A Master Narratives Approach to Understanding
Base Politics in Okinawa

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**OVERVIEW**
- Key Findings ................................................................. 1
- Summary of the Narratives ............................................. 3
- Map of Okinawa Prefecture, Surrounding Region .............. 4
- Population Density Near US Bases on Okinawa .................. 5
- How This Guide Is Organized .......................................... 6

**OKINAWA’S MASTER NARRATIVES**
- Victimization ................................................................. 7
- Discrimination ............................................................... 14
- Peaceful People ............................................................. 21
- Beautiful Island ............................................................ 29
- Asia Crossroads ............................................................. 36

**SOURCES & ENDNOTES** ................................................. 41
Japan -- A Master Narratives Approach to Understanding Base Politics in Okinawa

The following guide uses a "master narratives" approach to help explain Okinawan attitudes and behavior regarding the US military presence there. Master narratives are the historically grounded stories that reflect a community's identity and experiences, or explain its hopes, aspirations, and concerns. The Open Source Center (OSC) identified five such narratives for Okinawa -- some of which are more deep-seated than others, and most of which present some degree of challenge to US policymakers. An understanding of how these narratives function should help analysts put Okinawan attitudes into context and help communicators plan messaging and outreach efforts.

In order to relate the essence of each narrative, OSC gave them descriptive names and drew first person statements that capture their content. These narrative portraits are summarized with context and implications for US interests in the table on page three and discussed in detail in this guide. The narratives -- listed in the order they appear -- are: Victimization, Discrimination, Peaceful People, Beautiful Island, and Asia Crossroads.

METHODOLOGY NOTE This guide draws upon the Master Narratives methodology recently developed by the Open Source Center to uncover five master narratives that help explain attitudes and behavior pertaining to base issues in Okinawa. It explains the historical basis and current use of the narratives as well as their implications for US policy. Research for the guide was based on a review of primary and secondary sources -- including media treatment of busing issues, education materials, memorial sites, museums, literature, and popular entertainment.

KEY FINDINGS The narratives of Victimization and Discrimination present the greatest challenges for the United States when it comes to messaging and alliance management. The narratives are rooted in traumatic or degrading experiences in the past that are widely memorialized and taught on the island. Local politicians, opinion leaders, and media often frame their messages in the context of these narratives, keeping them current in the Okinawan public's view.

- The narrative of Victimization has a historical foundation in Okinawans' memories of WWII and the US occupation of Okinawa. Okinawans' sense of injustice and perceptions of helplessness over ongoing incidents and accidents involving US military personnel on the island contribute to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's "burdens" in hosting US military bases should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Attempts to counter this narrative by reframing the discourse -- such as focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden -- are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

- The narrative of Discrimination has a historical basis in past ethnic discrimination against Okinawans by mainland Japanese and 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

* For more on the methodology, see "Master Narratives Methodology Document, 23 January 2011."
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. Fundamentally, the discrimination narrative is about Okinawa's complex relationship with Tokyo, and it is not likely to be countered by any direct action on the part of the United States. Indirectly, US statements would probably have an impact to the extent that they converge with Tokyo's policies and Tokyo's approach in seeking the Okinawans' understanding of baving issues.

The narratives **Peaceful People, Beautiful Island**, and **Asia Crossroads** capture values that affect the way Okinawans perceive the US base presence and interpret messages regarding the US-Japan alliance.

- The **Peaceful People** narrative draws upon the lessons of Okinawans' World War II experiences and a cultural tradition of cherishing life. Okinawans claim a special moral authority within the broadly pacifist culture of Japan. They attribute this authority to the island's experience as the site of the only major land battle fought on Japanese soil during the war and also to long-held beliefs, such as ancestor worship and self-discipline. The peaceful people narrative manifests itself as a general anti-military attitude that is not directed specifically at the United States. US messaging that addresses the role of Okinawa-based forces in regional humanitarian and disaster relief efforts would be consistent with the general themes of the narrative. Okinawan media would most likely look for ways to criticize such a message, but the public might be less cynical about it.

