OKINAWA

READER
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JOHN M. STEEVES
Consul General and Political Advisor
Naha (1955-1956)

Ambassador John M. Steeves served in the China/Burma/India theater during World War II in the Office of War Information. His Foreign Service career included positions in New Delhi, Tokyo, Djakarta, Naha, Kabul, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Thomas Stern on March 27, 1991

Q: *Then you went from Djakarta to Naha in Okinawa as the consul general and also the political adviser. You were there from 1953 to 1955. Could you explain the situation and what your job entailed?*

STEEVES: From the standpoint of personal relationships and comforts that was a delightful assignment because it was with the military command. I got along with all of them extremely well. General Moore and all of his staff. I got the Command people to give up a perfectly delightful site that they had begun to fix up--in fact, put a million dollars into it actually--and use

as a club. I told them that it would look very, very bad for them to be occupying a place like that as a military club--high on a cliff overlooking the China Sea and obviously beyond their needs. I said, "You know what you ought to do with that? You ought to turn it in to the consulate general." I got Washington's permission to go along with that and they did.

Q: *That's diplomacy.*

STEEVES: It was the old Japanese naval inspection site. It had a lighthouse on it. It still had the rings on the wall where they tied up the pirates that they caught at sea. It was a marvelous place. One of the Okinawa contractors built new counters for us out of that lovely travertine that they have naturally in Okinawa and put it all in for nothing. It was one of the most delightful offices I have ever had in my life.

Q: *What were the issues?*

STEEVES: The issues were occupation problems. Getting the Command to do the types of things for the Okinawa people that would bring about the right relationships between the two, which is not very easy.

Q: *Was that the period when you had either a communist or socialist mayor of Naha?*

STEEVES: No, neither the Mayor of Naha nor Okinawa Governor were Communist. You must be referring to Senaga, a member of the native Council--or some such office.

Q: *How did that work?*

STEEVES: Senaga caused us a lot of trouble for he was an out and out communist. He was popular with the people on some issues but he had to be controlled very carefully. Under Military Rule, of course, he could have been dealt with very quickly. But that would not have been a wise course to follow.

Q: *This was the fifties. How did you deal with him?*

STEEVES: Well, he could be isolated pretty well because he didn't have a lot of influence, but he had potential influence. He was beginning to gain popularity with the teachers union. Then, we had done so many things for the Okinawans that were obvious benefits that they could kind of see where their bread was buttered. I, for instance, sent back to India and got the Coiembatore Experimental Station to send me great crate loads of experimental cuttings to revolutionize their sugar industry. One of the things that I really prize in the Foreign Service was when they sent me a silver cask with the first sugar that they got from the new cane some years later.

Q: *At this period I take it that Okinawa Reversion to Japan was not a major issue.*

STEEVES: It became a major issue somewhat later. It was just beginning when I left. It was growing all the time because the Japanese wanted the islands back and the overtures and propaganda was strong and constant.

Q: *How about the Okinawans?*

STEEVES: Yes, for cultural reasons, language especially, they would be just more at home with their own Japanese people despite the fact that they were always looked on as country second cousins. They suffered a lot by being looked down upon by the Japanese. I am afraid that is happening again--and we told them it would.

RICHARD W. BOEHM
Vice Consul
Naha (1955-1958)

Ambassador Richard W. Boehm was born in New York in 1926. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and joined the Foreign Service in 1954. His career included positions in Japan, Germany, Luxembourg, Nepal, Turkey, Thailand, and Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Cyprus and Oman. This interview was conducted in 1994 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

BOEHM: I was told that I was to go to [the Consulate General in] Melbourne, Australia. I really didn't want to go to Melbourne because, although I'd never been to Australia, I had the idea that Australia was probably pretty much like the United States. I wanted to go to some place different. So I appealed to somebody I knew in the Personnel Office and said, "Can't I get something else?" He said, "I'll see what I can do." He came up with [the Consular Office in] Okinawa. This was, if anything, far less exotic than Australia, because it was a United States military base.

So I went there and spent two years in Naha. It was a mistake. I feel that I would have been much better off going to Australia, in a way, though not entirely.

At any rate, that was that. I went to Okinawa, again with misgivings, because it wasn't at all what I had in mind. I seemed to be going, really, in the wrong direction. The Consular Unit, as it was called, in Naha was a four-man post. Organizationally speaking, it was an interesting one.

It was headed by a senior officer, at that time John Steeves, who later became Director General of the Foreign Service and Ambassador to Afghanistan. He had the title of Consul General, but his main hat was as Political Adviser to the Commanding General of what was called USARYUS/IX Corps, or United States Army, Ryukyu Islands - IX Corps. The commander was a three-star general. John Steeves was his Political Adviser. That was the main function he had. There wasn't much consular activity. There was one upper middle grade officer who was his deputy, who more or less ran the Consulate. There were two junior vice consuls, of whom I was the more junior. We did everything else--the administration and the consular work. The number two guy, Steeves' deputy, was an economic type. It was great training, in fact--really, very good training. The senior vice consul had entered the Foreign Service through the back door. He had been a ship's radio operator earlier in his career. Then he had became sort of a consular clerk or communicator somewhere--I think in Australia. Then he made it and was commissioned a vice

consul. He was a very salty old guy. However, he knew his business. He took it very seriously and taught me not only the consular business but administrative affairs as well. All of this, plus my experience [in the Department] as a press officer stood me in very good stead throughout my career. Even though, at the time, I was frustrated at being in Okinawa, I came to appreciate it and realized that it was a very useful experience.

Living in Okinawa was nothing much. You lived in a fenced-in area, a US military compound where a few houses were set aside for the people from the Consular Unit, as it was called. It was called the Consular Unit, because the United States was the administrative power in Okinawa, and you couldn't have a Consulate, as such. Technically, it was treated as a branch of the Consular Section of the Embassy in Tokyo, for consular purposes. There were several military compounds--some of them in one area, some in another. Life was kind of like Levittown with a fence around it. So that was a disappointment. We did our best and struggled along.

I got a chance to do something--I'm not sure what role it played in my career. Maybe none, except in my own mind. We had an inspection during my tour there. There were two inspectors. One of them was Ed Gullion, a well-known Foreign Service Officer and later an Ambassador. He eventually became the head of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Ed Gullion sat down with John Steeves, the Consul General, at the end of his inspection. He said, "We have a list here of political subjects on which there has been no reporting. You have this young vice consul. We think that it would be a good idea if you and he, between you, would pick one of these subjects, turn him loose for a couple of weeks from his other responsibilities, and let him do it." John Steeves was a very fine guy and a very good developer of his staff. He said OK. The inspectors went their way and John called me in and said, "Let's look at this list."

The subject that attracted me was "Reversionist sentiment among the Okinawans." At the time Okinawa was being run by a military governor--not the commanding general to whom Steeves was an adviser, but a civil administrator, who was an Army officer. All of the civilian Americans living there worked for the military government. They had a notion that the Okinawans loved us so much that what they really wanted was to become the 51st State. However, there were a few people who believed that Okinawa should revert to Taiwan, because it had historic ties with China at one time or another. It had been an independent kingdom, and there were some who wanted it to be an independent kingdom again. However, those with any sense realized that the Okinawans considered themselves Japanese. If they went anywhere, it would be to become a province of Japan.

I was asked to do a report on this. I did. I took two weeks off. I didn't have very many sources. I must admit also--and I might want to take this out of the transcript later--that I had a preconceived notion of what the answer should be, even before I began my research. The preconceived answer was that the Okinawans really wanted reversion to Japan. This probably also served US interests best, and I thought that we probably should start preparing for it. At that time we kept Japan very much at arms length in Okinawa. There was no official Japanese representation in Okinawa. When a Japanese ship came into the harbor, it couldn't fly the Japanese flag. We kept the Japanese away, which might have been a mistake. We should have begun to involve them and gotten them to pay some of the bills [for the Occupation]. I had these ideas before I began my research. So I can't say that it was entirely objective, although I think

that the conclusions I reached were correct. I came up with this report, which concluded that reversion to Japan was the way to go.

Q: Method and process are always very interesting things. Here you were--obviously, you didn't speak Japanese, or certainly not the Okinawan dialect in Japanese. How did you go about this?

BOEHM: I went about it as best I could. I would say now, with the perspective of four decades later, that it was a very inadequate kind of research. But you talk to anybody you can lay hands on. There was a structure, a Ryukyuan government structure, with a governor, a mayor of Naha, various officials, and an Okinawan staff. I'm afraid that all too often we drew on our local staff for this kind of report. I tried to find Okinawans who would talk to me and I talked to Americans, as well, who had contacts, to see what they thought, looking to those who were as objective as you could find. So I put together what I could. I would say now that what I did was inadequate, in terms of research--although I think that the conclusions of the report were correct. Anyhow, I prepared the report. It was a bombshell. By the time the report was completed, John Steeves had moved on. He'd gone to become Political Adviser to CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] in Hawaii.

But the American military command in Okinawa was outraged at this report. They wouldn't speak to me. I was shunned.

Q: Could you explain what the American military attitude was at that time?

BOEHM: They were convinced that we had to keep Okinawa. It was ours. They thought the Okinawans liked it that way, and the idea of more or less inviting Japan to start coming in and preparing eventually to take over was anathema to them. My report, by implication, rebutted their notion that the Okinawans loved us and wanted us to stay. A few of the military would come to me privately and say that it was a great report. They said that they couldn't say this publicly, but "You are absolutely right about what you said." The official American military reaction was very bad.

It happened that just after the report came out, I went to a consular conference in Tokyo. At that time the Ambassador was Douglas MacArthur II.

Q: General Douglas MacArthur's nephew.

BOEHM: Yes. The DCM in Tokyo at that time was Outerbridge Horsey.

Q: Two very much establishment types.

BOEHM: Very establishment. Horsey gave a luncheon for the visiting consular officers, to which Ambassador MacArthur, of course, was invited. Since Horsey had a protocol problem of whom to put next to Ambassador MacArthur, he solved it by choosing the two most junior persons present to sit next to the Ambassador. I was one of them. Ambassador MacArthur turned to me and said, "That was a first rate report on the reversion of Okinawa. Congratulations." I was

stunned and thrilled. I doubt if he had actually read it. His staff probably drew it to his attention. It gave me a tremendous lift.

Q: Oh, I'm sure.

BOEHM: And I got a letter from John Steeves, congratulating me on the report which, he said, was being read with interest in Hawaii. Even though the local reaction in Okinawa among our military was very negative, the report got some attention and attracted interest elsewhere.

Q: I think that it was the first time we really started to look at this issue.

BOEHM: It did that. I would like to think that I made a decisive contribution to something. As we go along in this interview, I'll come to other points in my career where I felt that I did something that was crucial at the time that I did it. But I'm not at all sure that this was the case [with regard to Okinawan reversion]. It was something which was going to happen, either then or a little bit later, in any case.

Q: Anyway, it was a timely report.

BOEHM: It was. It took a little time before we started to negotiate with Japan and to hand Okinawa back to them, although we kept our bases there. It worked out all right. Okinawa is still chafing a little bit. I read in the press the other day that the Japanese governor has been in Washington, asking us to give back a lot of land which we now use on our bases. Okinawa is land-poor. So that kind of issue--the base presence--goes on. But that is something that we will negotiate with the Government of Japan.

Q: I had a call from Japanese Public TV earlier this year--not too long ago. They wanted to do something or talk to people about the reversion issue and all of that. I said, "You know, you don't have to talk to the Japanese authorities. If you want to get different views, talk to the Pentagon and the Department of State people at that time, because that's really where the conflict was."

BOEHM: They ought to talk to Dick Sneider, who was head of the Political Section [in the Embassy in Tokyo] a little later. It was he who, while in Japan, or perhaps back in Washington in some capacity, gave impetus to the negotiations which ended up in the reversion of Okinawa. Anyway, I'd like to think that I made some kind of a contribution. But the point was that, as a very junior officer, I was given the opportunity to prepare this report. It made a splash. It was a great lift for me.

Q: Oh, absolutely. Was there anything else in Okinawa? Who was Consul General after Steeves?

BOEHM: It was another very fine career Foreign Service Officer named Olcott Deming. He went from there to be Ambassador to Uganda or Malawi and then retired. His son is now, I think, a senior officer in the Foreign Service. I was lucky in my assignment to the Consulate in Okinawa. Both Steeves and Deming were very good guys. I was in Naha for two years [1956-1958].

Q: You left Naha in 1958.

BOEHM: It was a two year tour.

OLCOTT H. DEMING
Consul General
Naha (1957-1959)

Olcott H. Deming was born in New York in 1909 and was raised in Connecticut. As a Foreign Service officer, he served in Thailand, Japan, and Uganda. Mr. Deming was interviewed by Horace G. Torbert on April 20, 1988.

DEMING: Let me just catch up with my history here in my mind.

After a long tour in the United Nations Bureau here and in New York, I was assigned, without much prior notice or expectation, to the post as Counselor of Embassy, Tokyo, and Consul General in Naha, Okinawa, which was still occupied by the American military and administered by the United States Army. At that time things were still very unsettled in China only 400 miles across the South China Sea from Okinawa. The military called Okinawa "the bastion of the Pacific." While the war with Korea was on, Okinawa was a base for jet fighters that could make just two bombing runs over Korea and get back without running out of fuel.

So you can imagine that the priority of Okinawa as a Pacific base for not only the Seventh Fleet but for the Air Force and the Marines. I had never served with the Army or in the military. It probably would have helped me if I had. But I found the "military mind" not inscrutable but difficult to accommodate to.

Q: *Channeled along somewhat different lines than you were yourself.*

DEMING: Than the diplomatic service, you're absolutely right, Ambassador.

When problems came up I'd have to consult with the High Commissioner, who was a three-star general, and I was the equivalent of a one-star general. When on an Army base civilian officers have an assimilated rank. As a Class 3 Officer I was equivalent to a brigadier general. The brigadier general on the base with whom I served, said, "Olcott on this base, Consul Generals rank with but after Brigadiers." So when meeting VIPs at the airport, I stood at the left of the brigadier general.

Q: *Respectfully one pace to the rear.*

DEMING: Respectfully.

When ran into a political matter, because I was really a political advisor although they didn't call it POLAD at that time, I would consult with the brigadier or the lieutenant general who were my

superiors. The High Commissioner on occasion would point out to me that Okinawa is not a democracy, it is not a sovereign country, it is an occupied island and we go "by the book." Don't you have a book to go by in the diplomatic field? I would say, no, we don't have a book. We improvise. It's the art of the possible, diplomacy is, within accepted limits.

The Commissioner might shake his head and repeat that the book tells us how to behave when you're on Okinawa. This is an occupied island, we are surrounded by the enemy. We do not fraternize with the enemy. At one meeting I noted that the army had a cultural program here that sends a great many Okinawans to the United States for education. The returned students called themselves "The Golden Gate Club." As a ranking civilian officer here, I give them receptions or parties from time to time. I said I'd like to have the High Commissioner come and talk to them.

That apparently was very difficult for him. He said, "we're still an occupied island and it must be perfectly clear to them that we are the conqueror. We do not fraternize."

I had a leading Okinawan up to my house one evening. He had to come through a check-point, naturally, before coming onto the military base. An incredulous Non Com phoned me up and said "this man says that he's invited to come to your house; is that right?" I said that it was.

