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US Military Bases in Okinawa: Are They Still Needed Today? Why (Not)?

(The US-Japan Security Treaty)

US Civilisation, Course 4235
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Introduction

In September 1995, the rape of a twelve-year-old Japanese schoolgirl by three American servicemen[1] shocked the world and brought to its attention the presence of American forces in Okinawa. But shortly after, the military bases faded once more from sight. Few people understand the burden placed on the Okinawans, nor do they know why and how these bases first came into being.

A Short Historical Background Towards the close of World War II, Okinawa was the scene of a horrendous three-month battle, later referred to as the "bloodiest battle of the Pacific war"[2]. As a result, US armed forces took the tiny island from Japan (which had colonized the small independent kingdom only a century earlier). Then, in the aftermath of the battle, US forces remained and turned the island into the keystone of American military defense in the Pacific.[3] When the Americans returned Okinawa to Japan in 1972, the original arrangement between the two countries was designed for the Cold War: America promised to defend Japan in return for stationing its troops there to ward off Soviet aggression and further communist influence in Asia.[4]

However, since the end of the Cold War, it remains unclear why the Americans should want to keep the bases.[5] In addition, the people of Okinawa, who have hosted the bases for five decades, are today actively campaigning for the military to leave the island.[6]

Why, then, does the United States wish to remain? Why not "let the US-Japan security relationship atrophy"[7]? This paper will first briefly sketch the present-day arrangement between the US and Japan (part one). Part two will then examine the main reasons the United States has for maintaining the treaty, whereas some often heard arguments against the US presence in Asia will be the object of part three. Finally part four will give some more details about the situation in Okinawa.

[1] DESMOND, E., "Rape of an Innocent"
[2] GIBNEY, Fr., "Eviction Notice"
[3] ZICH, A., "Okinawa: Claiming its Birthright", pp. 91–92
[4] THE ECONOMIST, 1997, c), "A sense of security"
[5] MORLEY, J., "Revitalizing the US-Japan Security Relationship"
[6] KUNII, I., "Yankees, get lost !"; GIBNEY, Fr., "Eviction Notice"; LE SOIR, "Anniversaire chahuté pour les bases US à Okinawa"
[7] MORLEY, J., "Revitalizing the US-Japan Security Relationship"

Part One: The US-Japan Security Treaty[8]

The security treaty between the US and Japan was first signed in 1951, then replaced in 1960 by a treaty that still applies today. In this later version, "(...) the United States of America (was) granted the use (...) of facilities and areas in Japan", "(f)or the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East".

The US has declared it plans to keep in the future about as many troops in Asia as in Europe: approximately 100,000.[9] As of June 30, 1994, there were 36,500 men stationed in Korea and 45,300 in Japan[10], seventy-five percent of whom on Okinawa[11].

The treaty of 1960 also specified that "The use of these facilities and areas as well as the status of United States armed forces in Japan (would) be governed by a separate agreement", and it is this last clause which has recently allowed a redefinition of reciprocal obligations and their adaptation to changing security necessities in the Far East.

The New Guidelines[12]

On June 7, 1997 were published the new guidelines to the treaty.[13] In comparison with the former version, which dated back to 1978 and had mainly provided for the defense of the Japanese archipelago against an attempt at invasion (obviously with the Soviet threat in mind), the new guidelines have shifted the emphasis of the treaty onto dealing with conflicts in the area surrounding Japan.

Japan would now be expected in a crisis situation to provide the American forces with logistical support (repairs and supplies, including fuel and oil, but short of weapons and ammunition, which it can only transport for the American forces), as well as to allow the use of its civilian infrastructure (airports and harbors), to participate in evacuation of United States citizens as well as Japanese, in search & rescue operations at sea, in mine-sweeping, and in possible sea blockades.

Various Japanese laws will need to be amended in order for the agreement to enter application, although the government believes the guidelines themselves will not have to be debated in the Diet (parliament).