- The **Beautiful Island** narrative is relatively recent but widely shared. Okinawans see their natural environment as a source of pride, and both traditional and ecotourism rely on the natural environment to attract visitors. Okinawans will probably want any new base construction projects to be undertaken with high regard for the environment. Likewise, they will want returned US base land to undergo thorough environmental remediation measures. In this respect, Okinawan support for environmental preservation presents challenges to alliance managers who seek to minimize the negative impact of the bases. US actions demonstrating a policy of good stewardship of base land, such as quick and transparent response to accidents that could be detrimental to the environment, could help in this regard. US messaging regarding such a policy would possibly be viewed skeptically unless well supported by actions and examples.

- The **Asia Crossroads** narrative has a weak historical basis in the distant past. It represents an aspiration, primarily of Okinawan leaders, to define a future vision of the prefecture as a crossroads in a dynamic, economically linked region. In this vision, US bases are implicitly presented as obstacles to a prosperous future. This narrative probably has limited resonance with the public now to the extent that it describes the origins of their distinct culture. It could gain traction among base opponents if Okinawa becomes more successful in diversifying its economy, and US bases are seen as an impediment to such efforts. As of now, however, the narrative does not directly challenge the presence or maintenance of US bases in Okinawa or affect sentiment toward bases. The United States could shape its message so that it is consistent with this narrative by pointing out that the bases in Okinawa help to keep the region safe and thereby enable enhanced regional economic and cultural exchange.
### Summary of Okinawa's Master Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Narratives</th>
<th>Condensed Description</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victimization</strong></td>
<td>&quot;We have been the victims of oppression, domination, and episodic violence.&quot;</td>
<td>This narrative directly involves the US presence in Okinawa today — in the form of noise, accidents, and crime. Okinawans do not feel like the United States adequately acknowledges the perceived negative effects of the US military presence on Okinawa.</td>
<td>Okinawans' sense of injustice and helplessness over events involving US military personnel on the island contributes to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's &quot;burden&quot; should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Focusing on the positive &quot;impact&quot; of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden is unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discrimination</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Tokyo treats us differently than other prefectures in Japan, seeing us as second class citizens and expendable.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawa's political leaders and media have shaped the discrimination narrative to implicate the United States by making their central grievance with Tokyo the &quot;disproportionate burden&quot; of hosting US Forces.</td>
<td>Fundamentally, 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. Further, Okinawans may react with frustration to messages about the deterrence value of US forces, because that does not answer their &quot;why us?&quot; question.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Peaceful People</strong></td>
<td>&quot;We embrace nonviolence and believe we have a moral obligation to be ambassadors for peace. Our culture has long valued the principles of peace and cherishing life, and our experience during WWII has further cemented these values.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawans are taught in school that international conflicts are best addressed by treating life rather than by making war. Anti-base activists use Okinawans' strong valuation of peace to cast the US military presence as inimical to the Okinawan spirit.</td>
<td>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 likely be viewed with skepticism by Okinawa's media. It is possible that the Okinawan public would be less cynical about such messaging.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beautiful Island</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Okinawa is a beautiful island. We are responsible for preserving our natural beauty and have an obligation to hand it down to future generations.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawans express an intense pride in the natural beauty of their islands. Okinawans will want new base projects to be undertaken with high regard for the environment and returned base land to undergo thorough environmental remediation measures.</td>
<td>US actions demonstrating a policy of good stewardship of base land — such as quick and transparent response to accidents that could be detrimental to the environment — could help in this regard. US messaging regarding such a policy would possibly be subject to criticism unless well supported by actions and examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Asia Crossroads</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Long ago, our ancestors traveled the ocean and prospered through trade with China and Southeast Asia. We have a future as a crossroads of exchange and trade in Asia.&quot;</td>
<td>Influential Okinawan figures often use the narrative implicitly, but sometimes explicitly, to present the US bases as obstacles to a prosperous future for Okinawa.</td>
<td>Because most Okinawan leaders appear to be realistic about the prospects for quickly realizing credible alternatives to the bases, this narrative does not present a near-term challenge to the bases. The narrative might provide opportunities to highlight the role of the bases in fostering a stable environment for Okinawa's future.</td>
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MAP OF OKINAWA PREFECTURE, SURROUNDING REGION

According to the Okinawa Prefecture Government, the prefecture includes 160 islands across 1,000 km of ocean east-west by 400 km north-south.¹

¹ This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.
POPULATION DENSITY NEAR US BASES ON OKINAWA

Population Density Near US Bases on Okinawa

This OSC-created map estimates the population densities near US bases on Okinawa. Click the icon to view the map in full resolution.
HOW THIS GUIDE IS ORGANIZED

This guide is organized into five narrative portraits, which appear in the following order: 
Victimization, Discrimination, Peaceful People, Beautiful Island, and Asia Crossroads.

