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PRIORITY
R 260135Z MAY 83
FM AMCONSUL NAHA
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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3338
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COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA
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AMEMBASSY SEOUL 270
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ZEN/CORUSAGO MAKININATO JA

ASIA. ACCORDINGLY, THE REVERSION MOVEMENT GREW FROM YEAR TO YEAR, ATTRACTED A WIDE SPECTRUM OF OKINAWANS, AND BECAME A UNIFYING FACTOR FOR ELEMENTS RANGING FROM THE EXTREME TO THE MODERATE.

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 NAHA 300

EMBASSY TOKYO PLS PASS TO JAPAN CONSTITUENT POSTS VIA POUCH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL PGOV PINR MARR US JA
SUBJECT: (U) OKINAWA - THEN AND NOW

REF: (A) 82 NAHA 326 (NOTAL), (B) NAHA 179 (NOTAL)

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY: MAY 15 MARKED THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVERSION OF OKINAWA FROM U.S. ADMINISTRATION TO JAPAN. THIS MESSAGE REFLECTS ON CONSIDERABLE BENEFITS REVERSION HAS BROUGHT TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. IN OKINAWA PERHAPS THE MOST NOTABLE RESULT HAS BEEN THE DIMINUTION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN OKINAWANS AND AMERICANS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN OKINAWAN TOLERANCE FOR OUR MILITARY PRESENCE. THIS TOLERANCE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE SO LONG AS U.S. ENJOYS SUPPORT OF GOJ AND SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY OF JAPANESE PEOPLE. TO HELP ENSURE CONTINUED OKINAWAN TOLERANCE, U.S. SHOULD ACCORD HIGH PRIORITY TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, MAINTENANCE OF CONTACTS WITH OKINAWAN LEADERS AND MEDIA, ADEQUATE BRIEFINGS FOR U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND READINESS TO CONSIDER BASE ADJUSTMENTS IN AREAS UNDER HEAVY POPULATION PRESSURES. END SUMMARY.
3. MAY 15 MARKED THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF OKINAWA TO JAPAN. A GREAT MANY CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THIS PERIOD AND SINCE THE UNDERSIGNED LAST SERVED ON OKINAWA FROM 1968-70. OKINAWA'S RETURN TO JAPAN AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST ELEVEN YEARS HAVE CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE ON OKINAWA VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH EXISTED BEFORE 1972. THIS MESSAGE REFLECTS ON SOME OF THE CHANGES WROUGHT BY REVERSION AND THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND ON THE VALUE OF REVERSION TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.
4. IN 1968 REVERSION WAS THE CENTRAL, ALL-CONSUMING POLITICAL ISSUE AND THE REVERSION MOVEMENT WAS WELL UNDERWAY, CONSTANTLY ORGANIZING DEMONSTRATIONS, PROTESTS, MEETINGS, SYMPOSIA, AND OTHER POLITICALLY-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES. A HEATED ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR THE FIRST PUBLICLY ELECTED CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ACTING GOVERNOR SUBJECT TO U.S. AUTHORITY) WAS UNDER WAY. THE ANTI-VIETNAM WAR MOVEMENT WAS AS ACTIVE HERE AS IN THE REST OF JAPAN. LABOR UNREST TROUBLED OKINAWA AND CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AUTHORITIES AND THE MILITARY BASE WORKERS' UNION SOMETIMES OCCURRED. THERE WERE SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN ARMED U.S. SOLDIERS DIRECTLY FACED AND EVEN CLASHED WITH JAPANESE CIVILIANS.
5. THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF TENSION WAS THE REVERSION MOVEMENT. A LARGE MAJORITY OF OKINAWANS WISHED TO REJOIN JAPAN AS OKINAWA PREFECTURE, BUT PROSPECTS FOR REVERSION WERE UNCLEAR IN THE FACE OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM AND U.S. SECURITY NEEDS IN

