders, academics, and anti-base organizations most often charge Tokyo of discrimination when decrying the concentration of US military bases in Okinawa.

- Governor Hirokazu Nakaima went so far as to call Okinawa’s base hosting “close to being discriminatory” at a mass rally on 25 April 2010. His comment drew the attention of not only Okinawa’s but also national-level media for being unusually “harsh” (Yomiuri Shim bun) and “surprising” (Asahi Shim bun). Naha Mayor Takeshi Onaga told center-left Asahi: “If US bases are needed for the sake of deterrence, the whole nation should think about the issue. I think imposing bases only on Okinawa is discrimination” (13 May 2010).

- Professors and other academics on Okinawa publicly claim that Tokyo’s policy on US bases discriminates against Okinawa. Notably, Masahide Ota, former Okinawa governor and former Ryukyu University president, told a Tokyo daily newspaper, “Okinawa’s citizens regard the fact that Tokyo ignores their will [on base issues] as ‘Okinawa discrimination’” (Tokyo Shim bun, 14 May 2010).

FORMER GOVERNOR OTA KEY FIGURE IN SHAPING NARRATIVE

Born in 1925, Masahide Ota is a former member of the House of Councillors where he represented the Social Democratic Party, was governor of Okinawa from 1990 to 1998, and was a professor and then Dean of Law and Literature at the University of the Ryukyus. During the Battle of Okinawa, Ota was drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army and served as a member of the Blood and Iron Student corps.

- Ota strongly opposed the presence of US forces in Okinawa, and as governor in 1995 he refused to sign a document granting the Japanese Government the right to continue leasing land for US military bases.

- In a 2003 essay, Ota detailed what he called Tokyo’s "structural discrimination" against minorities, including Okinawans. Ota said that the myth of uniformity is “still maintained in Japan by excluding or ignoring differences as if they did not actually exist…. The over-concentration of military bases in Okinawa is a case in point.”

He has written many articles and more than 70 books about Okinawa, including The Battle of Okinawa, Essays on Okinawa Problems, The Okinawan Mind (Okinawa no Kokoro), Who Are the Okinawans? (Okinawajin to wa Nanika), The Political Structure of Modern Okinawa (Okinawa no Seiji Kozo), and The Consciousness of the Okinawan People (Okinawa no Minshu Ishiki), among others.
Okinawa's news media -- led by the island's two main newspapers -- draw heavily on the narrative of discrimination in making their case against the US military presence in Okinawa.

In 2010 and 2011, Okinawa's two main newspapers have increasingly argued that Tokyo's handling of basing issues amounts to "discrimination." A deputy editor for national daily Mainichi Shimbun and others have attributed the increase to former Prime Minister Hatoyama's acceptance in May 2010 of the Henoko plan for MCAS Futenma (29 November 2010). 66

The OSC-produced chart above shows the total number of editorials that link base issues to Tokyo's "discrimination" from May 2008 through September 2011. The spike in May of 2010 coincides with Hatoyama's endorsement of the US-Japan accord to relocate Futenma to Henoko.

There were few editorials in 2008 that discussed "discrimination" in relation to US basing issues, but OSC has noted such editorials as early as 1997. OSC has not researched editorials before 1997 for this paper because they are not readily available in electronic format.
In an editorial critical of Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba's 19 September meeting in New York with Secretary of State Clinton, Okinawa Times argued that "the excessive base-hosting burden borne indefinitely by Okinawa is nothing less than structural discrimination." The same editorial accused the Democratic Party of Japan of "using the national media to make deplorable threats that Futenma would remain unless the Henoko plan is realized" (22 September 2011).

The evening news programs on Naha TV stations also routinely frame their coverage of US military basing issues in terms of Tokyo's neglect of Okinawa's so-called burden, according to an OSC survey of programming. These news programs account for a major portion of Okinawa's limited local programming.

2011 INCIDENT OVER OFFICIAL'S REMARK ILLUSTRATES DIVIDE BETWEEN TOKYO, OKINAWA

In late 2011, a broad swath of Okinawan society reacted with visceral anger to remarks made by the director of the Okinawa Defense Bureau (ODB) Satoshi Tanaka. Tanaka likened Tokyo's legal options for forcing the Futenma relocation to a rape of the island, comments that evoked memories of the 1995 rape incident on Okinawa that led to Futenma relocation plans. On top of that, the defense minister stated that he knew little about the 1995 incident. The episode illustrates the extent to which Tokyo can be tone-deaf to the narratives and historical events that have shaped Okinawan attitudes.