The narrative portraits consist of the following content categories:

- The **HEADER** helps readers keep track of their location in the guide.
- The **FIRST-PERSON STATEMENT** surfaces the narrative's "characters" (its heroes, villains, or scapegoats) and articulates the general plot that drives the narrative's core story. It is written from the point of view of someone who believes in the narrative.
- The **DESCRIPTION** provides background on the narrative's origins and explains how the narrative remains current today.
- **NARRATIVE IN ACTION** shows how the narrative is used in a contemporary policy context by examining public statements of groups and key influencers.
- The **WHAT'S IN A WORD?** box highlights a vernacular word or phrase that is closely associated with the narrative. Master narratives often incorporate unique phrases, images, or symbols that can remind, reinforce, or even trigger behavior.
- **AUDIENCE RESONANCE** discusses how deeply felt or widely held the narrative is with the Okinawan public.
- **IMPLICATIONS** identifies actionable opportunities for US communicators to connect with the Okinawan public and also flags potential communication pitfalls.
The narrative of victimization is deeply held and rests on Okinawa's historical grievances primarily against Japan and the United States. The narrative manifests itself today in messages about the perceived negative impact of US bases in Okinawa. These messages probably resonate widely with Okinawans precisely because they are received in this historical context. Attempts to counter this narrative, such as by focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden, are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

**VICTIMIZATION**

"Okinawans continue to suffer today from noise and crime associated with the US military bases. This is just another example of Okinawa's long history of suffering at the hands of outside powers. Since the late nineteenth century, we have been victims of oppression, domination, and episodic violence."

**DESCRIPTION**

Okinawa's history, as conveyed by educational texts, memorials, literature, and pop culture, is often presented as a tragedy. Okinawans associate the following four key events with their historical victimization: (1) Satsuma's invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609; (2) Japan's annexation and assimilation of Ryukyu as a prefecture in 1879; (3) heavy casualties inflicted on Okinawans by US and Japanese forces during World War II; and (4) land seizures by the Japanese military in the prewar period and by the US military after the war.

- **"SATSUMA INVADED THE RYUKYU KINGDOM"**
  The Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education in "The History and Culture of Okinawa" records that the Ryukyu Kingdom was "conquered and tormented with oppression" following the 1609 "military attack" by Satsuma, one of Tokugawa Japan's feudal domains. "Shuri Castle," it goes on, "was occupied and many royal belongings were taken. King Sho Nei and his retainers were taken prisoner and sent to the Edo Shogunate." The Ryukyu Kingdom, which continued its tributary state relationship with the

**WHAT ABOUT CHINA?**

Accounts of Okinawa's history recognize the influence of China as the dominant external power during the Ryukyu Kingdom's "Golden Age of Trade" from the late 14th to the 16th century.

- Well-known Okinawan historian Kurayoshi Takara said the Ryukyu Kingdom subordinated itself to the Ming Dynasty in 1372 and developed a favored trading relationship as a tributary state to China (1993).

- Okinawa's historical relationship with China, however, relates most strongly to the Asia Crossroads narrative.

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5 The Ryukyu Kingdom was an independent kingdom ruling most of the Ryukyu archipelago, including Okinawa, from the 15th to the 19th century. It held trading relationships with China, Korea, and Japan.
Qing Court of China, bore the "double pressure of Satsuma and China" and saw "its royal treasury bled heavily" (2000).  

- **"JAPAN FORCED OKINAWA'S ASSIMILATION"** Okinawa's Board of Education in "The History and Culture of Okinawa" says the Japanese Meiji Government "forced" the dissolution of the Kingdom and brought "an end to the tribute system with China." The Kingdom "lost its independence" and became "part of the Japanese national system" in 1879 (2000). 