As you can see I had some difficulty at first with "the military mind." I had a book by that title which I read assiduously. It was quite impressive and helpful. I thought, wouldn't it be nice in the conduct of diplomacy if we had such a book of rules. I was reminded of an episode during the retreat from Yalu during the Korean War. A correspondent asked a Marine general, "are you retreating, sir?" He replied, "Hell, no, we're not retreating. We're advancing in another direction."

The attitude of the military stemmed from their experience of the "Battle of Okinawa" and explained a lot of their longstanding feeling that this was the land of the enemy. I was told, it's hard to believe, that 153 ships of various sizes were sunk in the Battle of Okinawa. They had to advance from cave to cave, because the island is of volcanic formation. The caves were filled with Japanese with guns and hand grenades. It was a very bloody military operation, the first piece of Japanese territory that the American military had conquered. The Japanese fought to the last man to defend Okinawa. It was on a little island right off the main island that Ernie Pyle, as we may remember, was killed when he stuck his head up to see what was going on and they got him.

So it was a very learning experience for me. I tried to strike a balance. I had separate communications with the Department, which was always a sore point with the military. They got copies of my telegrams of course. The brigadier would often call me over to see him. He'd say, "I don't understand a paragraph here that looks like you're talking on behalf of the Okinawans instead of the High Commissioner." So we had quite a few run-ins of that kind. And it was difficult for them to have a diplomatic/civilian observer to some of their operations on Okinawa, which were often heavy-handed, and not sensitive to the feelings of the Okinawans who, after all, wanted to return to Japanese rule & were destined to do so.

It was significant that the Japanese had a representative on Okinawa who did not come from the foreign ministry or the Japanese foreign service. He came from the office of the Emperor. Had he

come from the foreign office it would indicate that Okinawa was a foreign country. This was a way of saying that Japan held ultimate sovereignty over Okinawa.

I was not there to see the treaty returning Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty.

Q: *What year was that?*

DEMING: That happened several years later, I think not until about 1970. And it was an occupied area all the time that I was there.

There was much linguistic misunderstanding. I used to follow the translation of the Okinawan daily press. Editorials often expressed the need for having a "confrontation" with the High Commissioner and the military government. This was due to poor translation. What it really meant was a "dialogue." The translators continued to use the term "confrontation" and this irritated the military highly. My Brigadier told me "if they want confrontation, we'll give it to them." I would try to explain that they felt the need for a give and take, a discussion of problems, frankly.

Q: *Face to face.*

DEMING: Face to face.

One of the interesting episodes of my stay on Okinawa was when John Foster Dulles and his wife flew in on his way back from Japan for an overnight stay. I gave a dinner for him at the officers' club. The Secretary was his usual cantankerous self. He at that time was suffering from rather advanced stages of abdominal cancer which later proved fatal. But he was still in a combative and energetic mood and wanted to know what my problems were as Consul General on Okinawa. I said that one of the problems is that the Okinawans want to know when they're going to return to Japanese rule. They did not understand what the term "residual sovereignty" meant. Trying to put a little humor into the situation, I observed that "residual sovereignty," with the Japanese difficulty with the letters 'r' and 'l', is almost impossible to pronounce. The Secretary said, "It's perfectly clear what I meant by 'residual sovereignty.' It means when we've finished with Okinawa the Japanese get it back. Any other problems?"

So that was that! (I found Dulles a man of extraordinary intelligence with a terrific bark but a rather gentle bite. He liked to drive you into a corner and make you stand up for what you think).

Continuing to make light conversation at the dinner, I mentioned that I had served under Ambassador Robert Murphy in Tokyo and that now he is Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs. Mr. Dulles barked, "my Robert Murphy! My Robert Murphy! He never served in the UN Bureau!" on that cheerful note the dinner ended. About 10 days later, I got a handwritten note from the Secretary: "Dear Mr. Deming. Robert Murphy was Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs for three weeks and one day. Sincerely. John Foster Dulles."

Q: *Ambassador Deming, it's now April 21st, I believe. Anyway, it's the next day that we left off from. I guess it's time to go on to your African life, except that I understand you have something you wanted to add on Okinawa. So do you want to go ahead with that?*

DEMING: Yes, Mr. Ambassador, thank you. I do have a footnote on Okinawa which illustrates rather dramatically the differing duties and priorities of the military in an occupation situation such as Okinawa, and the historic diplomatic reporting duties of a Foreign Service Officer.

In 1959 for the first time the High Commissioner agreed that there should be an election for the mayor of Naha, Okinawa, the capitol city. The Okinawans had been pressing for this. There were two candidates running for mayor. One, a Mr. Sanaga, who professed to be a Communist, was attracting more support than the other candidate. This presented a rather serious situation. Very shortly, the High Commissioner got in touch with me and said that we cannot tolerate having a Communist as mayor of the "Bastion of the Pacific" and I am changing the regulations under which candidates are qualified for mayor so that he will not be able to run. I said that this is going to be taken very seriously and with some alarm in Washington. He said, "yes, I know. That's why I wish you not to report what I plan to do." I said that this puts me in a very difficult position with my department. He said that yes, he knew that.

Then he took out the Executive Order establishing the authority of the High Commissioner of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands. A paragraph made it perfectly clear that the High Commissioner without consulting Washington could take any steps, military or political, which he deemed necessary to the security of the base, and to America's position on the base.

I suggested that we send a limited distribution or an "Eye's Only" telegram to the Department and the pentagon so that they would be apprized ahead of time and be prepared. The High Commissioner said that I knew as well as he that, in effect, there is no "limited distribution" or "Eye's Only." That means it will still go to top policy officers in several agencies. It would become a public matter very rapidly or difficult instructions will be issued to him, tying his hands. I said, "this may be very damaging to my position and career, but I understand your position and authority so I will not report in advance." He said, "I will help you any way I can if you get into difficulties."

The High Commissioner then issued a order abrogating or changing the rules for candidates for mayor of Naha, to this effect: That no one who had been arrested for a civil or criminal offense could run for mayor. It turned out that Sanaga, the Communist candidate, had one or more civil infractions of a rather minor nature, traffic or otherwise, but enough to come under the order. So the order went into effect. There was a great outcry in the Okinawa paper about "the failure of democracy, etc.," The election was held, Sanaga did not run, his opponent of course did win. A day later I got a short but hot telegram from the Department; it said, "Your failure to report has been taken to the highest levels. Please report. Dulles."

Of course I was prepared for this. And I reported, quoting from the Executive Order giving complete authority in such matters to the High Commissioner. And I said, if such episodes were not to happen again, the Executive Order should be amended. Then I went on to explain the origin of the crisis and ended by pointing out, as the High Commissioner had to me, that if I had

reported and news had got to Washington first and Washington had directed that Sanaga not been ruled out for election and had been elected, the headlines in American papers would be "State Department Supports Communist Mayor of military base, or stories to that effect." That apparently got them thinking a little bit.

Fortunately that blew over. But for whatever reason, after that John Foster Dulles was warmer towards me than he had been before. Whether it was because it gave him a chance to amend the Executive Order which had given such authority to the High Commissioner in an outlying province of Japan, with whom we had restored normal relations, and which was going to return to the sovereignty of Japan, or that he understood the position I had been put in under the military and the reasons therefore. I do not know. Changes were made in the Executive Order. I thought I would mention that because it shows the stresses that can develop between the diplomats and the military, each trying to carry out their obligations and responsibilities, as they see appropriate, to support American interests abroad.

WILLIAM CLARK, JR.
Chief, Liaison Office
Okinawa (1969-1972)

Ambassador William Clark, Jr. was born in California in 1930. He graduated from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in 1955. He served in the U.S. Navy intermittently from 1949 to 1953. In 1957, he joined the State Department, serving in Sierra Leone, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, India, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 11, 1994.

CLARK: Let me illustrate why I was not bilingual after two years of language school. When I first reported to duty in Osaka, Zurhellen told me that the Japanese Foreign Minister was coming to Kyoto for United Nations Day. He wanted me to go to hear the Foreign Minister and then to write a report on the speech. Fortunately, the authorities gave out copies of the text because the Foreign Minister was Mr. Shina, originally from the Island of Honshu. He spoke a dialect called Zuzuben which I didn't understand at all. I told Zurhellen that I might have wasted two years in language school. He said not to worry about it. A couple of nights later, we were invited by some local officials to a restaurant where we were served by some young ladies from local tea-houses. One of them sat next to me and I was looking forward to practicing my hard learned Japanese. She started speaking in an Osaka dialect which left me completely dumb-founded. I reported that episode to Zurhellen who again said not to worry about it. He invited me to a dinner at his house where he was going to entertain some senior Japanese businessmen. After dinner, one of the guest, the founding father of Matsushita (Panasonic), spoke to some of the guests who were sitting around. They were CEOs of their companies and were all graduates of Tokyo University. They were salaried. Matsushita owned his company although he had never gotten passed the fourth grade in his school in Osaka. Seeing his audience, he also began to speak in the local dialect. I asked him whether he was trying to do me in. After that episode, I decided I'd better learn some of the local dialect which I did. So the school could never have made its students bilingual because the dialects which you encounter in every part of Japan are so distinct that with

rare exceptions, almost all Japanese can fall back into their local dialect leaving other Japanese from other districts almost completely in the dark. Most Japanese will claim that they can understand all dialects, but I think they have troubles with some, if not all of them. All Japanese could understand my standard Japanese, but I could not understand all dialects. The one that really mystified most Japanese was the Okinawan dialect, which is now dying out. Okinawa is the only place in Japan where I needed an interpreter. He would interpret my Japanese into the local dialect and vice-versa. The Okinawan I was speaking with could not understand Japanese; I could not understand the Okinawan dialect. Because of TV and other interchanges, dialects are being used less and less today. The "official" Japanese language is basically the Tokyo dialect. …

Q*: How did your assignment to Okinawa come about?*

CLARK: As I said, I was in the regional Office of the Bureau for Far Eastern Affairs. I was a Japanese language officer. The Country Director for Japan at the time was Richard Sneider, later Ambassador to Korea. One day, he asked me to come to his office. All who know him have recognized what a great manipulator of policies and people he really was. He said that he wanted me to go to Okinawa to head up a liaison office--the political advisor's office for the Civil Administration. He said that he had sent my name to Bob Fearey, who had agreed on my assignment. Sneider said that Fearey knew me "well and favorable". I mentioned him in connection with the SEATO meeting that was held in 1969. He had moved from POLAD in Honolulu to Civil Administrator in Okinawa. I told Sneider that that assignment seemed alright. Once the word had gotten around, I received unsolicited advice from a number of people who thought I was making a mistake, primarily for going to work for Fearey. In fact, Bob and I became great friends and he is one of my son's godfathers. But he had a reputation of being very tough on people, particularly those who had not established the right relationships right away.

I knew something about the Okinawa problems from my tours in Japan. I also knew that, for the record, an assignment to Okinawa would show as "detail to the US Army". That was not the most propitious entry a Foreign Service officer could have on his record; I had no illusions that the Okinawa assignment would be "career-enhancing". But the opportunity to participate in a process which would return occupied territory to its former country seemed to me to be too important to miss. The decision to revert the island back to Japan had already been reached in the previous year; it was progressing towards an unset date, but I was confident that it would happen during my tour in Okinawa. I was looking forward to assisting the reversion and preventing any obstacles from being erected. What I didn't know was that Sneider was going to go to Tokyo, first as the officer in charge of the reversion process and later as the DCM. Sneider knew that when he asked me to go to Okinawa, but I didn't.

The whole administration of Okinawa was under the US Army. We did have a consulate there which was sub-office of the consular section in the Embassy in Tokyo. That was the ingenious solution to the question of how the US Government could have a Consulate in territory which it already administered. The head of Okinawa consular section was very unhappy with that solution because he was not treated as a Principal Officer which impacted on his eligibility for a number of allowances like Official Residence expenses. All of the Americans in the Consular Section remained part of the State Department establishment; they were not seconded to the US Army.

That office was there primarily to service the American military who needed documentation if they were to leave Okinawa for visits to other places. The US military was not entirely happy with the State Department presence for quite a while, but it finally adjusted to it.

I, on the other hand, was detailed to the US Army as were all of the Foreign Service officer who worked for the Civil Administration. I replaced John Manjo who had been the first Foreign Service Officer to head the liaison office. Before that, that position had been filled by a US Army civilian. The office liaisoned with lots of units, but principally it was there to maintain contact with the government of the Ryukyu Islands, which was run by Okinawans. That was the organization that really governed the Islands.

The US presence in Okinawa was headed by a High Commissioner. He was also the commander of the 8th Army--a lieutenant general. He was assisted by the 8th Army Chief of Staff, a CINCPAC Chief of Staff because the General also was part of the CINCPAC staff, and a civilian Chief of Staff. Below that level, there was a large Civil Administration staff, which had legal, economic and administrative sections as well as the Liaison Office. The Civil Administrator was a civilian; his deputy was a Colonel. Over time, the Department assigned Foreign Service Officers to the Civil administrator. When it became clear that the Islands would be reverted to Japan, the Army became less and less interested in the function and the State Department increased its representation because, wisely, it thought it was important to have officers in Okinawa who knew the language and the culture as we approached the actual reversion date. So my deputy was a Foreign Service Officer; there were two other FSOs in the Liaison Office as well as four military officers, three secretaries, two Japanese-Americans for translation purposes and two Okinawans.

Our major political objective was to keep stability on the Islands until Japan could take control. We were concerned with anti-base agitations which was on-going; much of it was generated, strangely enough, by the base workers' union. We used to have demonstrators demanding the abolition of the bases and the same time they insisted on no more reductions in staffing. Logic was not of great importance! So we had to wrestle with some unrest. The US had used Okinawa for a storage area for poison gas--mustard and CSH nerve gas. The demonstrations forced us to remove that material from the Islands. That was very touchy issue.

Then we had to worry about the future of the facilities we had on Okinawa. Over the years, the US had maintained that many of these facilities were being built for the benefit of the islanders, but which, as part of the final settlement, were in fact sold to Japan for $360 million, which in the late 1960s was a fairly sizeable amount. Ten percent of that went, at the demand of Senator Javits, to a Japan-US Friendship Commission--an educational program which is devoted to funding research and studies. It is still alive even though it had been expected to go out of business years ago.

We had to deal with the disposition of the Senkaku Islands which are located between Okinawa and Taiwan. They are on the Chinese Continental Shelf. Nevertheless, Japan claimed them--the only territory claimed by Japan which is on the other side of the Japanese chain. These islands had been part of the Japanese Empire, but had been administered from Taiwan. When we occupied Okinawa, we administered the islands from there. The US government, in one of its

usual firm, unswerving positions, said that it was turning the administration of the islands over to Japan, but would not take a position on which country they belonged to. The Taiwanese stimulated some demonstrations against this solution on the Senkakus which we had to deal with.

One other issue that we worked on diligently was the question of which facilities might be retained on the Islands and which would have to be relocated. In fact, this was not a major problem. Unlike the our bases in Japan, the bases in Okinawa were leased from the Okinawans. That made for a large "landlord community". As we approached reversion, the Japanese government picked up the leases and became the tenants. The lease terms were quite generous; in most cases, the leases were more profitable for the Okinawan owners than alternative uses. That factor dampened down the enthusiasm for closing the bases.