[8] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan ,1960, *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America*

[9] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 6

[10] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1995, *Deployment of U.S. Forces in the Western Pacific*

[11] OKAMOTO, Y., "A Three-Point Plan for Okinawa", p. 13

[12] The Economist, 1997, d), "Can Japan be Asia's policeman?"; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1997, *The Interim Report on the Review of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation*

[13] i.e. *The Interim Report on the Review of the Guidelines* (...), the final report being expected for autumn 1997, but as yet unavailable on the Internet.

The SACO (Special Action Committee on Okinawa) Report[14]

Due to Okinawan hostility to the American bases (see part three), a committee was established to deal specifically with the problems arising from the presence of the bases on the island. Its report was published on December 2, 1996. Under the agreement, the US will return 21 % of the total land it occupies, on condition that the facilities can be relocated to other sites in Okinawa or Japan.[15] This includes abandoning Futenma Air Base, which is located in the densely populated outskirts of Naha, the capital.[16] The document also contains other measures related to noise reduction, the adjustment of training and operational procedures of the forces and improving the application procedures of the Status of Forces Agreement.

[14] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996, d), *The SACO Final Report*

[15] Le Monde, a),"Washington pourrait reconsidérer son dispositif militaire en Asie"; The Economist, 1998, a), "Americans in Japan: Lower profile"

[16] The Economist, 1998, a), "Americans in Japan: Lower profile"

Part Two: Why is an American Military Presence Necessary?

The Instability of East Asia

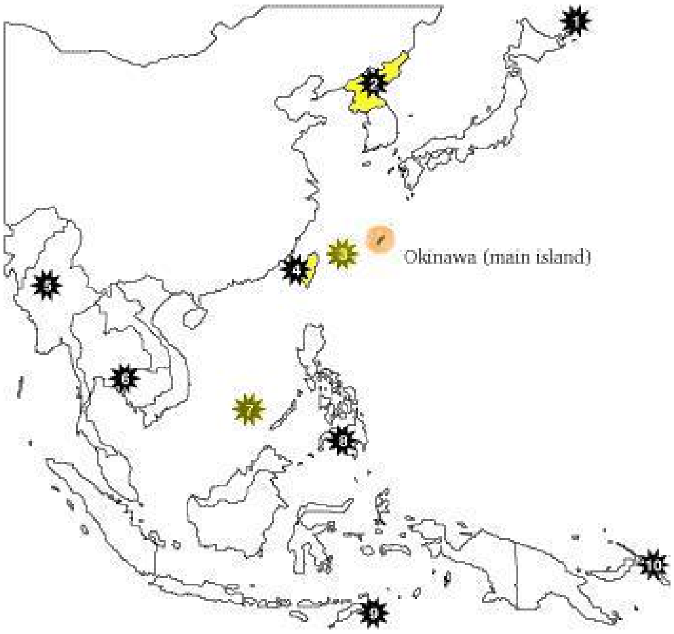
Although the Cold War is over, other threats have replaced that of the former USSR, and East Asia is today generally unsteady for a number of reasons.

The first, immediate, concern is **North Korea**. Its population is, literally speaking, starving.[17] Ever since the end of the Korean War, North Korea has been issuing belligerent threats to invade its southern capitalist twin. American presence in South Korea and Japan may have been the only reason an outbreak of conflict has been, so far, avoided. Today however, many increasingly fear that the collapsing regime may lash out in a desperate attack against the South.[18] The possibility was once considered that North Korea might be developing nuclear weapons, but this threat seems much less real today, although it is still waived by right-wing Japanese. Even without nuclear weapons though, and even if defense expert Shunji Taoka of Japan's Asahi Shimbun argues that North Korea lacks the oil and logistic backing necessary for a prolonged war, a war between North and South would still be quite devastating, given North Korea's million-strong (brainwashed and well-fed) army that might engage in kamikaze-type actions.[19]