Tanaka was reported to have said, "Do you declare that you are going to commit an act before you do so?" According to reports, he used the word "okasu," which can mean "rape." Tanaka made the comment during a drinking session with members of the media in Naha on the evening of 28 November 2011. Ryukyu Shimpo broke the story on 29 November. The defense minister sacked Tanaka shortly thereafter (Jiji, 29 November 2011).

DPJ policy chief Seiji Maehara criticized Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa on 3 December for saying that he had no knowledge of the details of the 1995 rape in Okinawa involving US service members. Maehara told reporters: "[Ichikawa] seems to be a bit too unprepared.... He should at least know about the history [of US base issues in Okinawa]; otherwise, he won't be able to address security issues and the relationship with the US military" (Asahi Shim bun, 5 December 2011).

Okinawan leaders, media, residents, and civic groups reacted harshly to the remarks, as observed in Okinawan and national media. Many said that the incident revealed a "discriminatory" mindset on the part of the central government toward Okinawans.

See the 12 May 2011, OSC Analysis, "Okinawa Dailies Highlight Tokyo's Pattern of Neglect, Discrimination" (JPF20110512324001) and the 30 October 2009, OSC Media Aid, "Japan -- Local Media Play Important Role in Okinawa" (JPF20091030455001001).
AUDIENCE RESONANCE The narrative appears to resonate widely with the Okinawan people. Although many Okinawans closely link the narrative with base issues, others link it to disparities in wealth with mainland Japanese:

- Center-left *Asahi Shimbun* published a poll that found 85% of respondents in Okinawa agreed there was "a gap (kakusa) between the Japanese mainland and Okinawa." Respondents selected the following reasons for the gap: "base issues" (43%), "income" (24%), "jobs" (10%), "education" (4%), "transportation" (2%), and "other/cannot say" (2%) (20 September 2010). 78

- Japan's largest circulation newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* assessed that Okinawa Governor Nakaima's address at a 25 April 2010 mass rally against the Henoko relocation plan for MCAS Futenma would resonate with "the people of Okinawa, who harbor bitter memories." Nakaima said that Okinawa's "excessive base-hosting burden" was "clearly unfair and close to being discriminatory" (26 April 2010). 79

- Users of *Okinawa Uwasa Banashi*, a popular Okinawa-focused online discussion forum, expressed dissatisfaction with then-Prime Minister Hatoyama for accepting the May 2010 US-Japan accord to relocate MCAS Futenma within Okinawa Prefecture despite his statements a year earlier to "at least move Futenma outside of the prefecture."80 Few forum respondents explicitly mentioned "discrimination," but those that did also claimed Okinawa was being treated "unfairly" and differently than other parts of Japan. 81

IMPLICATIONS Okinawa's political leaders and media have shaped the discrimination narrative to implicate the United States by making their central grievance with Tokyo the "disproportionate burden" of hosting US Forces. Fundamentally, however, the discrimination narrative is about Okinawa's complex relationship with Tokyo and, therefore, is not likely to be countered by any direct action on the part of the United States.

- Governor Nakaima, in a speech given in Washington on 19 September 2011, stated that the "first problem" with the US military bases in Okinawa is that "74% of the total land area used by the US military bases in Japan is concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture." He went on to criticize Tokyo for "not offering any convincing explanation to Okinawan citizens" about why Futenma must be relocated to Henoko (*Ryukyu Shimpo*, 20 September). 82 For Okinawans, MCAS Futenma is symbolic of this perceived disproportionate share.

- Former Okinawa governors Keiichi Inamine and Masahide Ota have long argued that the so-called "burden" of the US-Japan Security Treaty should be equally shared by the whole nation of Japan (*Ryukyu Shimpo*, 1 January 2011). 83

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6 For more, see the 31 March 2011, OSC Media Aid, "Japan -- Online Discussion Board Provides Window to Okinawan Audience" (JPF20110331324001)

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The discrimination narrative does not deny the security benefit of the alliance to the whole of Japan. However, messaging that explains the deterrence value of the US presence could have the unintended consequence of heightening Okinawans' frustrations with Tokyo. Moreover, skeptics of the deterrence argument will almost certainly continue to look for ways to undermine it, as the Okinawan media did after former Prime Minister Hatoyama publicly questioned its validity.