The reversion negotiations were a three way discussion: the Japanese government, the Okinawans and us. There wasn't much interest in the issues in other countries. It some way, the most difficult part of the process was to get the various US bureaucracies to agree and to speak with one voice. Let me take you back into history briefly. The first US administrator of the Islands was the US Navy. Then the responsibility was shifted to the US Army. The High Commissioner, as I mentioned, was a US General--the last one being Jim Lambert. We were all fortunate that he was in charge during the end game; in fact, he extended his tour in Okinawa for another year to finish the job. He had been an engineer and thought that seeing reversion to fruition would be a high note of his career. Issues referred to the Pentagon were handled by a special group in the Office of International Security Affairs which was responsible for Okinawa and Panama issues. This group had been in being for many years; it had a relatively narrow view of Okinawa. It resisted change. The Army finally reluctantly agreed to support reversion, in part pushed by Lambert who was committed to the process and who was instrumental in making progress. The Army, until 1968, viewed Okinawa as a vital defense territory for the defense of our Far East position. The Navy was much more relaxed. They had a much smaller operation on the Islands. The Air Force had a large installation as did the Marines, but the Army was in charge and therefore viewed itself the greater "defender of the faith". The Air Force and the Marines knew that their facilities would remain even after reversion; so they stayed out of involvement in the politics of reversion. Three years before reversion, the Okinawan government changed from a conservative one to a reform in an election. The new Chief Executive was less favorably disposed to us than his predecessors, but he was absolutely committed to getting us out of the civil administration of the Islands. That helped in getting good cooperation out of him. We were able to do some things with that Executive that we might not have been able to do with a conservative. For example, he was very helpful in the removal of chemical weapons, which was quite an operation.

I think in general we had done a pretty good job in getting the Okinawans prepared to administer their own territory. We certainly did a far better job there than we did in Micronesia. The Okinawans, at reversion time, were in pretty good economic shape by South East Asian standards. They were not at the level of their countrymen in Japan, but then they had not been there even before the war. It became the poorest prefecture in Japan as it had been before the war. Our investment was relatively modest to that made by Japan after reversion. We had done a fair amount, but our investment was essentially in the development of the bases, which did become the mainstay of the economy. The Islands were essentially an agricultural area; employment

provided by the bases was a major economic boost. Of course, a whole base support industry developed--bars, restaurants, etc. We had a good many Americans stationed on Okinawa who spent some of their income on the local economy. So our presence certainly was important to the economy, but still not sufficient to bring it up to Japanese standards. We did relatively little on infrastructure investment. We were building a rather large dam to help improve a fair water system. The roads were acceptable and we were building some at the time of reversion. There was a working telephone system. So the economy was finally moving in the right direction; the Japanese accelerated the process.

I arrived in Okinawa after the initial negotiations had been completed. The amounts of compensations had been settled. But there here were still some ambiguities that had to be worked out. One was that, in the reversion agreement, we had promised the Okinawans a complete after system. That seemed to have been forgotten in days after. When we finally got around to looking at it, we found that the main pumping station was in the middle of Kadena Air Base. The Air Force was reluctant to turn the base over to the Okinawans, but eventually it gave in and we did return the base to Okinawa. That was just one example of a lot of loose ends that had to be tied down before the final ceremony. These fine points were not left intentionally vague; the initial agreement was relatively detailed and voluminous, but still too broad to nail down every last aspect. We spent a lot of time with Japanese on how the various projects--the dam, the roads, etc.--that we had started would be completed. In retrospect, that was primarily an exercise in negotiations because once the Japanese took control of the Islands, they proceeded as they wished. We undertook those negotiations because we had an engineering division in the Civil Administration which was dedicated to doing a good job and it wanted to be sure that the Japanese would not let all their good work go down the drain. Actually, we just should have told the Japanese what we were working on, given them the plans and then let them do what they pleased.

The initial negotiations were between the Japanese and the US Government. Subsequently, as the details had to be worked out, the Ryukyu Islands administration was brought in making the those discussions tri-partite. The US was represented by a Foreign Service officer assigned especially to Okinawa for these last negotiations; he had a small staff working with him. The Japanese had an Ambassador assigned to Okinawa; he was the head of their delegation. The Chief Executive of the Ryukyu Islands was the chief Okinawan representative and he also has a small staff devoted entirely to the negotiations. At the end of the day, it was primarily a hand-holding operation which was useful in that regard. The Americans doing the negotiations never really appreciated how useful their role really had been. They thought they should be far more operational, but that is not what that staff was intended to be. They were there to act as an information transmission belt and to make sure that all none of the Okinawans were surprised by any developments. This process permitted the local inhabitants to have considerable input before they were officially at the negotiating table.

From the time the US Government had agreed to deal with reversion, the State Department began to infiltrate the US military establishment on the Islands. We, who worked in a US Army organization, got along quite well with the US military. By the time I arrived, the Civil Administrator and his staff had the confidence of the High Commissioner and the US military-civilian interface went quite well. We, of course, had differences of opinions with the US

military on substantive issues, but we were fully accepted by them as part of their operations. The Consular office, which as I mentioned was a sub-office of the Embassy in Tokyo, had a more difficult time. The head of the office was never quite pleased with his status because, as I also mentioned earlier, he never had all the perks that went with being a Principal Officer. Until just shortly before reversion actually took place, the US military was very suspicious of the independent State Department personnel on the Islands. They used to monitor the consular operation closely, even though that function was in Okinawa essentially for the benefit of the military. Of course, as time went on, that consular operation was most helpful to the Okinawans who wanted to travel to US or its territories. At one point, Dick Flint, who was the head of that consular office, used to go to Tokyo once each quarter to report what was going on in Okinawa because all of his communications went through military channels, which he felt restricted his reporting. He did write letters and traveled to Tokyo, but I think he felt that he was being censored. The consular section actually worked on one of the military bases; that meant that Okinawans who had consular business to transact had to go through a military check-point.

My assignment to Okinawa was rather serendipitous in the first place having accidentally met Bob Fearey while I was working on SEATO Affairs in Washington. I arrived in Okinawa right after the completion of a major conference on the reversion process. Representatives of State and DOD from Washington attended as well as representatives of the High Commissioner. I was told that it had been a very good conference, except for one occasion when a State Department officer--trying to be amusing, I think--commented that General Lambert was using "back channel" communications to Washington. The General didn't appreciate the gratuitous remark and tore the State Department officer into shreds. In fact, Lambert did not use "back channels" and tried his best to be very cooperative with all elements of the US government. The conference finally got over that inauspicious beginning and was successful. My job, right from the beginning, was to liaison with the government of the Ryukyu Islands. At an earlier period, the Civil Administrator and the Government of the Ryukyu Islands had been in the same building. But then a new headquarters was built which separated us from the local government--three miles away which most often took thirty minutes to navigate. So the Liaison Office was not spending as much time as it should have with the Okinawans. It was my job to see the Chief Executive, although his official counterparts were really the High Commissioner and the Civil Administrator. My main task was the liaison one. I was also responsible for a public affairs function, which included the management of a small fund to build small village places and other facilities of that kind and were intended primarily to engender good will. We spent some time on "putting out fires". If problems arose, we would try to find solutions. We intervened to a considerable extent in local politics. The last time we tried it--election of Chief Administrator-- it was an abject failure. We did support the LDP candidate for Chief Administrator. He was followed by a conservative who in turn was succeeded by a socialist, Mr. Yara, who also became the first governor after reversion. About the time I got to Okinawa, the LDP opened an office in Okinawa, headed by a Mr. Nishimi. He later became the Governor of the Islands. Before I arrived, I believe that we provided financial support to LDP candidates; by the time I arrived, the election had taken place and no further US government financial support was disbursed. There was an election of Mayor of Naha. But the reform Mayor was so solidly entrenched that his election was assured. But we had a policy before reversion had been agreed on to support candidates that backed the status quo.

One of the things that I found interesting was the chemical weapons removal because it gave me considerable insight into the workings of several organization. One of those was the US military. The existence of weapons had been published in the *Wall Street Journal* about six months before my arrival in Okinawa. The military was rehabilitating some of the mustard gas canisters which were deteriorating. A small leak had developed on one of the canisters; no harm had one to anyone, but the story became known to the *Wall Street Journal*. That began the drive to remove them form Okinawa. The preparation for evacuation was very elaborate. at the last minute, Washington decided that a test run would be necessary--six months in advance of the total evacuation. Some of us argued against this decision on the grounds that a test run would only exacerbate the local concerns; if we were to get the gas out of Okinawa, we should do it as rapidly as possible. But we didn't prevail. We briefed all of the islanders. We had a Colonel who went all over Okinawa briefing all the local inhabitants, explaining the procedures and what the convoy would look like--a police car in front, then an MP car, then a contamination truck, an ambulance, then the five gas carrying trucks and then the same configuration in back--the ambulance, contamination truck, etc. When the demonstration process began, I was on the press bus watching the convoy leave the base. This convoy had only four trucks in it, raising the question of what happened to the other truck. Later, the Colonel explained that his briefings were based on a "normal" convoy; there wasn't enough mustard gas to require five trucks. A story of unintended consequences. The convoy had a long way to go to Tengan Pier, where the gas would be loaded onto to ships--it was too heavy to fly out. The Okinawans objected to that route. So in the six months between the demonstration and the real thing, we had to build a special road that went straight to the pier, mostly across military occupied territory. The Okinawans had a point; the transport of gas is a dangerous process; their population would have been at greater risk over the original route. But had we not had the practice run, but actually evacuated the gas right away, we would have been successful too. The gas was transported to Johnson Island where, as far as I know, it still rests. We built a disposal facility there, which hopefully has been used.

During the actual evacuation of the gas, Okinawa was going through a severe drought. So we tried to help out by bringing some "cloud seeders" to Okinawa. We tried to make it rain when the convoys were not moving. Trying to make it rain, but not at specific times, was a complicated task in itself. It didn't work very well. There was rain, for which the "cloud seeders" took credit. Unfortunately, most of time, the rain fell in the seas away from the Islands.

I mentioned that Dick Sneider had gone to Tokyo as Minister for Okinawa Reversion. Dave Osborn was the DCM. When Dave left, the two jobs were combined and Dick became the DCM. By the time I arrived, the direct communications problem had been solved and we had no difficulties. As I mentioned before, earlier in the history of the Okinawa occupation, the US military always wanted to put its spin on the analysis of local events. By the time I arrived that was no longer true and we sent our messages without censorship. The Embassy received copies of almost all the messages we sent, which were sent to the Pentagon with the Department receiving copies. We traveled back and forth often; that was true for Embassy personnel as well as Japanese Foreign Office officials. So we had a close working relationships with Tokyo. Washington was still concerned about reversion. The military of course was interested in maintaining as much of their base structure as possible. The Vietnam war was still on, which made Okinawa a very important logistic base for that effort. Trucks and tanks were repaired on the island, by the hundreds. Reversion was also important as an aspect of US-Japan relations, so

that the State Department was interested in what was happening on the Islands. But by the time I arrived, the decision to return and the broad outlines of an agreement had been reached. Our job in 1970 and for the following two years was just to get it done and leaving.

As I mentioned, we did have a mounting number of demonstrations as we got closer to reversion. They culminated one evening in a march on our headquarters in late 1971 or early 1972. I was in a helicopter at the time overseeing the demonstration and radioing back what was happening. That was the last march. It was a union-sponsored march, but it had been infiltrated by some radical students. They managed to pull one policeman from his group; they knocked him down and threw Molotov cocktails on him, killing him. That ended demonstrations for good; the Okinawans had had enough. The students came from the local University. Some of the demonstrated came from Japan. There was a well known incident involving our Marines who had been in Vietnam. The Marine commander, Lew Wilson, later Commandant of the Corps and a Congressional Medal of Honor holder, had decided that despite all their Vietnam experience, his troops still needed more experience, particularly in building "fire bases". He decided that he would hold some maneuvers in the northern training area. The Marines built a gun emplacement and put a 105 into it. In the meantime, local criticism, which spread throughout the world, grew because the Marines were invading the territory of the red throated woodpecker. People were concerned that the gun fire would scare the animals and that might prevent their reproduction. Some Japanese demonstrators showed up and Wilson figured he could handle them by himself. He didn't ask for any assistance from any one who knew something about Japanese or demonstrations. He sent one of his Okinawan employees to monitor the demonstrators. They got half way up the hill where the gun stood. One of them climbed a tree and nailed the Japanese flag on it and refused to come down. I talked to the Civil Administrator about the situation and urged him to call Wilson to cancel the exercise. The Civil Administrator did that and I monitored the conversation on an other phone nearby. Wilson got on and the Civil Administrator said: "Lou, I have Bill Clark on the extension. He would like to talk to you!". So I gave Wilson my arguments; they didn't get very far. The Marines' political advisor told Wilson that the kid on the tree was obviously a leftist and that his fellow demonstrators would congregate around the tree. Of course, anyone who knew anything about Japan would have known that the leftists hated the flag and would never have used it, much less rallied around it. The Marines took a chain saw and threatened to cut the tree down unless the kid climbed down. He of course wouldn't; so the tree was cut down, kid and flag and all. The kid broke a couple of ribs and was treated in the US military hospital. All this happened while I was in a meeting with General Wilson, three other generals and some of the Okinawans who were protesting the proposed exercise. Wilson got a note during the meeting. He passed the note to other generals and me with many inappropriate expletives. Finally, CINCPAC called from Hawaii and told Wilson to knock off the exercise. Despite this rough beginning, Wilson and I got along very well. As it turned out, the kid was a conservative and the son of a Japanese policeman. He didn't object to our forces being in Okinawa or in japan; he just didn't want the red throated woodpecker disturbed. That is just an illustrations of some of the problems we encountered with the military. It was also an example of a Japanese who wanted the US military to stay in Okinawa but he was definitely in the minority.

The reversion decision had been big news in Japan. The details and some of the troublesome implementations were not headline material. Sato, who served seven years as Prime Minister, was the big Japanese "mover" on reversion. He had said that his principal goal was to end the

war in the Far East by the Okinawa reversion. He stayed as Prime Minister until it was completed. He is one of the few politicians who supported a positive policy that he was able to see to fruition.

In closing this chapter of my career, I should describe the actual reversion ceremony which took place on May 15, 1972. It was done on that day because the Japanese fiscal year ended on March 31. The Japanese wanted reversion take place on April 1. Our fiscal year, in those days, ended on June 30 and therefore we were holding out for July 1. The obvious compromise: May 15, which made everybody unhappy. I remember one staff meeting when the generals got into a debate over the need to put up another flag post on all of the bases after reversion in order to fly both the American and the Japanese flags. The debate was about the modalities of pulling down our flag and then putting it up with the Japanese one. I suggested that the ceremony take place at midnight, after sun down when our flag is lowered in any case. And so it was done. We pulled down our flag at sunset and raised both the next day.

RICHARD W. PETREE
Consul General
Naha (1972-1973)

Richard W. Petree was born in Jamestown, New York in 1924. His career in the State Department included assignments to Japan and Ethiopia. He served as political counselor to the United Nations from 1976-1981. Mr. Petree was interviewed by Paul McCusker on July 22, 1993.

PETREE: That was because of Okinawan reversion in 1972 and I was picked up and sent on direct transfer.

Q: *From Addis direct to Naha?*

PETREE: Back to Naha. And I arrived there in early May just days before reversion on May 15th, 1972. I participated in the reversion ceremony down in Naha. I delivered greetings to the Okinawan people, in Japanese, which hadn't been done before. It made a stir in the press and it was fun to watch.