China is a much larger problem. It is often considered the "preeminent destabilizing force in Asia"[20] because of its size, fast growing economy and consequent possibilities for heavy future military spending[21] (although Shunji Taoka argues its military capacities are at present very much declining[22]). But mostly, China worries western countries because of the unpredictable attitude of an increasingly nationalistic government that seems to want to "make China into a country the (...) world will respect"[23] and acquire the necessary "power projection" towards this aim. Moreover, the government's "One China" policy opposes it to the Taiwan-supporting United States, and China also still lays contested claims to a number of (potentially oil-bearing) territories in its surrounding seas. Mentioning in addition China's human-rights record and trade conflicts with the US, it remains to be seen whether a very recent improvement in United States-China relations can last.[24]

But North Korea and China are only two of the largest **uncertainty factors** in Asia. There are many **others**, as shown on the map below. The region hosts countries with

[17] BOGERT, C., "The Dying Fields"; MACKENZIE, H., "Among the Dying"
[18] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"
[19] HARRISON, S., "Une évolution qui inquiète Pékin"
[20] HIRSCH, M., "Here's to Spring"
[21] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 5
[22] HARRISON, S., "Une évolution qui inquiète Pékin"
[23] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 5
[24] HIRSCH, M., "Here's to Spring"



1. Kurile Islands, occupied by Russia and claimed by Japan.
2. **North Korea**, isolated, hungry and still technically at war with South Korea.
3. Diaoyu/Senkaku **islands**, subject to rival **claims by China**, Taiwan and Japan.
4. **Taiwan**, considered a rebel province since 1949 by China, which does not recognize its independent status.
5. Myanmar, controlled by a military junta which has ignored the results of a 1990 election.
6. Cambodia, where recent coups have left an unstable government and political unrest.
7. Spratly **islands**, variously **claimed by China**, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei.
8. Mindanao, where in spite of a recent peace treaty, Muslim rebels are still fighting for independence from the Philippines.
9. East Timor, a former Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia in 1975 and heavily repressed.
10. Bougainville, seeking Independence from Papua-New Guinea.

"Ten flashpoints in East Asia", map adapted from The Economist, March 14, 1998, p. 80

nuclear arsenals, is littered with boundary disputes[25], and also shows the fastest growth in military spending in the world[26]. In defense of the US-Japan security relationship, it is often argued that the US is at present the only country with a worldwide political and diplomatic influence capable of acting as a deterrent on potential hostilities.[27]

The Absence of a Military Structure for Asia

As an alternative to this stabilizing counterweight role the US currently has in Asia, some have thought of applying the solution which was found by western countries in the days when a giant USSR loomed over Europe: the creation of a multi-lateral, treaty-based security structure, such as NATO in Europe, which would unite Asia's numerous smaller nations and keep in check the major powers.[28] At present, East Asia has no such military network, only bilateral ties like that between the US and Japan,[29] but this may be changing.

[25] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"; CORTEN, O., *Notions de droit des gens*, "Le problème des frontières", pp. 17-19

[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996, b), *Japan-U. S. Security*, sec_b

[27] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"

[28] SMITH, G., *Multilateralism and Regional Security in Asia*

[29] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"

The Emerging ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF): an Asian "NATO"?

Recently, the first steps in this direction have been taken by ARF, an emerging institution (the first meeting took place in July 1994)[30] aiming at taking charge of East Asian security. ARF includes the ASEAN countries, the United States, Japan and China, but also the European Union, and this inclusiveness means discussions often seem vague or empty.[31] Success of the ARF until now is disputed: some argue it is clearly as yet incapable of shouldering defense, whereas others see its "great progress"[32] as a very positive beginning:

> "The ARF, in just two years, has succeeded in its aim to build a multilateral security dialogue that engages the relevant players, and helps to forestall possible conflicts in part through concrete transparency and confidence building measures."[33]

Nonetheless, it must be said that the ARF initiative stems from ASEAN, which tends to bias discussions towards ASEAN concerns. It is important now ARF be expanded into a more balanced forum for the entire region and to further the subregional dialogue between Northeast-Asian countries as well as with the US.[34]

APEC and US Economic Interests in Asia[35]