6. ANOTHER PROBLEM OF THAT ERA WAS FRICTION ASSOCIATED WITH THE NECESSITY FOR THE U.S. TO FULFILL ITS ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEEP ITS BASES FUNCTIONING. THIS MEANT THAT, ON OCCASION, ARMED U.S. SOLDIERS HAD TO PERFORM PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS. IT ALSO MEANT THAT THE U.S. ENTERED DIRECTLY INTO OFTEN CONTENTIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOCAL LABOR UNIONS AND LAND-OWNERS. SOMETIMES THE U.S. WAS EVEN FORCED TO INTERVENE IN LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS TO ALTER, NULLIFY, OR CHANGE LEGISLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RYUKYU ISLANDS (THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHICH OPERATED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE U.S. HIGH COMMISSIONER) WHICH WOULD DIMINISH OR INTERFERE WITH U.S. AUTHORITY. MANY OF THESE ACTIONS SPANNED PROTEST ACTIVITIES. IN SHORT, THE U.S. WAS QUITE OFTEN THE FOCUS OF LOCAL RESENTMENT FOR REASONS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO BASE PROBLEMS OR THE REVERSION ISSUE ITSELF.

7. STILL ANOTHER SOURCE OF FRICTION LAY IN RELATIONS HERE AT THAT TIME BETWEEN THE U.S. AND GOJ. THE GOJ, EVEN THEN CONTRIBUTING ALMOST SIX TIMES AS MUCH FINANCIAL AID TO THE GRI AS THE U.S., CONSTANTLY SOUGHT TO INCREASE ITS INVOLVEMENT IN OKINAWAN AFFAIRS. SOMETIMES THE GOJ FOUND ITSELF TORN WHEN THE GRI AND THE U.S. DISAGREED. THE U.S. OFTEN WAS FORCED TO LIMIT OR FORESTALL GOJ INVOLVEMENT TO PREVENT ENCRoACHMENT ON ITS ADMINISTRATIVE RIGHTS AND OCCASIONALLY DISAGREED WHEN THE GOJ LINED UP ON BASE-RELATED ISSUES WITH THE GRI. ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, OKINAWA REMAINED BY FAR THE MOST SERIOUS BILATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

8. THIS ENTIRE SITUATION WAS EMMESHED IN VIETNAM PROTEST ACTIVITY, LOCAL ANTI-BASE MOVEMENTS, AND THE FIRST CHIEF EXECUTIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH BEGAN UNOFFICIALLY IN EARLY 1968. BOTH CANDIDATES, CHOBYO YARA, CHIEF OF THE REFORMIST REVERSION COUNCIL (COMPOSED OF THE OSMP, JSP, JCP, AND OTHER "PROGRESSIVE" ELEMENTS), AND THEN NAHA MAYOR JUNJI NISHIME, THE CONSERVATIVE (AND PRESENT GOVERNOR), WERE FOR REVERSION; HOWEVER, MORE CAUTIOUS CONSERVATIVE STANCE ALLOWED THE REFORMISTS TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE ISSUE. YARA'S SUBSEQUENT ELECTION IN NOVEMBER 1968 WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED AS A PLEBESCITE FOR REVERSION AS SOON AS FEASIBLE, THUS PLACING THE U.S. UNDER EVEN GREATER PRESSURE TO ACT.

9. THUS, IN 1968 THE U.S. FOUND ITSELF ATTEMPTING TO COPE WITH AN INCREASINGLY RESTIVE OKINAWAN POPULATION AND GRI, KEEP THE LID ON REGULARLY RECURRING LABOR PROBLEMS, AND DEAL WITH A SET OF MILITARY LANDLORDS INCREASINGLY DISSATISFIED WITH U.S. COMPENSATION AMOUNTS AND PROCEDURES. AT THE SAME TIME, THE U.S. FACED PROBLEMS BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY WITH THE GOJ OVER OKINAWA, INHIBITTING POSITIVE BILATERAL COOPERATION IN THE SECURITY AREA HERE. MOREOVER, THE USG WAS FACED WITH THE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT NECESSITY FOR GAINING ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR BUDGET SUPPORT AND OTHER AID TO OKINAWA AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION HERE, AS WELL AS BEARING THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ISLAND.