- Okinawa media reacted with indignation when former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told *Ryukyu Shimpo* that deterrence was an "expedient" justification for US Marines' presence in Okinawa. Hatoyama's remarks were the focus of several articles, editorials, and two special three-day serial columns in Okinawa's dailies during February 2011. The widespread coverage of his remarks probably increased the Okinawan public's doubts over this justification for the military's presence. 84 85

- In his weekly column "Uchina Comment" for *Ryukyu Shimpo*, Masaru Sato, a former analyst for Japan's Foreign Ministry and political author, warned readers that Tokyo might use China's military buildup to "strengthen its structural discrimination against Okinawa based on the theory of deterrence" and, for example, "push for the relocation of Futenma to Henoko" (*Ryukyu Shimpo*, 9 July 2011). 86
"We Are a Peaceful People Who Cherish Life"

The peaceful people narrative has been advanced by Okinawan political leaders and civic groups. It draws upon the lessons of Okinawans' experiences during World War II and the island's cultural tradition of cherishing life. The narrative retains its currency through the peace curriculum taught in Okinawa's schools and appears to resonate widely. The Okinawan perception that militaries are antithetical to peace seems to place the US military at odds with the narrative. However, some US messages would be consistent with this narrative, such as accounts of the role of Okinawa-based forces in regional humanitarian and disaster relief efforts. Okinawan media would most likely look for ways to criticize such a message, but the public might be less cynical.

**DESCRIPTION**

The narrative draws heavily upon lessons of Okinawans' experiences during WWII and, to a lesser extent, the peaceful legacy of the Ryukyu Kingdom (see also, Asia Crossroads). It is grounded in long-held beliefs, such as a reverence for ancestors and a belief that self-discipline and respect for life can create a peaceful and ordered society.

- **SEEK PEACE** The Okinawa Prefecture Peace Prize Committee says on its website for children that "We citizens of Okinawa seek peace more than anything else." The committee explains that the prefecture's pacifism is rooted in three experiences: the Ryukyu Kingdom's legacy as a "bridge to all nations" when "Okinawa fostered peaceful trade throughout Asia"; the "sad history" of the Battle of Okinawa when "200,000 lives were lost"; and the "present-day effects on everyday citizens' lives related to the large presence of US military bases." 87

- **CHERISH LIFE** The belief that life should be cherished is prevalent in many Okinawan cultural practices, including the reverence for ancestors. Okinawans gather at their family tombs in the spring to "make merry and strengthen their ties" as part of the ancestor worship festival "Seimei" (pronounced "Shimi" in the Okinawan dialect). Families also gather "to renew their kinship" for the three-day "Bon" festival in the seventh lunar month when it is believed that ancestral spirits "return to this world and commingle with the living," according to official prefecture publications. 88 89

- **CREATE HARMONY THROUGH SELF-DISCIPLINE** Okinawan karate, one of the prefecture's successful cultural exports, is founded on a philosophy that says individuals, by practicing mental and physical self-discipline and by showing respect for life, can create
a peaceful and ordered society. In The Essence of Karate-Do, Okinawan karate master Shoshin Nagamine says that "peace-loving" Okinawans developed karate as "a weaponless system of self-defense" that enables practitioners to protect themselves against "physical danger from without" and "passions from within." 90 Similar to many other Japanese martial arts, Okinawan karate seeks to be a way of life that teaches self-development, respect, and spirituality.