Q: *Did you run into a guy named Jay Van Swekringen, or had he left already?*

PETREE: Sure. Oh, he had left there but I had known him while I was on the desk, mostly because he was out there at that time.

Q: *That's right, because I replaced him in Jakarta, originally as commercial attaché, but we didn't have any commercial business in Indonesia during the Sukarno period. Anyway, we eliminated the commercial attaché position, but I replaced him. He'd been in Indonesia for several years, and then he went off to Naha. That must have been a delicate business*

representing the American community. The Japanese, of course, I guess, were happy to have Okinawa back as part of their country. How did you find the dealings with the Japanese went?

PETREE: That was smooth. That was the smaller part of the problem. There was tension between Okinawans and Japanese authorities in Tokyo, principally because Okinawans have always traditionally been treated as second-class citizens on ethnic grounds, if nothing else. They were terribly sensitive about how they would be treated in the new era after reversion. And there was a great deal of nervousness between the two of them in that early period when reversion occurred. And there still is, but it has settled down now, particularly, I think, smoothed out by the amount of money Japan has spent on trying to bring them up to speed. They've thrown a huge amount of central government funds into helping Okinawa get on its feet again.

But the big job that I'll never forget was dealing with Americans. Understand it was then the Vietnam war, and the focus of the military commanders, who were all very, very senior people, Marine, Air Force, Army and Navy, and they were all present on the island, and they'd been there for many, many years and had their own environment that they had built and hated to see it go. And for the most part were emotionally pitched against the State Department's foolishness of trying to give Okinawa back to the Japanese. So, the big tensions that I had to deal with were in every day's dealings with the feelings and the other preoccupations that the military commanders tried to protect. The general thing that never had occurred to me before, is that we Americans are no different than anybody else in the world. We form attachments for a territory, or a turf, and a place, just like the Panama Canal, and the Philippines more recently. But it was true in Okinawa too. We are colonialist just as much as anybody else, and that had never occurred...I always felt like that was one thing you could forget about. We Americans never did those bad things, never had those instincts that drove other nations. But it was true.

ROBERT B. PETERSEN
Executive Officer, USIA
US Pavilion, Okinawa's World's Fair
Okinawa (1974-1976)

Mr. Petersen was born and raised in Ohio and educated at Oberlin College. He entered the USIA Foreign Service in 1965 and served as Public and Cultural Affairs Office in Embassies or Consulates in Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Mauritius, Israel, Morocco and Cote d'Ivoire. He also served in several senior USIA positions in Washington, D.C. Mr. Peterson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: You were in Japan from '74 to when?

PETERSEN: I left again in '76. I went to Okinawa and set up shop in a Hilton hotel. If I wanted to sum it up in a couple of sentences, I could describe the whole expo. It's like the circus coming to town. You go in, you put the tent up, you do the show, take the tent down, and away you go. That describes to some extent what I did. I was the executive officer. The person in charge of the

pavilion was hired from outside the Agency, Allen Beech from Seattle, who had had experience working at international fairs in different capacities. He was hired to be the pavilion manager. As a deputy, the Agency provided him a fellow named Nikita Gregorovich Barski from USIA, a career employee. I was the executive officer, handled the administration, which included personnel, security, maintenance, and so forth. Quite a change for a public diplomacy specialist. When I got to Naha, I think I was the third one to arrive. Al Beech was there. Nik Barski was there. When I left in '76, I was the last one to leave, turned out the lights. It included tearing down the site and returning the land to the same contours that it had before the pavilion was there. It was an impressive building. It was modular in design. We had an administrative module and about seven exhibit modules, one that had to do with weather forecasting using satellites over the ocean, another that was all about deep sea drilling. In one module, we had a huge saltwater aquarium. In addition to the fish, we would have people go in with television cameras and they'd be filming the artificial reef and filming the fish. We'd have monitors outside showing what the people were filming inside. It was very interesting. From late '74 until sometime in late spring of '76, I was attached to the pavilion. We had 75-80 employees, maybe more, who were direct employees. I had security and maintenance teams who were just contractors who were hired. It went smoothly to the visiting public and was very impressive. Of course, behind the scenes, it was just an incredibly mixed up, challenging thing to provide support, see that the pavilion was constructed according to plans, that the exhibits got there, were installed properly. I continued recruiting personnel once I got to Okinawa. My first couple of months there, a lot of time was spent on that, interviewing and hiring appropriate personnel. I did not hire some of the technical people, the people doing filming. I certainly didn't have anything to do with hiring anybody involved in construction per se. That was all done under a blanket contract. It was mainly to hire guides and administrative staff, support personnel. I hired a librarian to set up and run our library at the pavilion.

Q: How did you find the interaction? Okinawa is out in the boondocks for most Japanese.

PETERSEN: One of the reasons for having the exposition there was to help with Okinawan development. Reversion had occurred in '72. The Okinawan prefectural government and the Japanese national government, was looking for ways to develop Okinawa. It was felt that tourism could, would, and should play a major role in Okinawa's economic future. It was felt the International Expo. would be a good way to kick off an effort to increase tourism to Okinawa, both Japanese and international tourism. But also it fit in with road building, developing roads to the center of Okinawa and into Nago and out to the Motobu Peninsula, where the exposition was placed. All sorts of infrastructure upgrades, not only such things as roads, communication upgrades and so forth, but beautifying Okinawa, planting the palm trees along the highway and doing other things to really make it attractive to tourism, building additional hotels, increasing hotel space, restaurants, and so forth. It was all designed to not just ease the way into increased tourism, but to really jumpstart tourism to Okinawa. Behind the scenes, for us, it was a real challenge to not only get it constructed but to put appropriate exhibits into the pavilion. Congress provided what could be described as seed money. But to have exhibits and so forth was dependent on going out and going to organizations and getting them to donate exhibits or material that could be used as part of exhibits. Lockheed provided something that occupied all by itself one of the modules, a model of a future floating city that showed how you could have a self-contained thing that a few thousand people would live on. It used the thermal difference in

the temperature between the surface water and deep water to set up a circulation that powered this floating city. It was a grandiose, greatly expanded floating oil derrick. It was a model made out of plywood or something. It showed how such a thing could operate. The Jansen company was approached and provided some of the costuming for our guides. Bayliner provided a boat to us. We had a nice inboard-outboard 28-foot Bayliner. I'll tell you a funny story. From the company's point of view, it was an opportunity to show off one of its products to people who would see it in the midst of this exposition. I was an executive officer, so I guess you could call me a bean counter. My fellow bean counters back in Washington took a jaundiced view of this and were disturbed that we had this boat on our inventory there. There was discussion about how it would not only be used for representational purposes by the commissioner general of the U.S. pavilion but that it would be available for emergency commuting from near Kadena Air Base up to Nago when the roads were not passable because of construction and so forth. It may have been used that way a couple of times, but it was a several hour trip by boat, much longer than going by highway when the highways were open.

In any event, at one point during the exposition, word came down from Washington that we had to get rid of that boat immediately. We got rid of it just prior to the end of the expo. Somebody in Washington was disgruntled that we had that boat there. I had to find a buyer and sell the boat.

Q: Did you find that you were bringing in Japanese tourists?

PETERSEN: The expo was a bust financially. People who invested money, the collateral people, not the official exhibitors, of course, the big company, Mitsubishi, had a nice exhibit there, and other major companies did. It must have been part of their marketing budget and they accounted for it as marketing. People like us, it was an expenditure for our government, the seed money. For some of our exhibitors, I don't know which ones, there was a marketing benefit. But the people who invested money in restaurants, hotels, and particularly souvenirs didn't make out very well. I know some of them were extremely disappointed. They said that the estimates about the projected number of visitors had been highly inflated by whoever was originally in charge of conceiving the idea of the expo. There was a lot of disgruntlement by businesspeople.

Q: Looking at it from a distance and not knowing the territory, I would think you've got Okinawa, a relatively poor area with not a huge population. You'd have to rely on a lot of Japanese particularly flying down there. I wouldn't think Okinawa would be the place the Japanese would fly to.

PETERSEN: The number of visitors did not reach the projections. There are lots of reasons and explanations, everything from the general state of the economy, to the remote location, but it's true that it was not an expo that provided a lot of monetary benefit to people who invested in the collateral parts of it.

Q: I realize you were really tied up with the Expo. Okinawa had reverted to Japanese control just a few years before. How was this working?

PETERSEN: Aside from just a brief airport visit once on my way to Malaysia in '68, I had not been in Okinawa until I arrived again in '74. The return of Okinawa to Japanese control had been

in place for a couple of years. There was still a rather healthy expatriate American community there. People were involved in business, many of whom supported the American military presence, a few who had branched out and were just a regular part of the Japanese economy. I got to know quite a number of them very quickly because we turned to them for some services, some work that we needed at the pavilion as well as just general guidance as to what was going on in economic and business sense in Okinawa. But a few things stand out. One time, an American schoolteacher who taught in the military school system there for many years, said to me at a social event, "This was terrible, this reversion. This was a number one territory that the U.S. needed. We'd developed it. We should keep it." I remember looking askance at her and thinking, "I never thought I'd hear…" She was a schoolteacher but employed by the military system, so technically she was a U.S. government employee. I was surprised to hear a fellow U.S. government career employee talking in that fashion. I heard echoes of that from a few other Americans who were irate and felt that we had done so much and that our contribution to developing Okinawa was not appreciated. These people said to me, "Every Okinawan wanted to remain part of the United States." I was thinking, "Oh, are you out to lunch. What nonsense!" I forget the technical word for someone who wants to hang on to a territory that way. I heard a few stories told half humorously about the bumpy transition to Japanese control. One of them might be an urban legend about a Japanese businessman who was visiting Okinawa and was caught speeding in his car. He told the policeman, "You have no right to arrest me. Okinawa belongs to Japan. I'm a Japanese. You can't do this." He was talking to an Okinawan Japanese policeman supposedly. I'd hear stories like that. I heard a lot of nonsense, frankly. I did not observe any significant difficulties, wasn't really aware of any.

Q: Recruiting from former missionaries, did you have any problems with them reverting back to missionary reflexes?

PETERSEN: Wanting to prosthelytize, they'd go out and spend their free time going door to door? No. That was not an issue. I don't know the number of former Mormon missionaries we got in, probably six, certainly fewer than 10 out of the total number of guides that we had. We had quite a diverse group. We ended up recruiting quite a number of people who had grown up in Okinawa, sons and daughters of longtime residents, people who had U.S. citizenship but who had grown up and lived in Okinawa, gone to American schools there and were fluent in Japanese. Our guides were divided into different groups. Some were the outside greeters. All the guides were costumed. Some of them on the exterior were welcoming visitors and would be dressed in American colonial costumes, the men in the colonial seaport look. We had some models and displays of American sailing ships showing the development of seafaring technology in the U.S. from the first years of the Republic. The women guides were dressed in colonial period, something like hoop skirts and bonnets. Inside, depending on the location, we had some people dressed as oil-rig people with hardhats and so forth as they'd look if they were working in oil exploration. Others in the modules having to do with future technology were dressed in futuristic costumes. It was quite a diverse group of men and women as our guides.

Q: In '76, you moved on. Did the fact that the fair was sort of a bust carry over?

PETERSEN: It did. Having been associated with it didn't work to my advantage in terms of a corridor reputation. At the same time, it would be greatly exaggerated if I suggested that was

some significant impediment to me in any way. You know how it works in Washington. You come back and meet somebody on the elevator and between three or four floors you exchange your recent vita. If you've come from a hotspot and done something, you get off the elevator and that person's mind says, "Wow! So-and-So is up to great things and just continuing with his stellar career." If I said to somebody, "Well, I just got back from this expo, it wasn't the greatest thing in the world." They'd think, "Petersen's on a downward slope." But it was a frustrating, difficult experience.

I was the last person to leave the expo staff. We finished it in January of '76. All the others had departed over a period of many weeks. Come late spring, I was still there returning the last of our equipment and vehicles that we'd gotten on long-term loan from the U.S. military.

There is a little interesting sidelight. Congress provided seed money but we had to go around and get donations in order to make this thing work. In one sense, we were living hand to mouth. We needed a fleet of vehicles. When I got to Okinawa, it was arranged that we would borrow them from the U.S. military. I went over and in a series of meetings with some of the DOD people worked out an arrangement where we were going to be provided with six passenger vans.

This technicality was that the rules of participating in the exposition were that you had to import the things you were going to use. Other countries that were participating had to purchase an imported vehicle or actually physically import vehicles that they were going to use for their pavilions. No one else had a military presence on the island. I patted myself on the back for being able to figure out a bureaucratic way of dealing with that. We took those U.S. military vehicles and technically exported them out of Japan and then reimported them a few seconds later with the appropriate paperwork. We weren't doing anything dishonest and we weren't doing anything that the Japanese didn't agree to and know fully well what we were doing. We imported the vehicles for the use of the U.S. pavilion on paper. But then we took the vehicles and had them all repainted from the olive drab and painted over any identifying marks of the military, painted them all white, and then had the USA pavilion logo stenciled on the sides of the vehicles. It made a very handsome fleet of vehicles. When I left, I had to go through the whole thing again, export those vehicles and have them reimported by the U.S. military. I dropped them off at some military lot. Presumably, they repainted them back to olive drab again and put them back into use. We did that with a number of things.

There were all sorts of things that I went through in dealing with personnel, security, and shipping. I'm often asked about what it was like to work in Japan and I sometimes use as an example my experience negotiating a shipping contract, which I did shortly after arriving in Okinawa while we were still housed in the Hilton Hotel and using the Hilton as our office base. All the pavilions, all the national exhibitors, had to have shipping contracts to have things shipped in, as did we. I went into this and the negotiations took a couple of weeks. It was an elaborate and not unsatisfying act that we went through sitting down with the team, never fewer than five or six people across the table from me from the Japanese representing the expo organizers. They offered us an array of potential shipping companies that had been approved by the expo organizers. I was free to select among them. I knew going in prior to the first meeting that they knew which one they wanted me to pick and I wasn't sure they knew that I knew they knew. But we went through these long negotiations. At the end of it, although we talked in great

detail about what would and wouldn't be covered, what the fees would be, could we get a discount here or there. I'll never forget standing up, reaching across the table and shaking hands and knowing in my heart of hearts that, yes, eventually we're going to put pen to paper and sign the contract but this thing was going to work because I was dealing with a Japanese company whose reputation was on the line and once the handshake took place, that was it. There would be no deviousness on their part, nothing unfulfilled. They were going to make sure that we were happy. I also knew or suspected that everybody on the Japanese side knew the outcome before we began, certainly which of the companies I was going to be steered to. I felt we got a very good deal on the shipping contract. The same thing happened on contracting with the security company to provide a staff of guards. I enjoyed it. I since have had some experience negotiating with American companies and sometimes there can be a big difference. But there was this certain sense of honor and confidence that I could really trust. I knew the outcome would be good and indeed it was. We never had any problems with any of the Japanese companies that we dealt with. We had problems with some American companies, but not the other way. But I don't want to come across sounding like some naive Japanophile here. It's not that. But it was an interesting process, the negotiations.

ULRICH A. STRAUS
Consul General
Okinawa (1978-1982)

Ulrich A. Straus was born in Germany in 1926 and, after some time in Japan, his parents settled in the United States. He served in the U.S. Army and attended the University of Michigan. Mr. Straus joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and served in Japan, Germany, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

STRAUS: A job in Okinawa opened up.