10. FINANCIALLY, OKINAWA WAS A CONSIDERABLE DRAIN. THE USG PAID ALMOST DOLS 36 MILLION IN TOTAL ASSISTANCE TO THE RYUKYU ISLANDS IN FY 1970 WHILE THE U.S. MILITARY SPENT DOLS 111.6 MILLION IN BT

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INFO NIDS(*) J3:NMCC(*) J5(2) USCINCENTLO(1)
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SONGS, DANCES, HANDICRAFTS, AND CUISINE RECEIVE MASSIVE ATTENTION HERE AS DOES OKINAWA'S HISTORY. ONE NEWSPAPER HAS RUN A SERIES OF COMICS DEPICTING RYUKYUAN HEROES OF THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES RESISTING AND OFTEN BESTING THE "YAMATO PEOPLE". AS THE MAIN-ISLAND JAPANESE ARE TERMED HERE. SHARP DIFFERENCES EMERGED LAST SUMMER BETWEEN THE OKINAWANS AND THE GOJ OVER THE ISSUE OF GOJ DELETION FROM JAPANESE TEXTBOOKS OF ALLEGED WARTIME MASSACRES OF OKINAWANS BY IMPERIAL FORCES (REF A). DURING THE REVERSION STRUGGLE, MANY OF THESE DIFFERENCES WERE PLAYED DOWN OR SUBMERGED IN ORDER TO DEPICT THE OKINAWANS TO BE AS JAPANESE AS POSSIBLE. PAGE FIVE RUADBEA2400 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 300

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APPROPRIATED FUNDS THAT YEAR, INCLUDING DOLS 15.2 MILLION FOR MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DOLS 45.9 MILLION FOR LOCAL SALARIES AND PAGE TWO RUADBEA2400 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 300 WAGES, AND OVER DOLS 9 MILLION FOR LAND RENTAL. THE OKINAWAN ECONOMY WAS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON THE PRESENCE OF U.S. BASES WHICH EMPLOYED OVER 16,000 OKINAWANS AND PROVIDED ABOUT 22.4 PERCENT OF OKINAWA'S 1970 "GNP".

11. THE ATMOSPHERE TODAY ON OKINAWA IS DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT. THE MOST STRIKING CHANGE THIS REPORTER HAS OBSERVED IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT OF OKINAWAN AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISSUES AND TOWARDS EACH OTHER. BASE-RELATED PROBLEMS STILL EXIST TO BE SURE, BUT THEY ARE VIEWED IN A SOMEWHAT MORE REALISTIC CONTEXT AND NO LONGER DOMINATE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL/POLITICAL LANDSCAPE TO THE EXTENT THEY DID FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.

12. THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THIS CHANGE ARE THE ATTAINMENT OF REVERSION AND AN ASSURED PLACE FOR OKINAWA AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF JAPAN; THE REMOVAL OF THE VIETNAM WAR AS A SOURCE OF ANTI-MILITARY FEELING; AND THE ASSUMPTION BY THE GOJ OF OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OKINAWA'S WELL BEING, INCLUDING ENORMOUS SUPPORT OF THE ECONOMY IN FORM OF SUBSIDIES, BUDGET SUPPORT, MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, SOCIAL WELFARE, ETC. MOREOVER, THE GOJ HAS FULLY ASSUMED ROLE OF DEALING WITH THE PREFECTURE, LABOR UNIONS, LANDLORDS, MAINTAINING ORDER, ETC., TAKING THE U.S. PAGE THREE RUADBEA2400 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 300 ENTIRELY OUT OF THAT PICTURE. LOCAL AUTONOMY IS NOW COMPLETELY IN OKINAWAN HANDS, ELIMINATING CONFLICTS OVER LEGISLATION, ELECTIONS, ADMINISTRATION, RESOURCES, ETC.