- "HAVE A CULTURE OF KINDNESS" History textbooks published in the prefecture note that Okinawa's "culture of kindness" or "culture without weapons" was documented by European explorers visiting the islands in the 19th century. 91 92 The Okinawan scholar Zenchu Nakahara inferred that the absence of words connoting ruthless killing in Okinawa's folk and religious songs from the 12th through 17th centuries indicated that the people did not have killing in their consciousness. 93

OKINAWA AS A 'LAND OF COURTESY'

Educators and contemporary entertainment in Okinawa help keep the narrative current and, in some cases, reinforce its linkage to US bases. 96

- A supplemental textbook published in Okinawa says that "Okinawans have learned that international conflicts are not solved by war but by treasuring life (nuchi du takara)." The book is authored by Toshiaki Arashiro, former high school teacher and current visiting professor at Okinawa University, and published by the Okinawa History Education Research Association (2010). 97

- A 1997 guidebook for visiting Japanese school children says that "Okinawans' insistence on the removal of bases is a heart-felt cry that comes from historical experience.

See also the 18 April 2011, OSC Analysis, "Okinawa Artists Raise Awareness of Military Basing Issues, Reinforce Pacifism" (JPF20110414324001), for more on how popular entertainment keeps the peaceful people narrative current.

Approved for Release: 2017/02/15 C06639870
Okinawans' hopes sing of the right to live in times of peace and are fused with the spirit of the Japanese constitution that renounces war.\textsuperscript{98} The guidebook is authored by Okinawa International University Emeritus Professor Masaaki Aniya.

- An online comic published by the Naha-based Interface Corporation on 7 January 2011, explained that "the Okinawan spirit cherishes and protects people; it is full of strength and kindness." Interface President Takehiko Yamazato said that by making the comics available online, the firm seeks to "make learning about Okinawan history, culture, and industry more accessible" to people in Japan and throughout the world.\textsuperscript{99}

- The Okinawa-produced television series "Ryujin Mabuyer" imparts cultural values to young audiences in the prefecture. According to the official website for the first nationwide movie version of the story, the heroes "embody care for others, forgiveness" and "the essence of Ryukyu Karate, which holds that 'one's fist should not strike first' and that one should not take an enemy's life" (2011).\textsuperscript{100} The masked hero fantasy series has spawned a movie, multiple DVDs, tour packages, and other consumer goods (Tokyo Shimbun, 22 November 2011).\textsuperscript{101}

**NARRATIVE IN ACTION** Okinawa’s political leaders and civic groups frequently tie their peace rhetoric to reducing the burden of US bases in Okinawa. Various civic groups take this further and demand the removal of US bases, saying that they are antithetical to peace.

- In his 2011 declaration of peace, Okinawa Governor Nakaima said: "We have learned that nothing can replace peace. With this as a foundation, the people in Okinawa have been steadily following the path of reconstruction and progress." He continued, "We will strongly call on the Japanese and US governments to significantly alleviate our burden, relocate the dangerous Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa as early as possible, and fundamentally review the US-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).\textsuperscript{103}

Okinawa's governors have issued declarations of peace every year since 1977 to mark the prefecture's 23 June Memorial Day for the Battle of Okinawa (Irei no Hi).

- Ginowan Mayor Takeshi Asato, in his 2010 policy speech to the city assembly, said, "I cherish our value of treasuring life (nuchi du takara) and respect the peace constitution.
I will put an end to the major problem posed by the Futenma base and build Ginowan into a city full of nature and peace." 104

- The Naha-based Okinawa Peace Activity Center organized a march on 15 May 2011 around MCAS Futenma with the stated purpose of "demonstrating that all Okinawan citizens are united in calling for the complete removal of any new military facility at Henoko and for removing Futenma from Okinawa and Japan." The center was established on 1 February 1993, and has a history of organizing peace marches that call for the removal of US bases. 105

- The Okinawa Citizens Liaison Committee for Peace in Okinawa has the stated objective of "removing the bases from Okinawa and [working toward] world peace." According to its website, "We believe in Okinawa's declaration of peace, which respects different cultures, values, and systems; and we are opposed to using violence and military force." 106 The committee encompasses 33 smaller Okinawa-based groups, and, according to Okinawa Times, plans to send representatives to Washington in January 2012 in order to convey its opposition to the Futenma relocation plan (19 October 2011). 107

Mainland Japanese groups also exploit Okinawa's peace activism, making it difficult to differentiate Okinawan and mainland activism.