Q: *This was 1978-82.*

STRAUS: Right.

Q: *I assumed you jumped at this chance?*

STRAUS: I did.

Q: *The position was...*

STRAUS: As Consul General. This was six years after reversion and Okinawa by that time was a regular part of Japan. The thing that makes Okinawa unusual and why we have a consulate there in the first place is the fact that we have somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of our total military forces in Japan on Okinawa. The time that I was there that meant about 50,000 Americans, including dependents, which translates to five percent of the population.

Q: *It is not a heavily populated island then.*

STRAUS: Well, a million people. Part of the area is jungle. Of course, the potential of problems are manifold. On my way to Japan I stopped off in Tokyo and had a memorable first encounter with Ambassador Mansfield. He was so gracious. He asked me if I wanted a cup of coffee, and I said, "yes." He goes out into the little vestibule next to his office and makes the coffee. I also, of course, talked to Bill Sherman, an old friend, who was DCM at the time. Bill in effect told me to do my thing down there. He didn't want to hear from me. We don't want any of the problems in Okinawa to escalate into US-Japan issues. And I think I was successful to the extent that during my time there I think I succeeded in doing that.

I think that having good luck is an essential part of effective diplomacy. And I was very fortunate. I was fortunate in the type of military officers I dealt with for the most part on Okinawa. I was also most fortunate in the Okinawan authorities that I dealt with. Within a couple of weeks of my arrival in Okinawa, the Governor of Okinawa, who was a member of the left, was stricken by a stroke, which forced him out of office within two or three months, and led to his untimely death. He was succeeded by the candidate of the Liberal Democratic Party, the center right in Japan, and he took a much more cooperative view of the American military presence in Japan then his predecessor had. It was a period of conservative resurgence. It was believed by the Okinawans that it was the left wing that had set the stage and effected the reversion of Okinawa. But now that they were part of Japan, it was more beneficial to have a member of the same party that was running the rest of Japan as governor. But it wasn't just the governor, it was a lot of other local jobs that went to the conservative party.

As I said, I found the military, particularly some of the Marines...in Okinawa it should be noted that there was a rather unusual situation. It is the only place abroad where it is the Marines that are the dominant military force. So the senior military commander was a Marine. You have about seven or eight general Marine officers. The next largest force is the Air Force, because of the huge Kadena Airfield there. Then the Army and Naval are minuscule, which is rather strange.

I guess my job was really to keep the peace. I had generally pretty good cooperation from the military. I never had to go up to Tokyo to ask them for anything. I had very good relations with the Japanese government authorities, as well as with the Okinawa authorities. We got constant harping in the Okinawan press, which plays a major role in Okinawa. We had frequent protest groups that came to the Consulate. We encouraged them to come to us rather than to the military because we felt we could probably deal with them better than the military could. We were fortunate that there were no really major incidents. I'm glad to say that during my time there was no murder on the part of our troops. All the really nasty stuff the military do in Japan really goes on in Okinawa. The nasty stuff involves live fire exercises which the Marines have to do to practice. Your typical Marine is a 19-year-old. The Air Force is very different. It is generally a 35 year old married mechanic who is the typical Air Force guy. If anybody is going to get in trouble off base it is generally a Marine. But most of the problems were not that type. There were ricocheting bullets, which hit a rock and would fly out of the maneuver area. Then there were accidents involving the Air Force like fuel spills and that sort of thing. Then the Air Force also, of course, were very noisy. They had these U2 type aircraft.

Q: *These were high flying photograph type planes.*

STRAUS: Yes, remarkable things. They had the most modern fighter jets at Kadena Airfield, one of the largest military bases in the world. Active 24 hours around the clock.

I used to tell the Marines and Air Force when they would complain about lack of Japanese cooperation, "What do you think an American mayor or governor would do in similar circumstances?" They were generally understanding. Particularly the Marines. Perhaps they lived close to the ground and had a particular understanding for the political problems. I also had that feeling with the Army, a much smaller group.

So it was a very interesting experience for me. There was nothing like running your own post. I did a lot of reporting on incidents and I think the way I reported them had an effect on perhaps decreasing the number of these incidents, making sure the military took all reasonable precautions.

Q: *Did you work with the military to get them to adjust their operations to avoid problems?*

STRAUS: Yes, exactly.

Q: *It wasn't, "Well, get the damn civilians out of the way that is their problem"?*

STRAUS: No, no. As I said, I found them generally quite accommodating and it was always a matter of individuals. You can't expect all of them to be that way. I think if they felt that you understood their problem ...When I got there in 1978, their problem in part was that the average Marine was a guy who was perhaps out of reform school who decided it would be better to go into the Marines then anywhere else at this point in his life. Many of them didn't have a high school diploma. By the time I left in 1982, that had changed. The quality of the people they were getting was much better. But we were still in the post-Vietnam period when I arrived. I had sympathy for them and I expressed that. I thought they were doing a remarkable job really of educating these young men and women.

I counted this as some of the happiest time I spent. I wasn't overworked, but on the other hand I had plenty to do and I thought I was very usefully employed.

Q: *How did you find the Okinawans? They had now adjusted to being part of Japan, but did you find they were a breed apart and would sort of use you to find out what was happening on the mainland?*

STRAUS: No not that, but I had the feeling that there were three actors, three players in Okinawa, whereas in Japan you only had two. You had the Okinawans who were sort of the landlords, the Japanese who were the treasurers, and then there was us. And any two were sort of playing off against the third and often badmouthing the third. But I think it was a well-understood game. And, as I said, largely thanks to the kindness and understanding of the Governor, who I thought was a very shrewd and effective politician and was there almost the

entire time I was there, things suddenly worked a lot better in Okinawa and I was able to take the credit for it.

Q: *What was your feeling about the Japanese officials or others who were down there?*

STRAUS: Well, I think the Japanese were usually more sensitive to the situation in Okinawa than they are usually given credit for. The Okinawans, while they were under the Americans had a great deal of independence, and now they were just another prefecture. Not only that, they were a prefecture that was historically the poorest of the lot. In a sense they didn't like that. They liked to be more important. So they screamed and did a lot of yelling which resulted in the Japanese pouring a lot of money down there.

There were a lot of guilt feelings involved on the part of the Japanese because, of course, the only land battles fought on Japanese soil was in Okinawa. They were told that was necessary in order to defend the homeland. Well, it turned out the homeland then decided to throw in the sponge. The whole thing is, of course, an irony. Everybody, of course, knows about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the prefecture that took the heaviest hits in World War II, was none of those two, it was Okinawa. A quarter of the population of the prefecture died. No place in the world had that kind of catastrophe. It was staggering. Historically they had been very pacifist. Then the irony is that they now host the largest concentration of American forces in Japan. So the Okinawan feeling is that you Japanese are getting the benefits of the American presence, but we have the Americans, thank you very much! So the Japanese say, "Yeah, but look what we are doing. We are subsidizing this and that." And they are doing that. And they were careful, at least during the period I was there, to restrain their business and not rush pell-mell down there and drive out less efficient Okinawan businesses. So there were no Japanese banks down there or department stores or construction companies. Okinawa really has no industry as such. Whether this has changed in the meantime, I don't know. But at that time I thought they showed commendable restraint and sensitivity. At the same time that they still tended to look down on the Okinawans as being under-educated, under-disciplined. Okinawans tend to be sort of southern people...a little slow, more relaxed...and that is not the Japanese. There is a difference.

But we appreciated the Okinawan culture. It is a different culture and it is remarkable what that little group of islands accomplished in history.

ANTHONY C. ZINNI
Regimental Commander, Marine Expeditionary Unit
Okinawa (1987-1989)

General Zinni was born and raised in Pennsylvania. After graduating from Vallanova College he joined the Marines, which became his lifelong career. His distinguish career took him to Vietnam, Okinawa, Philippines and Germany, where he served in senior level positions. Attaining the rank of General, Zinni served as Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM, where he was deeply involved in

worldwide missions including Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. General Zinnia was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

ZINNI: Well, I think besides the military sort of evolution of your experience, the war colleges and schools and command at different levels all the way up, I think the most significant thing was the exposure to the different cultures. Living overseas, operating in a number of different environments, working with forces from different nations, so being involved in their environment and in their culture so I think this whole exposure. I mean, we had a mission during the Cold War to go to Norway so we had cold-weather training. We continued our jungle training, mountain training, desert training and exposure to those environments out there so it was sort of this global environment, being exposed to that. And then not only commanding a unit in Okinawa, but I commanded a camp, so then I was required to interact with the local community.

Q: This was on Okinawa?

ZINNI: This was on Okinawa. I had to work with the mayor of Kin, a town that my base was located in and the assembly and so that gave me more exposure to, you know, interaction of working with them and, you know, the social aspect and all that, going to their funerals and to their weddings and everything else and getting to know them on a personal basis, too. And the same thing in Europe and elsewhere and so I think the most significant thing beside the military experiences during that time was the exposure to such a variety of cultures.

ALOYSIUS M. O'NEILL
Consul General
Okinawa (1994-1997)

Mr. O'Neil was born in South Carolina and raised there and in other states in the U.S. He was educated at the University of Delaware and Heidelberg University. After serving in the US Army in Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill joined the Foreign Service in 1976 and was posted to Korea. He subsequently served three tours in Japan as student of Japanese and Consular and Political Officer. He also served in Burma, Korea and the Philippines as well as in Washington, where he dealt primarily with East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Al, I think this is a good place to stop. We'll pick this up the next time. You're off to Okinawa as consul general. When did that happen?

O'NEILL: I got there in August 1994.

Q: Okay. Today is the 7th of November 2008. This is with Al O'Neill. Al, I've had quite a few interviews relating to the battle of Okinawa. I'm not talking about the invasion of Okinawa in '45. I'm talking about the battle of Okinawa over a reversion treaty. Reversion was the term?

O'NEILL: Yes, that was.

Q: There was a very bitter battle between the Department of State and the Pentagon over a reversion agreement. You were there from when to when?

O'NEILL: I got there in August '94 and stayed till July '97.

Q: First place, how did you get the job?

O'NEILL: Charm, I suppose. I had had Japan experience. I was still considered a Japanese language officer although it had been 10 years since I'd used the language very much. I wanted the job, and I knew people who were in a position to recommend me for the job, particularly Tom Hubbard who was our deputy assistant secretary.

I made clear that I wanted it, and the fact that I had Japanese language and previous experience in Tokyo was helpful. That was where I first worked with Tom Hubbard, who was the chief of the internal branch in political when I was Ambassador Mansfield's aide. Plus I'd been working for Tom for two years in the East Asia bureau. I was at the right grade. I wanted it for a lot of reasons, one of which was I wanted to be a principal officer and run my own post for a change. I thought that my military background would be helpful and I figured it would be a very interesting place. It turned out to be even more interesting than I thought.

Q: What was the situation in Okinawa? In the first place, when did the reversion come, and how stood things at this time, and where did Okinawa fit at this period in the Japanese political context?

O'NEILL: Well, reversion had taken place in May of 1972, 22 years before. Okinawa again became a prefecture of Japan as a result of reversion. Japanese was the official language. Many Okinawans, particularly the older ones, still spoke various Okinawan dialects which are quite different from Japanese. Okinawa was also the most visible symbol of the U.S.-Japan security relationship under the Mutual Security Treaty of 1960.

As a prefecture, Okinawa had an elected governor and elected prefectural assembly and elected mayors in the cities and towns and their own city councils, etc., from among the Okinawan populace. There were Okinawan representatives in the Diet in Tokyo. There were also numerous Japanese officials in Okinawa, including from what was then called the Japan Defense Agency or JDA, now the ministry of defense. Bank of Japan had an office there. Many of the organizations of the Tokyo bureaucracy were represented in Okinawa as they would be in other Japanese prefectures.

The U.S. military presence was huge. Okinawa prefecture consists of the main island of Okinawa and a line of much smaller islands stringing out north and south from Kyushu, the southernmost main island all the way to the island of Yonaguni. It is said that on a clear day you can see Taiwan from Yonaguni.

The bulk of the population and the bulk of the U.S. military presence were all on the main island of Okinawa which was only 67 miles long at its longest, the north-south axis, and then at the widest it's just 14 miles wide. Most other places it's a lot narrower than that. About 1.2 million Okinawans live on that island. In my time, there were also 29,000 U.S. military people packed into that island and a similar number of family members and Defense Department civilians including 900 people from the Defense Department school system. There were 13 DoD dependent schools on Okinawa including two four-year high schools; so it was an enormous U.S. presence on a pretty small island.

About 17,000 of the 29,000 military people were Marines from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force or MEF. The MEF commander was then a major general, a two star who was the senior U.S. military officer on Okinawa. He did not command the heads of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force components on Okinawa, but he was the senior officer and the Okinawa Area Coordinator. Each of them answered to component commanders at Yokota Air Base, Yokosuka for the Navy, and Camp Zama in the case of U.S. Army Japan. Most of the military forces on Okinawa were combat units of various kinds, so they trained constantly and tended to make a lot of noise. There were three F-15 fighter squadrons on Kadena Air Base, for example, and they were flying all the time. The units were always training for contingencies particularly in Korea and elsewhere in Asia as well. So, packed on a very tiny island, you had a U.S. military presence that affected everything because it was so large and noisy. The U.S. military also occupied also a lot of very prime land in central Okinawa.

Let me mention a couple of things about Okinawa's past. Until 1879, Okinawa was a separate kingdom, the Ryukyu Kingdom, a tributary state of China. In conducted its own trading relations with Java and Siam, Korea, etc., as well as China. They had a long history of being an essentially unarmed trading nation. They came under increasing Japanese control in the 1600s from a samurai clan in southern Kyushu, but they still were a tributary state of China. After the Meiji emperor was restored to being head of government in 1867, Japan moved to annex Okinawa as a prefecture. As a result of this there was always tension between the mainland Japanese and the Okinawans. The Okinawans were very much looked down upon by the mainland Japanese as being not really Japanese, as being mixtures of Chinese and Korean and Okinawan, etc., and were very much second class citizens through the war period.

The Battle of Okinawa was horrendous. It was one of the biggest battles of the entire Pacific war, 82 days of pretty much non-stop combat. The invasion took place on April Fool's Day, April 1, 1945. The naval force was larger than the one for the D-Day invasion of Normandy. The fleet was almost unimaginable. One thousand four hundred fifty seven warships took part including 40 aircraft carriers, 18 battleships and 430 troop ships and who knows how many cruisers and destroyers, and 50 submarines. There were 1,500 airplanes including B-29s. So this was a gigantic invasion of a very small place.

The purpose was to establish a base from which the U.S. could conduct the invasion of mainland Japan, starting in November 1945 with Kyushu and then the bigger invasion of the Tokyo plain which was planned for the spring of 1946. The Japanese probably didn't believe, based on the Pacific war to date, that they would be able to defeat the Americans and keep them from controlling Okinawa. Their intention was to cause as much damage to the American forces as

possible to delay them and to make them think twice about the cost of invading the mainland which is, indeed, exactly what happened.

We had 14,000 people killed in that battle. The U.S. Navy lost more people in the Battle of Okinawa than in any other battle in its history, a total of 4,500. Kamikaze strikes took a huge toll on the Navy during the battle and sank and damaged a great number of ships. Most of the people who died were Japanese, of course. About 240,000 people were killed all together, more than half of them were Okinawans civilians. The rest were Japanese soldiers and Okinawans who were part of the Japanese forces. Most of the fighting took place in an area about 15 miles by 20 miles at the southern end of Okinawa. The Okinawans refer to this battle as the "typhoon of steel," very aptly.