Other institutions exist in Asia which also have, in a more indirect manner, a stabilizing effect. Important to mention is APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), by its participation in which the US is also tied into the region. Indeed, US economic interests in the region are high[36] *Géographie économique* (68 % of total US trade in 1996[37]), and important to the prosperity of both the US and Asia. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan[38], sec_b, the (*United States) East Asian Security* (sic, i. e. Strategy) *Report* (EASR)[39], published in February 1995, states the following:

> "If the American presence in Asia were removed, the security of Asia would be imperiled, with consequences for Asia and America alike. Our ability to affect the course of events would be constrained, our markets and our interests would be jeopardized. To benefit from the growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, the United States must remain fully engaged economically, diplomatically, and militarily."

Others on the other hand argue that today Japan's trade surplus has taken the place of communism as a main US enemy,[40] and that the United States and Japan have

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30 MORIMOTO, S., "Fences and Good Neighbors"
31 The Economist, 1997, a), "Not so fast"
32 MORIMOTO, S., "Fences and Good Neighbors"
33 SMITH, G., *Multilateralism and Regional Security in Asia*, 1997
34 MORIMOTO, S., "Fences and Good Neighbors"
35 U. S. Department of State, a), *Fact Sheet : Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)*
36 DUBREUCQ, A.,
37 U. S. Department of State, b), *Fact Sheet : U. S. Economic Relations With East Asia and the Pacific*
38 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996, b), *Japan-U. S. Security*
39 Original document unavailable.
40 The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 7

become more competitors than allies[41]. And indeed, the new Japanese cooperation in security matters was not freely won, for the Japanese consented to the new guidelines on security only because these were bound to a number of commercial deals aiming at reducing American economic pressure.[42]

Traditional American values for Asia

Already since the opening of the country at the end of the 19th century, but especially since the American occupation force rewrote the Japanese constitution at the end of World War II[43], giving Japan the legal basis for a parliamentary democracy, Japan and America have increasingly shared values such as democracy and respect for human rights. Yet these are not part of Asia's cultural heritage, and are often still not respected nowadays in many an Asian country. Furthering these principles is also among American objectives in Asia. This is explicitly stated by Representative Doug BEREUTER:

> "We (the United States) must not neglect our historic commitment to the fundamental principles of democracy, pluralism, and respect for human rights."[44]

An Unassuming Japan vs a (Pre)dominant America

Another reason for the being of the American bases in Okinawa and for the existence of the treaty is that Japan, although an economic giant, is finding it difficult to assume its international responsibilities and to take its place among the world's military powers. There are also several reasons to this.

The Pacifist Post-World War II Constitution

The security treaty of 1960 makes all action by both parties "subject to their constitutional provisions".[45] Yet, the Japanese constitution contains in its Article 9 a renunciation to "war as a sovereign right of the nation".[46] Since 1945 though, these terms have been reinterpreted, first to allow for the defense of Japan's own territory through the creation of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), then to gradually extend what backing can be provided to Americans helping to defend Japan.[47]

However, the present interpretation still bars Japan from collective self-defense as understood by the United Nations. Whether to maintain the present US-Japan security treaty (for this to be possible, Japan must be able to do its share of the dirty work)[48] or to enable Japan to take its place inside ARF and eventually assume a bigger share of military responsibility worldwide, more change, be it further reinterpretation or straightforward revision of the constitution, is clearly needed. But as urgent as this may be,

[41] MORLEY, J., *Revitalizing the U. S.-Japan Security Relationship*

[42] HARRISON, S., "Une évolution qui inquiète Pékin"

[43] The Economist, 1997, b), "Revisionism revived"

[44] BEREUTER, D., *Congressional priorities in East Asia*

[45] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1960, *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security...*

[46] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 7

[47] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 7

[48] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Former National Security Chief Atsuyuki Sassa defends the U. S.-Japan Security Treaty"

great political will be necessary to convince the "pacifist" Japanese left, especially for revision, which would require a two-thirds majority in the Diet, plus a majority in a referendum.[49]