- **"US, JAPANESE FORCES Slaughtered Our People"**
  The 1945 Battle of Okinawa, often referred to as the Typhoon of Steel (tetsu no boufu) by the media and educational texts, is central to the victimization narrative. Senior archivist at the Okinawa Prefectural Archives Kazuhiko Nakamoto contends that the high number of civilian casualties during the battle contributes to a close and enduring association between war and civilian death among Okinawans today. The history of the battle is further complicated by stories of the Japanese military forcing Okinawans to commit group suicide.  

- **"JAPANESE, US MILITARY TOOK OKINAWA'S LAND"**
  The public-private Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau described the Japanese military as "forcibly seizing" land, houses, schools, and other property for the construction of airfields and barracks beginning in the summer of 1943. "The Japanese military conscripted Okinawans from all regions into the forced labor service," it says in its tour guide reference book. The account continues in the postwar period with the US Military seizing private land in the early 1950s with "bayonets and bulldozers" and turning Okinawa into a "fortress island" or an "Okinawa within bases." The Prefectural Board of Education's publication notes that "those who opposed were removed by armed soldiers and bulldozers."  

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6 Kenzaburo Oe, the 1994 Nobel laureate in literature, chronicled the role of Japan's imperial army in coercing Okinawan civilians to commit suicide rather than surrender in his 1970 book "Okinawa Notes." Two plaintiffs representing two Japanese garrison commanders sued Oe and his publisher in 2005 for libel. In April 2011, the Supreme Court turned down the plaintiffs' appeal and ruled in favor of Oe.
The victimization narrative can be found in stories about atrocities committed against the island's civilian population, in portrayals of a forced takeover of Okinawan property, and in popular accounts of Okinawa's historical subjugation by dominant powers.

- Yomitan-based sculptor Minoru Kinjo's 2007 exhibit "War and Humanity" depicted the history of Okinawa as told through a 100-meter-long relief. The exhibit prominently featured scenes from the Battle of Okinawa, such as Japanese soldiers expelling Okinawans from caves, mass suicides, and Japanese-American soldiers trying to convince civilians to surrender. It also included scenes from the postwar period, such as land seizures by "bayonets and bulldozers" at the hands of the United States. 

- The Tsushima Maru Memorial Museum in Naha memorializes the lives lost when a US submarine sank a Japanese evacuation ship on 22 August 1944. Of the ship's 1,788 passengers and crew, 1,418 were lost, including 775 school children. The memory of this event, said museum foundation chairman Seisho Takara in a note posted on the museum's website, should be used to "communicate the preciousness of peace and life to our children." 

- Japan's public broadcaster NHK cast Okinawans as victims in a special program on the 50th anniversary of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 2010. The program aired a close-up interview with Munenobu Kayo, an 86-year old resident of Henoko in Nago City. In describing the construction of Marine Corps Camp Schwab in the 1950s, he said, "The US military used force to suppress the local residents' opposition -- just like the Japanese military before it" (NHK, 5 December 2010).

- Anthropologist and Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Kyushu, Yoshinobu Ota, in a 1997 essay on Okinawan popular culture, said: "Many Okinawans recall their history in terms of the politically dominant with whom they have been negotiating their lives." 

"...From China to Japan. From Japan to America. From America to Japan.

Oh, how often things change in this Okinawa..."

Excerpt from Okinawan folk legend Rinsho Kadokar's "The Flow of Time" originally recorded in the 1960s and rerecorded in 2000 by Takashi Hirayasu from the Okinawan pop group Champaloose, who added an additional line to account for Okinawa's reversion to Japan.

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*See the Peaceful People narrative for more on the use of tragedy as grounds for promoting peace.*
HIMEYURI PORTRAYAL BY MAINLAND, OKINAWA MEDIA SURFACE COMPETING NARRATIVES
The subject of several film and narrative depictions, the Himeyuri -- or the Princess Lily Student Nurses -- were female student recruits during the Battle of Okinawa. In Tokyo-produced films, they are portrayed as valiant and self-sacrificing. In Okinawa, however, stories of their deaths are linked to compulsory group suicide at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army.