Japan regained its sovereignty in 1952 with the San Francisco Treaty but we held on to Okinawa for another 20 years. We euphemistically referred to "U.S. administration" but, in fact, the senior U.S. official in Okinawa during that period was an Army lieutenant general, called the high commissioner for the Ryukyu Islands. A State Department officer was his political advisor or POLAD, but there was no doubt that the Army was in charge.

Over the intervening years the U.S. tended to consolidate or close a lot of their military bases on the main islands of Japan as they were no longer needed or as they became too difficult to train on, etc., because of domestic political pressures. There was consolidation in some of the military bases in Okinawa as well but just not on the same scale. In fact, during the '80s when I was in Tokyo there was a great consolidation along the Kanto Plain military bases in the Tokyo area: Yokohama, Yokosuka, etc., but less so on Okinawa. The idea was that by doing more consolidation on the mainland and less on Okinawa, the U.S. and the Japanese governments would be buying time for a continued base presence in Japan and, indeed, they did up until the 1990s when I got to Okinawa.

The situation that I had to deal with was fascinating in a lot of ways. For one thing, when you go to a Foreign Service post you normally figure you're going to be dealing with one foreign culture or one different culture, anyway. In Okinawa, the consul general was dealing with *three* different cultures because there was the Okinawan culture which was pervasive and very interesting in its own right, but also there were the Japanese culture and the U.S. military culture.

In dealing with base issues, the consul general was a member of what was called the Okinawa Area Coordinating Committee or OACC which had the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine component commanders, and the Marine general who was the real estate commander, who oversaw the 13 Marine bases on Okinawa. The consul general ranked as a brigadier general. The OACC operated relatively informally. It was very valuable for coordinating among ourselves both in good and bad cases and to present a united front to the Okinawan prefectural government. The base issue was always at the top of the agenda on the U.S. side both in terms of dealing with the Japanese government and the Okinawan prefectural government and also the cities and towns that hosted the bases.

To get back to the battle for a second, the battle was always in the minds of Okinawans particularly the great number of Okinawans who had survived the battle. There were

interestingly mixed feelings among Okinawans about the relative U.S. and mainland Japanese roles in the battle. We came there as the invaders and the conquerors and blew up the island and killed lots and lots of people. But relatively speaking, the Okinawans that we dealt with in the political world, the academic world, businesses, etc., had a better attitude toward the American role in that battle than they did to the mainland Japanese role because they knew the Japanese strategy.

The governor at the time was named Masahide Ota, an academic turned politician. He was a deep-dyed pacifist. He had fought in the battle as a student soldier, was very badly wounded and hadn't surrendered until November 1945, two months after the Japanese formal surrender. He was illustrative of an Okinawan attitude of greater antipathy toward the central government in Tokyo than toward the Americans, although Ota was quite anti-base and would have been quite happy to have all the U.S. bases out of Okinawa. But he operated as did many Okinawans from this bifurcated look at the relative roles of the Japanese and the U.S. in the battle and then also later on, too. I think — and this is a sort of very broad brush — Okinawans felt that the Americans on the island and in Washington were at least more willing to listen to them and their complaints and maybe try to do something about it than the central government in Tokyo. There were some interesting examples of that that cropped up on my watch.

Q: Where did Okinawa fit in the Japanese political spectrum and society?

O'NEILL: It fluctuated because there were periods in which the prefectural governor, prefectural assembly, and many of the larger city mayors were conservative and were aligned with the LDP, the national ruling party. Ota's predecessor was a two or three term governor named Junji Nishime who was conservative. There were other times when the pendulum swung the other way. Ota himself was very much identified with the Japan Socialist Party. There was the Communist Party and a home-grown leftist party called the Okinawa Socialist Masses Party. So you had divisions among Okinawans as well.

But when I was there, most of the mayors with a couple of exceptions, and most of the city assemblies, the prefectural assembly and the governorship were from the left, anti-base activists. But also, as I kept reminding my military colleagues, mainstream opinion in Okinawa wanted to press the Americans and the Japanese for a reduction in the both the number of military people there and the total land area occupied by these bases. So even very much pro-American, pro-base Okinawans always were in one way or another pressing for what could be done to reduce the base presence.

For reasons having to do with topography and also in some cases where the Japanese themselves had built bases during the war, a lot of the U.S. bases were concentrated in the central part of the island which was quite populated. The farther north you went, the more the population thins out and it's more mountainous. There were mostly fishing villages or excellent resort areas along the periphery, but in the areas where the bases were it was relatively flat and better land in general than you would have farther north.

Among Okinawans, not only were there real party differences but the political pendulum periodically swung. Later on after I left, Ota ran for a third term and was defeated by a

businessman whom I knew quite well who had never been in electoral politics before. His wife had taught my wife Chinese character calligraphy. He defeated Ota and heralded a switch back to a more conservative line in the prefectural government and many of the cities. The political pendulum swung back and forth depending on a lot of things, in no small part depending on what various Okinawan administrations were able to get out of the central government in terms of largesse because Tokyo spent a huge amount of money on Okinawa in big infrastructure projects and on noise abatement measures. For example, in the houses around the bases the central government put in double pane windows and air conditioners to help keep down the noise of the KC-135 tankers and the F-15s that were taking off all the time.

Tokyo also paid large amounts for rent for base lands because another peculiarity of Okinawa is that most of the base land was privately owned. By contrast, the bases on the mainland were almost all former Japanese imperial forces bases like Yokota, Yokosuka and Sasebo that had been built before and during World War II. The Americans just took them over. In Okinawa there were a handful of such former Japanese bases like Kadena Air Base but even that base had absorbed much private land as it was greatly expanded during and after the Korean War.

That was also another subplot because a lot of the landowners didn't necessarily want their land to be given up by the U.S. That's one of the reasons why over the years it often became difficult to return or consolidate bases even when we wanted to because the landowners objected. They knew they wouldn't get as much money or believed they would not get as much money from a sale or return of the land for some commercial use.

Q: For years the thorn in our side was the mayor of Naha who was quite left wing, either socialist or communist. Was he completely out of the picture at this time?

O'NEILL: Mayors are elected every four years, and you could have multi-term mayors. During my time, the mayor of Naha was named Oyadomari; he was in the socialist camp. I think you're talking about a famous case, which will give you an idea of American democracy in action in Okinawa during the period of "U.S. administration." In the 1950's a man named Senaga was elected by the people of Naha as their mayor, and the lieutenant general who was the high commissioner for the Ryukyu Islands, essentially the occupation commander, removed him on the grounds that he was a communist even though he had been duly elected. He was, indeed, in the communist party which was a legal party in Japan but didn't seem terribly legal to an U.S. Army lieutenant general.

Okinawans remember that kind of thing. They've got an intense sense of history. They think of things that happened in the 1950s much as they do of things that happened last week.

Q: Did the Japanese on the main islands go to Okinawa? Was this being in exile? Was there much commerce or intercourse between Okinawa and the rest of Japan?

O'NEILL: In tourism there was. By the time I got there Okinawa was a great tourist destination for mainland Japanese. In fact, tourism had long supplanted the bases as the principal direct money earner. One of the peculiarities of Okinawan tourism was it was almost exclusively aimed

at mainland Japanese. There was not much in the way of an influx of Americans or Australians, etc., who would be tourists in Hong Kong, Singapore or Thailand, for example.

One of the reasons for this, that I kept reminding Okinawans about when they would talk of trying to compete with Hawaii, for example, was that they had to improve English language education among younger Okinawans. One of the things that surprised me was that even though the U.S. occupation had ended only 22 years before, relatively few Okinawans spoke much English at all.

So when you'd go to beautiful first class hotels on lovely stretches of the beach with sparkling blue water, you would rarely encounter any hotel staff who could speak much English in contrast to the top hotels in Korea. They had boxed themselves into tourism aimed at the Japanese mainland: honeymooners, scuba divers. There was world class scuba diving. That was one thing that did attract people from Australia, U.S. etc., to the coral reefs. In fact, I once met Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh in Okinawa. He was there as the president of the World Wildlife Federation, and he was particularly looking at the state of some coral reefs. He was not somebody you would expect to see there.

Q: Were the Okinawans at all ahead or behind the rest of Japan and in getting foreigners to come in to replenish the stock? Japan is renowned for getting older and older and not really reproducing itself.

O'NEILL: Well, I think the Okinawan birthrate was probably higher than the mainland birthrate. So were the divorce rate, the unemployment rate, and the basic income levels. That was always a constant source of complaint among the Okinawans towards the mainland, and they blamed this on the bases, too, which was not quite accurate at all.

In fact, I thought it was quite the opposite. My view was that it was the existence of these bases that put Okinawa on the map in terms of the central government in Tokyo. Had the bases not been there, I think Okinawa would have got a lot less attention because of the lingering prejudice toward Okinawans. I think some Okinawans understood this, that there was this weird paradox that the bases they were complaining about were the big ticket items as far as their influence in Tokyo was concerned.

Indeed, Okinawan politicians played this angle for everything they could because not only did you have the governor going to Tokyo to lobby for more goodies, like Ota's big idea for a monorail project and lots of other things. Everybody in Okinawa had big ideas that they wanted Tokyo to fund, and the individual mayors would lobby various offices in Tokyo for their projects in addition to whatever they wanted to do in terms of base realignment. There was no single voice in Okinawa. There was a fair amount of overlap in the kinds of things they wanted, but there was not an identity of desires, if you will, in dealing with Tokyo.

When I arrived, there were three main issues, *Sanjian* in Japanese, which Governor Ota was pushing with the central government and the headquarters of U.S. Forces, Japan. One of these was to relocate Naha Military Port which was run by the U.S. Army, to relocate it slightly up the

coast alongside an existing Marine logistics base called Camp Kinser in Urasoe City, the next city north of Naha.

The second thing was to return a little air field called Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield which was no longer used for aircraft, but it was a site of parachute training for the Special Forces and the Marine airborne people. This was right behind the original invasion beaches in 1945. The third thing that Governor Ota wanted was to relocate the remaining artillery training from Okinawa to the mainland. About half of the artillery training that the Marines had done on Okinawa had been moved elsewhere, but there was still a minimal amount, literally firing guns from fixed positions at a mountain inside a gunnery range on Okinawa just to be able to know that the guns and shells actually worked. There was no realistic training in moving the guns into position, doing all the calculations for setting up firing positions and actually firing the way you would want to do at Fort Sill, Oklahoma or another large training area.

The Okinawans made a big deal about the artillery training. It was a very safe thing, in fact, but they made a big deal, and the governor wanted that moved, too. The Marines were quite willing to move the training to Mt. Fuji artillery range on Honshu which is where they did much of their training anyway. The Japanese government up until 1995 was unwilling to expend the political capital that was necessary to do the ground work in the communities around Fuji to allow for this additional influx of Marines and somewhat more noise and a few more firing days per year than the local inhabitants were normally dealing with. Tokyo simply did not want to do it. They eventually did as a result of that horrendous child rape incident in September 1995, which I'll go into in more detail later.

Let me mention one other factor during my first year there. The prime minister of Japan was Tomiichi Murayama, who in many ways was very peculiar in comparison to his predecessors. First, he was from the Japan Socialist Party and had become prime minister in a rather shabby deal that allowed the LDP to keep a measure of power in a coalition. Murayama was in his 70s which was not unusual for Japanese prime ministers, but he had spent his entire political life of 50 years as a pacifist fighting against the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and against the existence of the Self Defense Forces which he considered unconstitutional. When he became prime minister, he had visited exactly one foreign country: North Korea. The Japan Socialist Party had links of various kinds, including financial, with North Korea over the decades. His CV boded badly for a lot of things in the coming year.

Nineteen ninety-five was, of course, heading into the 50th anniversary of the last year of World War II. For Japan this meant the appalling battle on the little island of Iwo Jima in February and March of 1945 and then the April through June bloodbath on Okinawa, the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 50th anniversary on August 15 of the surrender. The intent of all parties — the Okinawans, the central government in Japan and the American military, of course, was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this huge battle, the last U.S. ground battle against Japan.

The issue of how it would be done caused a lot of nervousness among a lot of Okinawans because they were afraid we would be celebrating our victory which was far from the intent in either of the U.S. forces or, indeed, the American veterans of the battle. So we had a lot of

preparatory work both to plan the events and also to reassure the Okinawans about U.S. intentions about the commemorations which were going to be centered in June. The landing was on April 1, but the idea was to do the commemorations over several days marking the very end of the battle in late June 1945.

As one example of the groundwork, I did an interview with NHK, the national TV network, a couple of months before the commemoration. My main point was that we were not going to celebrate a victory. First of all the American veterans' purpose was just to return to Okinawa where they had been through a horrendous experience and to remember their comrades who had been killed. They were not trying to celebrate anything. The overall U.S. idea was to remember the dead from all sides and also to emphasize the 50 years of a very productive relationship between the U.S. and Japan.

I think my NHK TV interview was helpful. I pointed out that NHK itself had done a program on the Battle of Okinawa a few months earlier. They reported that the American invasion force had brought with them food and clothing for about 100,000 Okinawans plus many thousands of civil affairs specialists. The U.S. knew that the Okinawan population had not bombed Pearl Harbor, but had been basically caught up as innocents in the militarist plans of the Japanese government. So I played that back to the NHK interviewer. He found that earlier program and blended it in with my interview when it was broadcast. The intended tenor of the commemorations was the point I was making to NHK and continued to make to the Okinawan news media including the newspapers.

Fortunately by the time Okinawan concerns were rising we had had the commemorations on Iwo Jima in March. Even though Iwo Jima is in Tokyo's consular district rather than Okinawa's, the Marines on Okinawa planned and supported the commemorations on Iwo Jima. With the NHK interviewer, I was able to point to the commemorative nature of the 50th anniversary ceremonies on Iwo Jima as a practical example of our intentions concerning Okinawa. I had seen that first hand. My wife and I had flown to Iwo Jima on General Meyers's airplane. He was at the time a lieutenant general commanding U.S. Forces Japan, later became chairman of the Joint Chiefs and his deputy in Japan, Pete Pace, became his successor as Chairman.

At that time, Generals Pace and Meyers and Ambassador Walter Mondale, the former vice president, and his wife Joan came down to Okinawa the day before the flight to Iwo Jima. The Mondales stayed with us that night. There was a big formal dinner at the main Marine Officers' Club and we all flew to Iwo Jima on Meyers's airplane. Iwo Jima is a tiny place. It's about two miles by four miles, and at least 26,000 people were killed in six weeks, over 20,000 Japanese and 6,000 Americans. It's still an active volcanic island, a very unpleasant place but a real shrine for the Marines.

The Okinawa commemorations in June 1995 were quite an extraordinary series of events. The prime minister came, as well as the speaker of the Diet's lower house and the chief justice of the Supreme Court. There was quite a large turnout from the Japanese government, a lot of ceremonies marking the huge toll of Okinawans who died. There was the dedication of what was called the "Cornerstone of Peace," an elaborate monument or set of monuments at the very southern tip of Okinawa, where the battle ended when there was no more room to fight. These

were a series of low granite walls, like Oriental screens, in which were carved the names of all 240,000 people, Okinawan, mainland Japanese, American, Taiwanese, Korean, and British, who had died in battle. It was quite an effort by the Okinawans to collect all these names. It is probably the most complete list of the battle dead that anybody could come up with. That was dedicated by the prime minister in the course of these commemorative events.