The United States: neutral among Asian nations and the "good guy" of the War

Then of course, it should also be mentioned that, although World War II was half a century ago, Japan's neighbors appear to remain suspicious because of past imperialist attitudes and fear a rearming of Japan.[50] Americans favoring a withdrawal of troops from Asia often argue that Asian countries should today "recogniz(e) that Japan is in fact the predominant regional superpower."[51] But when saying this, the increasing power of China must be remembered. The argument that the smaller nation's apprehension is due to the past may be only partially true, but it is certainly a diplomatically acceptable way to maintain the American troops necessary to an Asian balance of power, and avoid at the same time antagonizing China, as would open support for Japanese steps towards military independence.[52]

Concerning this Sino-Japanese rivalry, it must also be added that a withdrawal of the Americans in the next few years would almost certainly bring about an arms race, for China would probably then try to become the predominant military power in Asia, and this is something the Japanese could not accept and to which they would respond by military buildup.[53]

American boys bleeding for Japan

Part of the difficulty for Japan to assume more military responsibility also originates in the popularity of the present situation among the Japanese public, and consequently among politicians: the United States' military umbrella carries the advantage of keeping defense costs down and soldiers out of harm's way.[54] Unfortunately though for the Japanese, the limits of the arrangement appeared glaringly in 1991, when oil-dependent Japan stood by as American and allied lives were lost in the Gulf War.[55] Since then, there have been an increasing number of calls in America to end, or at least to rethink, the alliance.

[49] THE ECONOMIST, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 7
[50] THE ECONOMIST, 1997, a), "Not so fast"
[51] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Ted Carpenter: 'Close the bases in five years' "
[52] THE ECONOMIST, 1997, a), "Not so fast"
[53] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Patrick Cronin: 'Don't undermine the system' "
[54] THE ECONOMIST, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 7
[55] THE ECONOMIST, 1997, b), "Revisionism revived"

Part Three: Why the Bases Should Go

"Japan (...) was left to grow rich behind America's military shield"[56]

Of course, Japan helps in supporting the bases: it provides facilities and land, leases privately-owned areas, pays the wages of the Japanese nationals working on the bases and participates in operating costs.[57] The EASR states that "Japan supplies by far the most generous host nation support of any of our (the United States') allies."

Still, many now argue the "U. S. security commitment encourages Japan (...) to evade important political and military responsibilities"[58], and think it is time Japan took up a bigger share of military responsibility in Asia.[59]

By agreeing to the new guidelines, Japan accepted for the first time a supporting military role beside the Americans in dealing with regional hot spots, but it remains that the guidelines would still seem feeble in a crisis,[60] especially if American lives were to be spent in Asia while Japan stayed home and looked on. Constitutional reform and change in popular thinking are the first necessary steps, to which the Japanese are gradually coming.[61]

For a Better Balanced Security Council

If the opinion in Japan is today changing, it is also because Japan itself now has an agenda: as the second largest economy worldwide, Japan is presently seeking reform of the United Nations' Security Council[62] in order to make it more representative of the world... and in order to obtain for itself a Permanent Member's seat. But Japan itself realizes that if it wishes to have more say in world issues, it must soon start playing a bigger international role.

Chinese opposition to the American Presence

Due to the Sino-Japanese rivalry mentioned above, it is to be expected that Japan's starting along this road will not stand well with China. Unfortunately for Asia's balance,

[56] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"
[57] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996, b), *Japan-U. S. Security*; HARRISON, S. S., "Une évolution qui inquiète Pékin"
[58] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Ted Carpenter: 'Close the bases in five years' "
[59] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"
[60] The Economist, 1997, c), "A sense of security"
[61] The Economist, 1997, b), "Revisionism revived"
[62] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996, a), *Reform of the United Nations and the US-Japan cooperation*

China is not pleased with the American presence either. This has been especially true since the publication of the new guidelines, because of the important role these assign to America in a regional crisis. The Chinese seem to understand that the old US-Japan security alliance, whose previous aim was to contain Russia, has found a new meaning: containing China.[63] In particular, China does not want America to be able to use its bases in Japan and Japanese logistic backing if the Americans were to get involved in a possibly violent resolution of the conflict opposing China and Taiwan.[64]

[63] The Economist, 1997, e), "Rough waters"
[64] HARRISON, S., "Une évolution qui inquiète Pékin"

Part Four: Okinawa

Until now, this paper has mainly dealt with the pros and cons of the US-Japan security treaty in general. But what of the bases in Okinawa in particular? Their unpopularity with the Okinawan population constitutes a further threat to the security alliance.