- The 1952 award-winning film and mainland Japan production "Tower of Himeyuri" (Himeyuri no To) and its 1982 remake feature multiple scenes of student nurses and their teachers determined to "stick together until the end," portraying them as choosing of their own free will to use hand grenades to commit suicide. 19 20

- Himeyuri survivor and former guide at the Himeyuri Memorial Museum, Kikuko Miyagi, in a 2007 interview with Okinawa Times, said: "Education at that time taught that dying for one's country was virtuous. Passing out hand grenades was the same as issuing an order to 'die rather than be captured.'" Miyagi said, "Japanese troops who passed out hand grenades bear a grave responsibility (2 September 2007)." 21

Faced with the prospect of capture, two student nurses commit suicide with a hand grenade in the 1952 award-winning "Tower of Himeyuri."

A Himeyuri memorial on Arasaki Coast in Itoman City carries the poem: "At the island's edge, beloved students fluttering down as flowers, pray for peaceful sleep."

NARRATIVE IN ACTION Okinawa's politicians and anti-base activists draw on Okinawa's history of victimization in public statements when commenting on current contemporary policy issues, such as those involving history education or US military-related accidents.

- Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, at a September 2011 news conference in Washington, said that if Japan's central government goes ahead with the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma relocation as agreed on by the US Government, it would be tantamount to using "bayonets and bulldozers." He said that the United States built Futenma by "bayonets and bulldozers" in the first place, according to Japan's private news service Jiji Press (21 September 2011). 22

- Naha Mayor Takeshi Onaga in 2007 emphasized the importance of Okinawa's history of victimization to the island's identity when the Education Ministry recommended the removal of descriptions of coerced group suicides from high school textbooks. "We must accurately pass on the true story of the Battle of Okinawa so as to convey to the next
generation the tragedy of war and preciousness of peace" (Ryukyu Shimpō, 30 September 2007). 23

• Seiken Akamine, a Diet member from Okinawa representing the Communist Party, said after the 13 August 2004 crash of a US Marine Corps helicopter into Okinawa International University that “Okinawa's citizens have actual experience with the fear of death. If we are to learn from these lessons, Futenma Air Station must be closed” (Okinawa Times, 26 August 2004). 24

• A prominent Yomitan anti-base activist, Shoichi Chibana, has called the central government's approach to handling US basing issues in Okinawa the "fourth Ryukyu Shobun." In a February 2011 speech, he characterized negotiations over the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma as a continuation of Okinawa's history of assimilation into and subordination to Japan. Chibana's speech was delivered in Kobe and posted to a blog maintained by the mainland Japan anti-war group Kanjitsu Sanrizuka. 25

WHAT'S IN A WORD? "RYUKYU SHOBUN" The term "Ryukyu shobun" is used in Japan to describe the dissolution of the Ryukyu Kingdom and its subsequent annexation by Japan in 1879. It is presented as a neutral term in officially sanctioned history texts, but it has negative connotations for Okinawans.

• History books published in Okinawa Prefecture argue that the term "shobun" is "humiliating," "ignores Okinawa's viewpoint," and connotes a "rightful punishment" -- therefore implying moral justification for the forceful dismantling of the Ryukyu Kingdom. 26

Viewed through the lens of the victimization narrative, accidents or other incidents involving US bases can take on greater symbolic meaning. For example, the anniversaries of significant US military-related accidents continue to receive prominent coverage in the local media and to attract the attention of local leaders.

• All four of Okinawa's local newscasts on 30 June 2011 covered a memorial ceremony at Miyamori Elementary School in Uruma City commemorating the 52nd anniversary of a fighter jet crash there in 1959. Some 500 people attended the ceremony, including the school's students and families of the victims. "No matter how many years pass, Okinawan citizens cannot forget the grievous memories of 30 June," said one local broadcaster while introducing a five-minute segment on the ceremony at the beginning of its newscast (QAB's "Station Q"). 27
Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima held a news conference in August 2010 on the sixth anniversary of a US Marine helicopter crash that occurred on 13 August 2004 at Okinawa International University near Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's southern fence line in Ginowan. Nakaima called for "removing the current risks of the Futenma base as soon as possible" (Kyodo). All four Okinawa television broadcasters led their evening newscasts that day with stories about a rally at Okinawa International University attended by University President Moritake Tomikawa.

Okinawa broadcasters showed two US helicopters flying near an annual rally at Okinawa International University commemorating the sixth anniversary of a US Marine helicopter crash there in 2004 (2010).