13. THE CORDIAL AND EXTENSIVE U.S.-JAPAN COOPERATION IN THE SECURITY FIELD IS ONE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WAS LARGELY UNEXPECTED IN 1968. THE GOJ NOW PAYS ALMOST DOLS 160 MILLION IN LAND RENTALS ANNUALLY FOR U.S. BASE LAND HERE (OR ALMOST 18 TIMES THE COST 15 YEARS AGO). THE GOJ CONTRIBUTES OVER DOLS 4 BILLION ANNUALLY IN AID TO THE PREFECTURE IN VARIOUS FORMS, MAKING OKINAWANS THE LARGEST RECIPIENTS OF PER-CAPITA AID FROM TOKYO OF ALL PREFECTURES. APPROXIMATELY 90 PERCENT OF U.S. MILITARY CONSTRUCTION COSTS HERE (INCLUDING FAMILY HOUSING, THE LARGEST COMPONENT OF OUR MILITARY CONSTRUCTION), OF ABOUT DOLS 125 MILLION, ARE NOW PAID FOR BY THE GOJ. THE GOJ ALSO SERVES AS A BUFFER BETWEEN THE U.S. AND BASE LANDLORDS AND LABOR UNIONS AND, THROUGH THE LOCAL DFAB, PAVES THE WAY WITH LOCAL ENTITIES FOR U.S. ACTIVITIES (EXERCISES, SPECIAL EVENTS) AND/OR FOR NEW U.S. INITIATIVES (E.G., STATIONING OF NEW OR UNUSUAL U.S. UNITS, SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION, ETC.). THE MERE FACT THAT SUCH DEALINGS ARE NOW IN A JAPANESE-TO-JAPANESE CONTEXT REMOVES THE CHANCES FOR MISUNDERSTANDING OR RESENTMENT PAGE FOUR RUADBEA2400 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 300 WHICH OFTEN OCCURRED DURING THE PERIOD OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION.

14. ANOTHER POST-REVERSION PHENOMENON IS HEIGHTENED SELF-CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF OKINAWANS. RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, A STORY APPEARED ABOUT AN OKINAWAN FARMER WHO HAD DEVELOPED A STRAIN OF SWEET GREEN PEPPER (A POPULAR JAPANESE VEGETABLE) WHICH TASTED BETTER, GREW FASTER, AND KEPT LONGER THAN ANY NOW SOLD THROUGHOUT JAPAN. THE FARMER HAS NOW CORNERED A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE NATIONAL MARKET. THIS TYPE OF SUCCESS STORY WAS RARE A DECADE AGO. OKINAWA'S OWN CULTURE, SUBMERGED TO SOME EXTENT DURING THE PERIOD OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION, IS NOW IMMENSELY POPULAR.

ACTION

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ZYUW RUADBEA2401 1471618

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AMEMBASSY BEIJING 42
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
OAC CAMP BUTLER JA
COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS.

--MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH LOCAL MEDIA LEADERS, PERHAPS SENDING
LIKELY COMERS TO U.S. ON IVP PROGRAM GRANTS. (CONGEN REGARDS MEDIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA SECTION 03 OF 03 NAHA 300