Okinawan Hostility to the American Bases

Most of the military installations in Okinawa are located on the main island of the archipelago, occupying a fifth of its landmass.[65] At the end of 1995, there were more than 50,000 military personnel, including their dependents, stationed on an island of about 1 million inhabitants.[66] Such a concentration was, of course, bound to create problems, and the brutal rape in 1995 only "bl(ew) the lid off long-simmering discontent"[67] *Okinawa wo Kiru!* over the US military presence, which is mainly due to the nuisance brought about by the bases, more than to the crimes and accidents caused by the servicemen and their families.[68] This citizen opposition is personified by the governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Masahide Ota.[69]

The Importance of the Bases to the Economy

However legitimate these complaints, the bases also play a significant role in the Okinawan economy. Direct contribution of the bases to the economy may amount only to 4.8 %, but the actual impact of the bases on the Okinawan economy is much greater, and much more difficult to understand, than any statistics could show.[70] Moreover, Okinawa, which has the lowest income level among Japan's prefectures and an unemployment rate twice the national average,[71] depends heavily on government money it receives in return for hosting the bases[72]: it benefits from financial compensations,[73] from many programs against military exercises and aircraft noise as well as against damage done to nature by live-fire exercises, and in addition from many public works projects.

[65] ZICH, A., "Okinawa: Claiming its Birthright", p. 92
[66] OTSUKA, S., "Islands Apart", p. 10
[67] LEWIS, D.,
[68] The Economist, 1996, d), "America driven into the sea"
[69] PEDROLETTI, Br., "Le premier ministre japonais désamorce la crise sur les bases américaines d'Okinawa"
[70] OTSUKA, S., "Islands Apart", pp. 11-12
[71] The Economist, 1996, c), "Tiny plots"; PEDROLETTI, Br., "Le premier ministre japonais désamorce la crise... Okinawa"
[72] The Economist, 1998, a), "Americans in Japan: Lower profile"
[73] OTSUKA, S., "Islands Apart", p. 12

A Post-Base Era?

Though the Okinawans obviously want the bases scaled back, the prefecture economy is clearly not ready for them to go. A replacing economic structure must first be set up. Extra help from the government, in addition to that which Okinawa already receives to try to bring it up to the economic level of the mainland, is needed. Land for development is desperately necessary, and could come from the scaling back of the bases. The Okinawans also want Naha to become a free-trade zone, they want a new port, and more promotion of the island's burgeoning tourism.[74]

Hostility towards ... Tokyo

Aside from these economic considerations, it is also worth mentioning that the Okinawan resentment is not so much directed at the Americans themselves, as at the central government in Tokyo.[75] Indeed, the Okinawans are a people with a distinct language and culture, which the Japanese have ever since the colonization sought to assimilate.[76] At the end of World War II, the Battle of Okinawa, its slaughters and mass suicides, were the results of a deception of the Okinawans by the Japanese.[77] Thus today's fight to rid their island of the bases is for many Okinawans also a fight for the recognition of their separateness and of their heritage.[78]

Is a Relocation of the Bases Possible?