Of course, there were lots of things to be done on U.S. military bases for the veterans themselves. As I say, the Mondales were there. They were a big hit. General Mundy who was then commandant of the Marine Corps was there and also the commander in chief, Pacific Command plus lots of other high U.S. military officials. I was glad to be there during that time. As a baby boomer I had grown up in the shadow of WWII. Also, one of my uncles had commanded the Marines' 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion during the entire battle of Okinawa, so there was that additional interest for me.

Q: I was wondering, how did you relate with the American military at this time? Was there any animosity between State and Defense?

O'NEILL: We normally worked quite closely together. I've mentioned the Okinawa Area Coordinating Committee (OACC) which was one of the most frequent means of interaction among the main players on the U.S. side, including me. As the OACC, we interacted quite a lot and, of course, we also talked a good bit on the phone and met each other individually both officially in our offices and at many social functions. So there was a good bit of interaction. There was also a lot of contact between the military people and the towns and cities whose land they were occupying.

Kadena Air Base, for example, was big. The base covers 5,000 acres and adjacent to it is a 6,000 acre ammunition storage area. It's now, I think, the largest air base certainly in the western Pacific and perhaps anywhere outside of the United States. There were two 12,000 foot parallel runways. As I said, they had three F-15 fighter squadrons. They also had the only tanker squadron in the entire western Pacific, 15 KC-135 tankers. Also the Navy operated P-3 Orion anti-submarine patrol planes out of Kadena, and that was a very active thing because they were watching the Chinese all the time.

The bases themselves had pretty well established channels with the towns. For example, Kadena base overlapped two towns and a city: Okinawa City, Kadena Town, and Chatan Town. Their mayors met regularly with senior Air Force officers who were tasked to deal with their complaints about noise, accidents, problems of various kinds, disciplinary problems, etc. Generally these things worked pretty well because, for one thing, the military I think generally understood that they were a very large presence, a noisy presence. They usually recognized that it was some imposition on the Okinawans even if the military people also were quite wrapped up in their missions which were largely directed toward a contingency in Korea. They did a lot of training in Korea; very realistic training. I think at the same time they did an overall good job at trying to manage the base issues as best they could. The mayors understood this, and I think generally the relationships were quite good. There were certainly difficulties and misunderstandings but they were usually manageable.

The commanders were thinking all the time that they may be called to go to war tomorrow, and they had to make sure their people are trained up as much as possible so first, they could do their mission and second, fewer on them would be killed than would be the case if they were poorly trained. So there was this kind of mission tension, if you will, between needing to keep the Okinawans as happy as they possible with a very large and active base presence and also their obligation as commanders to be able to "sound the charge" when they needed to.

To go back to these *Sanjian*, these three main cases that Governor Ota was pushing; as I said one was relocation of Naha Military Port. It was an old facility, and relatively small. A lot of ships couldn't use it because the ships had outgrown the port. It was also subject to silting that had to be dredged all the time. The U.S. military would have been delighted to give it up if they could have a replacement facility, and where they wanted it was, as I mentioned, Camp Kinser which was just a few miles up the road from Naha City. You had several things at play. Camp Kinser, the ideal site of the relocated military port was in Urasoe City. The Urasoe Chamber of Commerce really wanted the port because they saw all sorts of benefits for what would become a dual use port for civilian use as well as military use. The mayor of Urasoe at the time was a nice man who was not terribly strong, and he was in favor of it, too. He wanted to get a brand new state-of-the-art military/civilian port, but his city council was majority leftist, and they would attack the mayor every time he supported the move to their city.

The Okinawan private citizens who owned the land that comprised the existing military port saw the same disadvantages to the old port that the U.S. military did. They thought, "Well, I'll lose my base rent if this port is actually turned over to Naha City, so where's my future income?" So they lobbied as hard as they could with Tokyo against turning back the port. This was one example of the tangle in Okinawa.

Here's another thing about this Naha Military Port issue that illustrates a lot about relationships on Okinawa. Once, Chairman Uechi of the Urasoe Chamber of Commerce asked me as the U.S. consul general to arrange a meeting for him and his colleagues with the director of the Japanese government's Defense Facilities Administration Bureau (DFAB) so they could him lobby for moving the port.

The irony of this was that the DFAB director was a representative of Chairman Uechi's own central government, his own defense ministry. And in terms of physical proximity, Chairman Uechi's office was much closer to the DFAB office than it was to mine. Nonetheless, he asked me to arrange for him and his fellow Okinawans to meet with this Japanese official to promote an idea that presumably the Japanese government wanted as much as we, Chairman Uechi and the other businessmen did. So this is kind of illustrative of the weirdness which could occur in Okinawa. I was more than happy to arrange that meeting which took place in my office. The director of Naha DFAB and Chairman Uechi had a nice discussion in front of me. This was a little disorienting but an illustration of the distance that a lot of Okinawans still felt from the central government.

Q: Was the closing of our bases in the Philippines on the minds of Okinawans?

O'NEILL: It was on Governor Ota's mind. I used to talk to him a lot and Ota used to talk about Subic Bay in particular. As I mentioned, when I was the deputy director for Philippine affairs a couple of years earlier I had visited Subic and talked with Dick Gordon, the chairman of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. He was working to transform that huge former naval base into a free trade zone and a high tech hub.

Ota talked longingly about reproducing that in Okinawa. I kept reminding him of the huge difference between the Subic situation and Okinawa. President Ramos and that Philippine central government saw Subic in the same way the Dick Gordon did, which was that it was going to be a huge economic boon to the entire Philippines. I told the governor, "Nobody in Tokyo sees that as a big boost for the entire Japanese economy; it's a totally different situation." Nonetheless, Ota was in many ways a romantic thinker in his economic theories and he was persistent in all of this.

Q: Did the Okinawans operate like Japanese in not reaching a decision until you got consensus?

O'NEILL: That was more or less true in Okinawa as well. That much the Okinawans had in common with their Japanese brethren on the mainland as a concept anyway. The difficulty a lot of times, though, in Okinawa was there were so many players that there was often no unity of view among Okinawan political entities about what should be done in any given case. Each of the cities, for example, had elaborate drawings and plans for the post-base development of their city. Nobody in Okinawa coordinated all these, so basically each city in Okinawa that had a U.S. military base had a plan for a theme park and a shopping mall, and some other things. A couple of kilometers up the road the next town would have its plan for another theme park and shopping mall. It just wasn't very coordinated at all. The governor for all of his desire to get the bases out of Okinawa didn't really feel the need to do much coordinating of these plans.

Q: Okinawa, when you were there, was basically a dagger pointed at North Korea and China and maybe even Russia. Russia was falling apart at this point. Did events in North Korea or in China play any particular role, or was this too far away?

O'NEILL: China literally was not very far over the horizon. There's a dispute between China and Japan over a group of islands called the Senkakus or Diaoyutai to the Chinese, which are part of Okinawa prefecture, a sprinkling of islands out to the west in the direction of China. Taiwan also claims the Senkakus as the legitimate government of China. There were times when Taiwan patrol boats would come into the waters around the Senkakus and also around Yonaguni, the southwestern-most island in the prefecture. The Japanese government would protest against this invasion of their territorial waters.

Also, you may remember in 1996 there was going to be an election for the president of Taiwan. The Chinese declared they were going to be testing intermediate range missiles and fired missiles in the direction of Taiwan. Nobody missed the message. Some of these missiles actually came down quite close to Yonaguni and other Okinawan islands. They didn't hit land, fortunately. At that point the Clinton administration sent two aircraft carrier battle groups to that area to bolster the people on Taiwan, which was an unusual concentration of aircraft carrier battle groups.

The central government in Tokyo was quite upset about this Chinese missile firing. The major of Yonaguni was quite upset too. But when I talked to Governor Ota about it, he claimed that it wasn't important. It was just something out there in the distance. Okinawans didn't have to worry because the Chinese were friends. Ota, in one of his romantic schemes, was trying to revive an economic link between Fujian Province on the coast of China and Okinawa. When there was a Ryukyu Kingdom, its principal link with China was through Fujian Province. There are a lot of cultural influences in Okinawa that are from Fujian. He thought that it would be a great thing to revive this, and he had arranged to build an Okinawan trade office in Fujian, on which the Fujian authorities overcharged tremendously.

There were a couple of flaws in Governor Ota's ideas. For one thing, he saw this as a way of reviving Okinawa's economy by bringing back these artifacts of the past. But no one in the Okinawan business community thought that it was worth pursuing at all. They thought it was just sort of a pipe dream of an academic who had never done any business, and they were probably right. The biggest thing that nobody could explain was why the people in Fujian would do what Ota wanted. He wanted them to export to Okinawa semi-finished products that Okinawans would finish and then sell for export. Nobody could quite explain why the people of Fujian Province wouldn't take the semi-finished products, finish them, and sell them, which is what they were doing.

Otherwise, on Okinawa the U.S. and Japanese militaries were very interested in China. In addition to the U.S. Navy P-3 Orions from Kadena, at Naha International Airport there were two Maritime Self-Defense Force Orion squadrons which worked very closely with our military, and they were doing the same thing, hunting for Chinese subs. I don't think anybody paid much attention to the Russians.

Q: I remember pictures about that time showing the Pacific Fleet, Soviet Pacific or now Soviet Pacific rusting up in Vladivostok.

O'NEILL: The Navy rear admiral who was the commander of the 7th Fleet's Amphibious Force, Task Force 76, was based with in Okinawa with his battle staff. There were three in succession during my time in Okinawa. Their ships which were located on Sasebo in southern Kyushu were the helicopter carrier and the amphibious landing ships, etc., which would carry the Marines into a Korean contingency, for example. The ships came to White Beach on Okinawa quite a lot to pick up Marines for exercises in Thailand and Korea.

Among the things that started then with the Russians was ship visits to Vladivostok and humanitarian rescue training with the Russian Navy and what the Russians called the Naval Landing Forces, their equivalent of our Marine Corps. The first of the amphibious group commanders I knew, John Sigler, came back from an operation in Vladivostok where they went with the amphibious ships and trained with the naval landing forces, and came back to Okinawa. John said he had had "an out of body experience. I was looking down into the well deck of one of my amphibious ships and here are these Russian amphibious vehicles." He added, "I had spent my entire naval career getting ready to fight these people, and now we're cooperating in these humanitarian rescue operations." One of his successors who eventually went on to become commander of the Pacific Fleet, Walt Doran, had an even more interesting experience with the

Russians. He took some ships to Vladivostok, too, for a similar exercise. Walt said they were tied up alongside the Pacific Fleet flagship, *Admiral Pantaleyev*. Some of his career sailors were scheduled to be reenlisted in the U.S. Navy. They came to Walt and said, "Admiral, can we get reenlisted on board the Russian flagship?" He said he would ask the Russian admiral.

Lo and behold! He and his sailors got permission to go aboard the Russian flagship for the reenlistment. The captain paraded his entire ship's company to watch this American ceremony. Through an interpreter Walt learned that his remarks included, "You see what the U.S. Navy does for its sailors? I want the Russian Navy to be this professional. This is what we need to move towards." That was pretty remarkable.

Q: I'm sure you had incidents. My brother was a naval captain graduate of the Class of '40 and was commanding officer of Navy pilots in the 1960's. He talked how he from time to time had to go, if a Navy plane crashed, had to go offer condolences to family. I assume that you who must have had drunks, rapes, murders, whatever. Did you get involved in any?

O'NEILL: Yes, I did, yes indeed. The main accident that I got involved in was only in the sense of attending a memorial service, but it's just a reminder of the cost to our people of operating with the very intense training tempo that they did. One of the squadrons at Kadena was HH-60s, search and rescue Blackhawk helicopters that would go out looking for downed pilots in combat and that sort of thing. They usually operated around Okinawa. However after dawn one morning in October 1994, I learned from the Air Force at Kadena that one of their rescue helicopters had been practicing night flying with night vision goggles near Osan, Korea. They hit a power line, the chopper crashed, and all five men were killed. That produced five widows and three orphans in an instant.

There was a big memorial service at Kadena. They brought the widows and everybody at Kadena went and obviously, naturally, I went. I remember the Wing deputy commander telling me afterwards "At three o'clock in the morning we got the word that they had been killed," and he said, "I was going around from door to door with the chaplain immediately to tell the wives. They don't pay me enough for that." It was pretty bad. On another occasion, a Marine helicopter crash killed a captain and another Marine. Naturally, I went to their memorial service up at Camp Schwab too.

But yes, there were crimes of varying magnitude on Okinawa. Any time you have 27,000 American military people in such a small area, unfortunately you have some who are pretty bad eggs and others who just get in trouble because they got drunk or something like that.

The general Okinawan reaction to various incidents was usually pretty measured. Okinawans were able to discern the difference between an accident — even a fatal traffic accident, for example — and a real crime. They understood the difference, and they usually reacted accordingly even though there were people who were always trying to take advantage of any incident. Particularly this was true in the Okinawa news media. But in general Okinawans knew the difference between a traffic accident and a rape.

I wound up dealing with the worst such crime probably since reversion. On Labor Day evening 1995 a Navy hospital corpsman and two Marines went out and searched for a schoolgirl to abduct and rape. They were caught within 48 hours by the U.S. Navy Criminal Investigative Service, NCIS. There was absolutely no doubt that these were the guys that did it in part because they had all been out in a rented car on Labor Day which was a day off. There were originally four of them altogether, three Marines and the hospital corpsman who was the ringleader. They began talking about kidnapping a schoolgirl and raping her. When the fourth guy began to realize that the other three were serious, he asked to be taken back to Camp Hansen where they were all stationed.

That night, the other three went out and found a 12 year old girl, and they had duct tape and rope and stuff that they had bought at the PX in preparation for this crime and they beat and raped her. When the NCIS began going around the barracks at Camp Hansen, the "fourth man" told his sergeant or NCIS that the other three had been talking about this, and he realized they had actually carried out the crime. So within 48 hours they were in the brig at Camp Hansen, each in solitary confinement. Monday was Labor Day; Wednesday is when these creatures were arrested. The first I learned about it was that day in a serious incident report cable from the Marines back to their headquarters and to everybody throughout the military chain of command, copied to me.

That Wednesday afternoon I immediately called Embassy Tokyo, to the head of the political military branch in the political section. He said he already knew about it because the mayor of Kin Town, next to Camp Hansen, happened to be meeting with them that day. Mayor Yoshida of Kin told him that this had happened, so the embassy knew about it already. I was talking to my Okinawan chief political employee who was absolutely wonderful to work with on this whole terrible business. He said the Okinawan police were trying to keep the knowledge of this out of the press.

It turned out that the MEF commander Major General Wayne Rollings, the senior Marine and the ranking U.S military officer on Okinawa had left that Labor Day weekend, to go to Hawaii for a commanders' conference and see some of his own units in Hawaii. The III MEF was scattered all from Hawaii to Iwakuni in mainland Japan to Okinawa.

On that Friday, since General Rollings was gone, I called Brigadier General Mike Hayes the relatively newly arrived Marine Corps base commander, to talk about what to do because obviously it was going to become public at some point. While I was on the phone with General Hayes, my FSN came in with the Friday afternoon newspapers that had this appalling story all over the front pages. I told General Hayes that we needed to figure out what we were going to do to respond.