AUDIENCE RESONANCE: Okinawans see strong feelings of victimhood as a negative aspect of the prefecture's character. Consequently, there are social pressures against asserting victimhood frivolously. The narrative is central to their identity, however, and a sense of victimhood often emerges around a singular event, crime, or accident that galvanizes the public.

- The Okinawa Prefecture Planning and Coordination Division found in its two most recent polls in 2009 and 2005 that the public ranks "strong feelings of victimhood" (higaisha ishiki ga tsuyoi) among the top 10 "shortcomings" of the prefecture and its citizens.

- The brochure of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum says, "Okinawa's war experience is at the very core of what is popularly called the 'Okinawan Heart,' a resilient yet strong attitude to life that Okinawan people developed as they struggled against the pressures of many years of US military control."

- The power of this narrative is often most evident when it is publicly challenged. In 2007, the Japanese Education Ministry recommended that school textbook publishers remove direct references to the Japanese military's forcing Okinawans to commit group suicide during the Battle of Okinawa. This case prompted the largest public demonstration in Okinawa since reversion in 1972 -- reportedly 110,000 people.

- The 1995 rape case involving a young Okinawan schoolgirl continues to have currency in Okinawa. Media refer to it in the context of "a string of crimes and incidents involving US military personnel" and use the incident as a marker from which to judge progress since the 1996 US-Japan agreement to return the land used by MCAS Futenma. At the time, the incident set off a chain of protest activities by women's groups, teachers' associations, labor unions, reformist political parties, and various grass-roots movements.

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6 Education minister Kisaburo Tokai announced on 26 December 2007 that the reinstatement of history textbooks would include references to the Imperial Japanese Army driving civilians into committing mass suicide in Okinawa. Okinawan media attributed the decision to the protest rallies.
organizations across Okinawa Prefecture. A prefectural mass rally on 21 October 1995 reportedly drew 85,000 people, including business leaders and conservative politicians who had seldom criticized the US military presence (Ryukyu Shimpo, Okinawa Times; 22 October 1995).

**IMPLICATIONS** The narrative of Okinawa's victimization by dominant powers has become tightly linked to the continued US military presence on Okinawa. Okinawans' sense of injustice and helplessness over events involving US military personnel on the island contributes to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's "burdens" should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Attempts to counter this narrative by focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

- In the past, Okinawa's local media have reacted negatively to leaders, such as Prime Minister Kan, who expressed gratitude for Okinawa's "base hosting burden" (Ryukyu Shimpo, 12 June 2010). Okinawa media also reported that the Okinawa Prefecture Government advised former President Bill Clinton against using the term "gratitude" in his 21 July 2000 speech at the G8 Summit in Okinawa (Ryukyu Shimpo, 19 July 2010; Okinawa Times, 22 July 2000).

- Okinawan cultural authorities like novelist Tatsuhiro Oshiro have argued that "Okinawans desire even belated recognition" of "Okinawa's sacrifices for the prosperity of the mainland" (Asahi Shimbum, 7 July 2011).

Recognition, in this case, probably means understanding Okinawa's "burdens" rather than expressing gratitude for them. Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi provides an example of an effective use of recognition. In the year before the 2000 G8 Summit, media quoted Obuchi numerous times recognizing Okinawa's history and post-war hardships. His selection of Okinawa as co-host of the summit was welcomed by Okinawan leaders including the governor at the time, Keiichi Inamine.

- Obuchi told the Japanese media, "After the war, Japan lost its administrative rights over Okinawa, and Okinawa faced many hardships. During the war, Okinawa greatly sacrificed [for Japan]. Even today, Okinawa hosts bases. I am fully aware of this pain." Obuchi said that he wanted the world's leaders to "experience Okinawa's rich empathy and beautiful natural environment," as well as learn about Okinawa, which "overcame and survived many difficulties" (Mainichi Shimbum, 30 April 1999).

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"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.

"Tokyo treats us differently than other prefectures in Japan, seeing us as second-class citizens and expendable. The Japanese Government sacrificed Okinawa to save the mainland during World War II and gave the United States administrative control over Okinawa until 1972. Tokyo neglected us after reversion, causing us to lag behind other parts of Japan economically, and it continues to do so today: we are subjected to a disproportionate share of the US-Japan Alliance's harmful effects."