Not only is the load on Okinawa very heavy, it is also disproportionate compared to the whole of the Japanese territory. Even with the close of some of the bases and a partial return of land as planned in the SACO report, the basic inequality between Okinawa and mainland Japan will remain. In addition, despite base closings, troop count is unlikely to shrink.[79]

Moving the bases within Japan will prove difficult for three reasons. First, Okinawa is Japan's southernmost outpost and lies at the door to potential conflict areas in the Far East, mainland Japan being much more northern. Then of course, there would surely be citizen opposition in any location appointed to host the bases, and third, the heavy costs of moving such complex installations must be taken into account.[80]

Other countries in Asia have also been considered, but Okinawa is, after all, ideally located for American purposes in Asia. The US has already left the Philippines.[81] The Korean Peninsula is a possibility,[82] but if the issue of North Korea were to be settled, it is unlikely a unified Korea would ask the US forces to stay on, although the ensuing Chinese hegemony would be very undesirable for America. If the Americans were to leave Okinawa, "The real American front line may one day be no farther west than Hawaii." [83]

[74] The Economist, 1996, c), "Tiny plots"; OKAMOTO, Y., "A Three-Point Plan for Okinawa", p. 15
[75] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*
[76] ZICH, A., "Okinawa: Claiming its Birthright", p. 93
[77] Les inédits du cinéma, "Level Five"
[78] ZICH, A., "Okinawa: Claiming its Birthright"
[79] GIBNEY, Fr., "Eviction Notice"
[80] OKAMOTO, Y., "A Three-Point Plan for Okinawa", p. 14
[81] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 6
[82] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Patrick Cronin: 'Don't undermine the system"'
[83] The Economist, 1996, a), "Between the dragon and the deep blue sea", p. 6

Conclusion: The US, Asia's Policeman?

Who Should be Responsible for Asian Security?

> "This Treaty shall remain in force until in the opinion of the Governments of Japan and the United States of America there shall have come into force such United Nations arrangements as will satisfactorily provide for the maintenance of international peace and security in the Japan area."[84]

By agreeing to these words in its security treaty with Japan, the US acknowledged that ensuring world security is not its own role, but that of the United Nations. During the days of the Cold War, when the opposition between veto-holding US and USSR paralyzed the Security Council, the US's attitude may have been a necessary one. But today's world is different from what it was less than a decade ago. Other balances are emerging in Asia which could be better managed through a military network such as that the ARF is seeking to set up.

One might question whether justifying US military presence in Asia by its economic interests or by its commitment to particular values should not be considered as a brand of economic and cultural imperialism. And this argument in turn might be countered by saying that as long as Asian nations agree because they also get something out of the deal, the present situation can be preserved. However, when considering those values many in the US say they want to further, I wonder whether this situation is not unhealthy and whether it is compatible with such principles as noninterference into other nations' policies. US economic interests in Asia could be well served by its membership in APEC and the US can continue to help in security matters by participating in ARF.

Moreover, growing calls in the United States for reducing security commitment in Asia cannot be ignored: "We (the United States) should be seeking a rough balance of power in Asia, with Japan as the predominant regional superpower. The United States should have essentially a supporting role."[85] Of course Japan wants the US to stay. But because it is in Japan's interest to benefit from a US security umbrella does not mean the US should necessarily accept to provide it. "Ultimately, the overall objective of U. S. national policy ought to be making Japan more responsible."[86]

On the other hand, the right timing is essential if an eventual reduction of the United States implication in Asian defense is to be successful. The general instability in the region must be taken into account. Where some wish the bases to be closed within five to seven years[87], I agree with others[88] that this seems a little hasty.

But if Asian security matters are, ultimately, to come to lie mainly in Asian hands, with US support at the back, the recent agreement between the US and Japan, which will bring about a partial pullout of forces from Okinawa and their relocation more

[84] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1960, *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security...*
[85] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Ted Carpenter: 'Close the bases in five years' "
[86] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Patrick Cronin: 'Don't undermine the system' "
[87] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*, "Ted Carpenter: 'Close the bases in five years' "
[88] LEWIS, D., *Okinawa wo Kiru!*; "Patrick Cronin: 'Don't undermine the system' "

evenly throughout Japan, should be a mere beginning. Rethinking of the alliance must continue to include all Asia. Most importantly the Asian initiative to shoulder its own defense should be encouraged, with the US considering itself a "a first among equals – no more and no less"[89], and a partner of the whole of Asia, instead solely of Japan.

[89] MANNING, R., "Defining a New Partnership for the 21st Century"

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