- The Tokyo-based Okinawa Protest Advertising Action ran a full-page advertisement in Okinawa's two major newspapers and a national daily in May 2011. The ad called for removing US Marines from Okinawa and argued that Tokyo should use Okinawa's sympathy budget for reconstruction. It also prominently featured the Okinawan expression "life itself is a treasure" (nuchi du takara). 108

- The same Tokyo-based group purchased a full-banner English-language advertisement on The New York Times website on 21 September 2011, which was probably timed to coincide with two other September events: Governor Nakaima's visit to Washington, and a Noda-Obama meeting in New York. It linked to a full-page PDF file titled, "A Message from the People of Okinawa and Japan to the People of The United States: Call For Peace Without Dependence On Military Power!" 109
Okinawa's two main newspapers present themselves as leading advocates for Okinawa's pacifist ideals and use this assumed authority to oppose the US military presence on Okinawa.  

- *Ryukyu Shimpo* says on its website that one of its corporate values is "to contribute to the establishment of lasting world peace based on international good faith." Similarly, its editor's mission statement includes the goal of "contributing to the construction of a democratic society and establishment of world peace." In its opposition to the US military presence, the daily has called the presence of US facilities in Okinawa "an outrage" and "contrary to humanity" (18 September 2011).  

- *Okinawa Times*, in an article commemorating its 60th anniversary in 2008, closely associated the company's policy with pacifist ideals, such as "contributing to the establishment of world peace." In the past, the daily has warned against any pretense of military build-up in Japan. A 2010 editorial warned that Tokyo risked "turning all of Okinawa into a military island replete with US and Self-Defense Forces," which would prompt "an endless arms race" in Asia and "increase military tension rather than stability" (19 December 2010).  

**WHAT'S IN A WORD? "NUCHI DU TAKARA"** The expression *nuchi du takara* (life itself is a treasure) from the Okinawan dialect emphasizes the preciousness of life. It is probably regarded by Okinawans as an important strength of their character.  

- The last Ryukyu king, Sho Tai, used the phrase in a poem in 1879 when Japan's Meiji Government eliminated the kingdom's diplomatic rights and removed the king's title, according to history texts published in Okinawa. Sho Tai's poem reads, "The time for wars is ending, and the time for peace is not far. Do not despair. Life itself is a treasure."  

President Bill Clinton quoted Sho Tai's poem in his speech on 21 July 2000 at the Peace Memorial Park in Okinawa Prefecture ahead of the 2000 G8 summit. The speech got positive reviews from Okinawan leaders and media.  

- Then-governor Keiichi Inamine commented that the President showed an "understanding of the Okinawan spirit and also referenced our history. It was meaningful" (*Okinawa Times*, 21 July 2000). An article in *Ryukyu Shimpo* said that by using the expression *nuchi du takara*, President Clinton gave consideration to Okinawan people and showed that he was "well-versed" in Okinawa's history and culture (21 July 2000).  

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1 See also the 12 May 2011, OSC Analysis, "Okinawa Dailies Highlight Tokyo's 'Pattern of Neglect, Discrimination'" (JPF20110512324001).
AUDIENCE RESONANCE The peaceful people narrative probably resonates widely among Okinawans. In polls Okinawans say that they value empathy and cooperation, which are themes reflected by the narrative. Moreover, peace slogans and rhetoric are prevalent throughout Okinawan society.

- Okinawa Prefecture's most recent prefecture-wide polls in 2009 and 2005 showed that the public rates "human empathy" and "a strong spirit of cooperation" as two of the prefecture's most important strengths.  

- The 15 May Peace March Committee and Okinawa Peace Activity Center organize an annual march, which commemorates Okinawa's return to Japan and seeks "a peaceful Okinawa without bases." Marchers have numbered in the low thousands, but Okinawa newspapers and television routinely focus on the event, perhaps giving it wider relevance with the population.

Many Okinawan municipalities, including those that host US facilities, have peace declarations, sometimes in the form of ordinances.

- Ginowan, the location of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, says on its website, "We Ginowan residents, drawing on the painful lessons of World War II, declare that we are an anti-nuclear peaceful city seeking disarmament."

- Nago City's peace declaration reads, "We, as the world's first nation to experience an atomic bombing, and also as Okinawan residents who experienced disastrous fighting, hereby repudiate all war and seek the abolition of nuclear weapons that threaten the survival of the human race."