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17. THE PRESENT SITUATION ON OKINAWA IS THAT A HARD CORE OF ANTI-BASE LEFTISTS CONTINUES TO BE VERY ACTIVE BUT IT HAS BECOME PAGE TWO RUADBEA2401 C O N F I D E N T I A L PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT TO GENERATE WIDE SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-BASE MOVEMENT ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS ALONE. ANTI-BASE ACTIVISTS CAN ONLY DO SO IF PROBLEM TO BE TARGETTED IS PERCEIVED AS THREATENING LIFE ITSELF OR QUALITY OF LIFE (E. G. AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS, SEVERE POLLUTION, ETC.). IN SHORT, U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IS TOLERATED BY VAST MAJORITY OF OKINAWANS WHO ARE ORDINARILY DISINCLINED TO COOPERATE WITH AN ACTIVE AND INCREASINGLY RADICALIZED ANTI-BASE LEFT. ONE FACTOR CONTRIBUTING IMMENSELY TO CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ANTI-BASE MOVEMENT IS EXTREME ANTI-MILITARY OUTLOOK OF OKINAWA'S TWO MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, OKINAWA TIMES AND RYUKYU SHIMPO, WHICH HAVE NEAR-MONOPOLY OF LOCAL MARKET. FOR CLOSE TO THREE DECADES THESE PUBLICATIONS IDENTIFIED REVERSION AS A PRIMARY GOAL AND DECIDED ON AN ANTI-MILITARY, ANTI-BASE LINE OF HYPERBOLE AS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO REACH THAT GOAL. THIS MIND-SET STILL PERSISTS AND BOTH PAPERS FOLLOW AN UNREMITTINGLY HOSTILE LINE WHEN REPORTING MILITARY-RELATED NEWS (OR, IN FACT, OFTEN TREATING NON-EVENTS AS "NEWS" IN ORDER TO GET A DIG IN AT EITHER THE U.S. MILITARY OR THE JSDF, WHICH RECEIVES EVEN MORE MEDIA HOSTILITY).

18. REVERSION OBVIOUSLY HAD A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH DIMINISHING PAGE THREE RUADBEA2401 C O N F I D E N T I A L TENSION ON OKINAWA. OTHER FACTORS MENTIONED ABOVE ARE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR AS A PROTEST TARGET, THE COOPERATIVE U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP, AND CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC AID OKINAWA RECEIVES AS CONSEQUENCE OF BASE PRESENCE. OKINAWAN POLITICIANS (INCLUDING, MOST NOTABLY, PRESENT GOVERNOR JUNJI NISHIME) USE OKINAWA'S "BASE BURDEN" SKILLFULLY IN OBTAINING MAXIMUM OFFSETTING ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM TOKYO. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DIMINISHED TENSION IS HEIGHTENED COMMAND SENSITIVITY TO LOCAL PROBLEMS AND NEEDS AND RECOGNITION OF NECESSITY FOR AT LEAST MODICUM OF LOCAL ACQUIESCENCE TO BASE ACTIVITIES. DESPITE A FEW NOTABLE INCIDENTS, CRIME HAS DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER PAST TEN YEARS AND TREND CONTINUES (REF B). PRESENT COMMANDERS HERE PAY CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY, AND THESE EFFORTS CONTINUE TO PAY OFF.

19. OUTLOOK. PRESENT SITUATION--OKINAWAN TOLERANCE FOR U.S. PRESENCE--WILL LIKELY CONTINUE SO LONG AS U.S. ENJOYS POSITIVE SUPPORT OF GOJ AND SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY OF JAPANESE PEOPLE. A MAJOR U.S. CONCERN SHOULD BE AVOIDING DISRUPTING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH OKINAWANS. A SERIOUS BASE-RELATED INCIDENT, FOR EXAMPLE AN ACCIDENT RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF LIFE, PAGE FOUR RUADBEA2401 C O N F I D E N T I A L WOULD INFUSE NEW LIFE INTO ANTI-BASE MOVEMENT AND CREATE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS, AT LEAST FOR A TIME. OTHER ACTIONS WHICH U.S. COULD TAKE TO MAINTAIN ACCEPTABLE ATMOSPHERE HERE MIGHT INCLUDE:
--MAINTAINING CORDIAL AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OPG, DFAB, SDF, AND OKINAWAN LEADERS.
--CONTINUING TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND

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