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 Ryukyu Shimpo that nationally approved texts were "often incomplete" (28 September 2010). 49 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. 50

- 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. In "Mabugumi" (Spirit Recalling, 1999), 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. 52 53

- 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. 54 55 56

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. 57

SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT FIGURE SYMBOLIZES TOKYO'S UNFAIR TREATMENT OF OKINAWA
Public commentary, official prefecture literature, and media often claim that 74.7% of land used exclusively by the US military in Japan is in Okinawa Prefecture.

- The Okinawa Prefecture Government, for example, prominently features the 74.7 percent figure on multiple pages in an online pamphlet concerning US military issues in Okinawa. 47

- Left-leaning Asahi Shimbum compared an area map of Okinawa with one of mainland Japan to show 73.94% of land used by the US military is in Okinawa (12 February 2010). 48

NHK dramatized the use of "dialect tags" to punish children for using the Okinawan dialect in school (18 June 2011). 51

Logo for the 5th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival
NARRATIVE IN ACTION Local leaders, academics, and anti-base organizations most often charge Tokyo of discrimination when deeying 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 Shimbun) and "surprising" (Asahi Shimbun). 58 59 60 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). 61

- 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 Shimbun, 14 May 2010). 62

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." 63

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? (Okinawaijin 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. 64
• Futenma Noise Litigation Group Vice Chair and former head of the Okinawa Teacher’s Association, Genpei Ishikawa, called the 21 June 2011 joint statement of the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee "another example of Okinawa being a sacrificed pawn (suteishi)" for the benefit of mainland Japan (2011). Ishikawa’s interview appeared in Mainichi Shimbun on 23 June, which is Irei no Hi, or the day to console the spirits -- Okinawa’s memorial day for those who died during the Battle of Okinawa.

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).  

Okinawan Editorials Linking Base Issues to Tokyo’s "Discrimination"

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 Shimpō 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 Shimbun, 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.

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1 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 Shinbun 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).  

- Japan's largest circulation newspaper Yomiuri Shinbun 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).  

- 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." Few forum respondents explicitly mentioned "discrimination," but those that did also claimed Okinawa was being treated "unfairly" and differently than other parts of Japan.  

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).  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).  

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

- 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).
"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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VICTIMIZATION</th>
<th>DISCRIMINATION</th>
<th>PEACEFUL PEOPLE</th>
<th>BEAUTIFUL ISLAND</th>
<th>ASIA CROSSROADS</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;We embrace nonviolence and believe we have a moral obligation to be ambassadors for peace. Our culture has long valued the principles of peace and cherishing life, and our experience during WWII has further cemented these values. We abhor war and have long yearned to create a peaceful island.&quot;</td>
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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 "Shiimi" 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." 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. 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.

**OKINAWA AS A 'LAND OF COURTESY'**

This archway at Okinawa's famous Shuri Castle is called Shurei-mon, which is an abbreviation of "Land of Courtesy." Japan featured the archway on its 2000 yen note for the Kyushu-Okinawa G8 Summit in 2000 to showcase Okinawa as a welcoming island.

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

- 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.

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b See also the 18 April 2011, OSC Analysis, "Okinawa Artists Raise Awareness of Military Basing Issues, Reinforce Pacifism" (JFF20110414324001), for more on how popular entertainment keeps the peaceful people narrative current.
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." 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.

- 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). The masked hero fantasy series has spawned a movie, multiple DVDs, tour packages, and other consumer goods (Tokyo Shimbun, 22 November 2011).

**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)." 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 (michi 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." 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.¹

- **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). ¹¹⁰

- **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). ¹¹²

**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). ¹¹⁶

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." Many municipalities also incorporate peace into their official symbols. Kadena Town, host to Kadena Air Base, explains on its website, "[Our symbol] is a simple design expressing the desire for peace and union of the people..."

- 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 Shimpō 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 Shimpō 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 Shimpō 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).\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{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."

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\caption{JAPAN'S SDF EMPHASIZE FAMILY, COMMUNITY IN COMMERCIALS}
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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).\textsuperscript{138}

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