- Yomitan Village, the location of the US Army's Torii Station, says on its website, "Yomitan's residents have expressed their desire for 'nuclear-free' world peace."

Themes of peace and nonviolence are common in popular Okinawan entertainment, suggesting that they appeal to Okinawan audiences in particular.

- Okinawan pop group HY celebrates life and alludes to family members' experiences during the Battle of Okinawa in the song "Over the Times" (Toki wo koe). The central theme of the song draws on the Okinawan proverb "life itself is a treasure" (nuchi du takara), which is used to indirectly negate war and promote the value of life. According to YouTube analytics, the official version of "Over the Times" has received 400,000 hits and 86 comments.
Rock group Mongol 800 invokes empathy towards others to prevent conflicts and emphasizes the importance of the "Ryukyu spirit," which embodies nonviolence and a love of nature, in their song "Ryukyu Love Song" (Ryukyu Ai Ka). YouTube analytics found that "Ryukyu Love Song," posted by record label Highwave, received over 660,000 hits and 112 comments.

Young People May Be Less Likely To Identify With Pacifist Ideals

It is possible that fewer young people nowadays identify with pacifist ideals. Peace education advocates, for example, worry that young people increasingly lack awareness of Okinawa's history.

Okinawa History Education Research Association president Toshiaki Arashiro, in a Ryukyu Shimpo article, expressed concern that "fewer young people harbor a spirit of resistance or are aware of their dependence on bases." Arashiro's association, in conjunction with the Okinawa Teacher's Union, has conducted a survey of high school students every five years since 1995 to assess their "knowledge related to peace education and Okinawan issues" (19 June 2010).

Implications

The peaceful people narrative embodies values that affect the way Okinawans perceive the US base presence and interpret messages regarding the US-Japan alliance. The narrative manifests itself as a general anti-military attitude that is not directed specifically at the United States. US messaging that addressed the role of Okinawa-based forces in regional humanitarian and disaster relief efforts would be consistent with the general themes of the narrative. Such messaging, however, would probably be viewed skeptically by Okinawa's media, although the public might be more open-minded.

The Japanese Cabinet Office's 2011 survey of nation-wide public sentiment towards other countries found that 82 percent of Japanese report having friendly feelings toward the United States. This was the highest rating since the annual survey began in 1978 and the first such survey since the US Military's Operation Tomodachi humanitarian support to Japan following the 11 March 2011 triple disaster (5 December 2011).

Okinawa media, however, were extremely skeptical of US motivations in publicizing the military's support during Operation Tomodachi. The Ryukyu Shimpo said in an 18 March 2011 editorial that it "respects" people who put themselves at risk of radiation exposure but criticized the US military for "advertising" its contribution to relief efforts following the 11 March 2011 disasters.

Okinawa media have also portrayed some US comments on humanitarian missions as appearing to be at odds with the argument that US forces in Okinawa are necessary for deterrence. When reporting on a 9 October 2011 humanitarian assistance drill at Camp Hansen by the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, for instance, the Ryukyu Shimpo pointed out that the commanding officer said humanitarian support operations is the 31st MEU's...
most important mission but that the US Government and the Government of Japan have insisted that US Marines in Okinawa are necessary for deterrence (Ryukyu Shimpo, 11 October 2011). 136

Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) uses themes such as peace, family, and community to help explain its mission to a national audience. The fact that the SDF takes this approach suggests that the Okinawan public might be receptive to such messaging.

- The SDF’s official website banner explains the organization's mission using phrases such as "further contributing to world peace" and "peace is our job" (2011). 137

- In 2011, the SDF produced six nationally aired commercials and 11 web-exclusive commercials, according to its website. These recruiting videos focus on humanitarian support efforts. They emphasize family and community by showing images of SDF personnel helping the elderly and children. The commercials end with the tagline: "We need your strength to protect as many people as we can."

**JAPAN’S SDF EMPHASIZE FAMILY, COMMUNITY IN COMMERCIALS**

The SDF web-exclusive commercial titled "Good Father" says, "There are children as young as my son affected, so I wanted to help. I'm not just in the SDF; I'm also a father" (2011). 138

In the nationally aired SDF commercial titled "Smiling Day," the narrator says, "The more smiles we encounter, the stronger we become" (2011). 139