I was also in touch with the chief of staff to Governor Ota in the prefectural headquarters in Naha, as I did several times over the weekend. We agreed in the course of our discussion that I would go and meet with Governor Ota on Monday to apologize for this awful crime and apologize to the Okinawan people. It would also be an opportunity for me to explain what the judicial processes would be. I was also in contact with the embassy in Tokyo several times over that weekend.

When, later on Friday or over the weekend, I spoke again to General Mike Hayes about meeting the governor on Monday, he said General Rollings was not scheduled to be back in Okinawa until that following Monday night which would be a week after the rape. He said that if Rollings was not back that he, General Hayes, or the deputy commander of the Marine Expeditionary Force, another newly arrived brigadier general, would go with me to Governor Ota and apologize. My political FSN and I spent a lot of time on the phone mainly with the governor's staff that weekend arranging the mechanics of the Monday meeting. So on Monday morning I was really stunned when I heard from the General Hayes that General Rollings had come back Sunday instead of Monday night and had decided that neither he nor any of his generals would go with me to meet Governor Ota.

As background, I had been in Okinawa for 13 months by this time. General Rollings and I knew each other well. We worked together on many things. He had been the Marine Corps base commander when the MEF commander, Major General Carl Fulford, was reassigned to the Pentagon. Wayne he was promoted to major general to command the MEF and become the senior Marine general on Okinawa.

Wayne Rollings was, by way of background, a tremendously brave man. He had been awarded the Navy Cross in Vietnam which is our second highest medal for valor. He had the Silver Star twice, the third highest medal for valor. The Marines don't give away medals for valor. He had two Purple Hearts, and he was missing the two last fingers on his right hand. So Wayne was a real lion on the battlefield. But like many generals, he was really camera shy despite his demonstrated bravery in combat.

As further background, in the previous four or five months there had been a couple of cases where Marines had murdered people in Okinawa. In one case a Marine had beaten a woman to death with a hammer. Because this was not an on-duty crime, obviously, he was subject to the Japanese judicial system and was then on trial in Naha as far as I can remember. But there were no Okinawan protests, interestingly, about that murder and previous one. In neither case had I recommended that Wayne Rollings or his predecessor and I go see the governor. But I knew instinctively this gang rape of a child was going to be bad just from the very disgusting nature of the crime and that we needed to deal with it in an extraordinary fashion. At that moment though, I had no idea how bad it would be, the extent of the reverberations nationwide.

I called Wayne right away about going to see Ota and said, "We really need to do this. This is really very important." He said no; he had two reactions. One, that if he went with me to see Governor Ota then the press would "make the military look bad" and two, he said he was going to do something preemptive. He said he would send a letter of apology to Ota before there was a protest, and he thought that this would be a valuable gesture. I told him that would not work in this case, that this is really something very bad indeed. As soon as I could I called David Shear who was the political military branch chief in the embassy in Tokyo and told him that to my amazement that General Rollings would not go with me. I added that I was going to talk to him right away and rode immediately to Wayne's office at Camp Butler which was about 20 minutes away.

When I got to Wayne's office, he had about four or five colonels and his Japanese-American civilian public relations specialist with him. I went by myself and began lobbying General Rollings as hard as I could. I told him that by this time I'd been in Asia for 15 years and there's no place in Asia where apologies count for more than in Japan and it is really important for us to do this. He was very resistant. I even used the example from 1981 of that fatal accident where the U.S. submarine *George Washington* sank the *Nissho Maru.* As I told you, ultimately Mike Mansfield himself went to the Japanese foreign minister and apologized for that accident. There was a famous photograph of Mansfield bowing deeply in front of Foreign Minister Abe. I said that helped. It didn't solve the problem by any means, but it did help. While I was there he called General Myers who was the commander U.S. Forces Japan and said, "Al wants me to go with him to Governor Ota. It's going to be a public thing, sort of a press conference." It was not exactly a press conference, but I guess it was close enough for military purposes.

Now, anytime you met with Governor Ota in his office there were TV cameras all over the place. There were microphones stuck in your face and all that, and you were meeting in his big conference room in his office suite.

Myers gave him permission not to go, so I had to call back to the prefectural people and tell them that I was coming by myself and I had to make up excuses as to what exactly General Rollings had in mind. So in the end Wayne didn't go and I did. Meeting Ota on camera gave me the opportunity to convey directly to the Okinawan public the shock that we Americans all felt at this horrible crime, and I said that the suspects were in U.S. custody but they would indeed be turned over to Japanese jurisdiction when they were indicted, in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA.

Later I realized I'd made a critical mistake. Having worked closely with Wayne Rollings for over a year, and not having recommended going to the governor for every incident, even a murder; I mistakenly believed that Wayne would trust my political judgment on this one. I underestimated how much he hated cameras. During the previous few days that he was in Hawaii if it had occurred to me for a second that he would refuse, I would have called him in Hawaii. His subordinate generals would have gone with me and I am sure that his predecessor Major General Carl Fulford would have gone with me too.

As I was going to Ota's office from the elevator and afterward going back to the elevator, I was swarmed by the TV cameras and reporters demanding "Why don't you turn them over now?" I kept repeating that we would follow the procedure under the SOFA. They would be investigated by the Japanese police while they were in U.S. custody – which they were at that very moment – and as soon as they were indicted would be in a Japanese court. They would be turned over to the Japanese police for imprisonment prior to trial which in fact did happen. Beforehand, the Japanese police did investigate them very thoroughly.

The feelings among the Americans against that trio were almost indescribable. The annual Futenma Air Station flight line fair was about a week or so after this rape. All of the American military bases had a big open house every year with rides and food, etc., to display all their military equipment and allow the Okinawan public on the bases. My political military officer

was at Futenma that day. He just casually asked some of the Marines who were with a helicopter display what they thought about the rapists. One said, "We'd like to kill them."

Q: This was in a way…

O'NEILL: Pretty intense to say that, but that was the kind of feeling that Americans had.

Q: What was in these guys' minds? The idea of going after some teenage…

O'NEILL: A 12 year old sixth grader. I don't know that we ever found out exactly what motivated them other than just really twisted minds. It was really — and still is — sickening to talk about. Of course, we had an unbelievable wave of protest groups coming into the consulate general. Everybody from one end of Okinawa to the other all sorts of groups, political, non-political, business, you name it, to the point where most days for weeks after this crime became public we had to line up the protest groups in our consular waiting room on the first floor and bring them up one group after the other to meet with me on the second floor. People were really angry as they had every right to be. There was nothing feigned about this. It was the worst thing that happened since reversion, and it sparked the largest series of demonstrations.

There was another aspect to it, too, which was because of the very fragile state of Japan itself, this child rape incident really caught on nation-wide. You had this whole series of bad occurrences in Japan during 1995 which added strength to the Okinawan protests. They reverberated in Tokyo and throughout Japan. When the Okinawans finally saw some of their pain and tribulations were gaining traction in mainland Japan, which spurred them on to more protests that kept feeding back and forth.

These were the factors in Japan in 1995: You had an extremely weak prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama, who as I mentioned before was a pacifist who had fought against the security treaty for 50 years. Also, Japan was in the fifth or sixth year of a recession which seemed to have no end to it. In February, you had had a gigantic earthquake in the Osaka-Kobe area which was extremely destructive. It was not only destructive in terms of about 5,000 people being killed and great damage being done to Japan's number one port area but also a psychological blow. The Japanese had looked at the earthquakes that we had in Los Angeles and San Francisco and said, "Americans don't really know how to deal with earthquakes. Well, we Japanese know."

March brought not only the 50th anniversary of Iwo Jima but also the truly bizarre sarin nerve gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system engineered by the weird cult named Aum Shinrikyo. They killed 15 or so people and sickened quite a number. It would be like a nerve gas attack at Metro Center in DC.

Then there was the trauma over the 50th anniversary of the Okinawa battle and the two atomic bombings followed by the surrender. So that was the Japan that in September of 1995 was faced with this horrendous rape case.

I was in touch with the prosecutor in Okinawa, a Japanese central government official. He told me he was quite pleased with the cooperation of the U.S. military authorities and the course of

the police investigation. He had no problem at all; the police had access to the suspects for as long and as frequently as they wanted. The police were taking the three suspects to the scene of the crime and to the nearest police station and were investigating them. There were always U.S. Marine escorts with them to the best of my knowledge every time they went for police interrogation. The Japanese police operate very differently than ours do. They don't allow lawyers to be present during interrogations anywhere in Japan. It has nothing to do whether it was military or civilian. So we had to provide more protection to these creatures than would normally have been the case, but the Marines felt obligated to do it. Otherwise, they were in solitary confinement in the Camp Hansen brig.

But meanwhile the Okinawan press was spreading lurid stories about how these three were free to roam around Camp Hansen which was an absolute lie. Frankly, if they had been out free they might have been killed, as I said, by their fellow Marines. The news media were spinning all sorts of lies; so ultimately I got the Marines to bring the press onto Camp Hansen to show them the brig and show where the three were being kept. After the news media had done so much damage by spreading lies, they did finally report the facts.

This crime also was reverberating in the central government in Tokyo, and also in DoD. The defense secretary at the time was William Perry who by coincidence had been an Army engineer in Okinawa right after World War II; so he had some feeling for the place and Okinawan people that the average secretary of defense would not have had. Perry was incensed at the child rape. He directed the Commandant of the Marine Corps to order the Marines on Okinawa to have a two day stand-down. They'd stop all training. The idea was they would have a couple of days of reflection about this vile crime and what might have caused it, etc. Ota himself went to see Ambassador Mondale after I saw Ota. General Myers from U.S. Forces Japan was with Ambassador Mondale when the session with Ota took place. Beforehand, the ambassador was good enough to talk on the phone with me quite a bit to ask what was Ota like, what to do, and how to handle the meeting. He was quite willing to take some of my advice on how to deal with Ota.

General Wayne Rollings took one step on his own that was very helpful, and I told Ambassador Mondale so. There was artillery training coming up, and he cancelled that before anybody mentioned it so it would not be a focus of more demonstrations.

Also, I knew that a pacifist organization called the Okinawa Peace Movement Center headed by a man named Arakaki Zenshun was going to hold a demonstration which was supposed to end up at the gates of Camp Butler, the Marine Corps headquarters, in the central part of the island right near Kadena Air Base. I kept in touch with General Rollings about this, telling Wayne what we knew. I told him I would invite Arakaki to talk with me about the demonstration and his plans. So I got my political Foreign Service National, FSN, to invite Arakaki to talk, which he was quite happy to do. Arakaki was a gentleman, a long-time pacifist, very much anti-base but a decent man. We had a long chat. The thing I was most concerned about was the march to the base gate. I wanted to know how the march was going to be controlled and how it was going to be controlled afterward so there was no opportunity for any mischief or misunderstanding. I also wanted to know what the objective was. What did Arakaki want to get out of this demo?

He explained they would march from assembly areas and have marshals for each subgroup. He was expecting 6,000 in all. When I said, "We really want this to be a peaceful march." He smiled and said, "We have a lot of experience with demonstrations." He didn't want anything untoward to happen either. There were a couple of tiny extreme leftist radical groups on Okinawa, offshoots of ones from mainland Japan, and he said he was going to make sure that those people were not part of the march because he didn't want anything to put a blot on it. He said when they got to the gate at Camp Butler he just wanted a Marine to take their protest petition. He said he didn't care who it was, just somebody at the gate to take the petition. Then the march would break up, and he had plans for moving everybody back in an orderly way.

The American news media on the other hand had gotten wind of this planned demonstration and were hoping for firebombs and blood. CNN was gathering and so were others. They were really hoping for something really messy. Our collective idea was to disappoint them. Right after this very productive meeting with Arakaki, I called Wayne Rollings and described the discussion. When I told him what Arakaki wanted, Wayne said, "I'll send Colonel Stu Wagner," his public affairs chief, "Stu Wagner will be at the gate to take the petition." That was great because Stu was very savvy when it came to handling these kinds of things.

In fact, that demonstration of about 6,000 people in a very congested area, in the midst of several military bases, went off without a hitch. CNN and all the rest were absolutely disappointed, which was a great achievement. That was the beginning of what turned out to be quite a large number of demonstrations of various kinds, over a long span of many weeks, all of which were non-violent.

The biggest one took place on my birthday, October 21, six weeks after the rape. It was held in a large sports field not far from my office. It turned out to be the largest demonstration in Okinawa since reversion in 1972. People from the embassy came down to observe, as did several of my people. I didn't go; I was watching on television from my house and was on the phone with Ambassador Mondale and the deputy chief of mission Rust Deming and getting reports from the scene. By that time I was recognizable enough that it would not have been helpful for me to be there.

We figured, given the size of the field and also the number of buses that you could observe, there were probably 25,000 people which was a significant portion of the population of Okinawa. The police eventually estimated 58,000 counting the crowd at the field and people as far as they could see in the general vicinity. The Okinawan press printed the figure of 85,000 which then passed into legend, and became the accepted figure among Okinawans. Wildly inflated, but there it was.

Nonetheless, as I pointed out to Embassy Tokyo, CINCPAC and Washington in a cable that day, even if our low estimate was correct it was still the biggest demonstration since 1972. That was the important thing. Just about every Okinawan group was represented there. The main speaker was the speaker of the prefectural assembly. The business community was even represented which was quite interesting. The business representative was Keiichi Inamine who eventually replaced Masahide Ota as governor. The only group that stayed away was the conservative base land owners.

The whole thing was absolutely peaceful except for one woman, an anti-base activist from Osaka on the mainland. She wanted to burn the American flag on the dais where the dignitaries all were lined up. The speaker of the prefectural assembly prevented her from doing that because he didn't want that kind of thing to mar their demonstration. So she went off to a far corner of the field and set fire to the flag. The next issue of Time International had a close-up of the burning flag as the cover photo. I still have that issue of the magazine. That cover photo was a good example of what the news media wanted.

The demonstrations continued. The main upshot of all this was the formation by the U.S. and Japanese governments of something called the Special Action Committee on Okinawa or SACO which included the State Department, Defense Department, Foreign Ministry, and Japanese Defense Agency policy level a major effort to decide what could be done to ameliorate the base situation in Okinawa. The idea was to reduce the so-called footprint of bases in terms of land area and also to reduce training and noise and disruptive training to the minimum allowable; in a word, to still keep the troops ready for the missions in Southeast Asia and Korea. We had floods of Japanese and American officials coming out of Washington and Tokyo to Okinawa to look at what could be done. Most of them had never seen the bases or at least hadn't looked at them through any kind of a fresh eye, so this was quite a new thing for them.

One of the amazing things was that few Japanese officials from Tokyo whether they were in the foreign ministry or even the Japan Defense Agency understood the way the U.S. military operated, or understand the command relationships. They thought, for example, that Wayne Rollings as the major general commanding the Marines also commanded Brigadier General Tom Hobbins the Air Force wing commander and the rest which was not true. In reality, each of the senior service commanders on Okinawa answered to their service component commanders on the mainland. The top Marine general was simply the coordinator. So an awful lot of education was needed on just in terms of dissuading some Japanese officials from some bright ideas they had that were predicated on the idea that the senior Marine commanded everybody else.

In the midst of all the protests, the mayor of Kin Town where the little girl lived used to come see me fairly frequently. I knew Mayor Yoshida well. He'd come to see me dressed in a polo shirt, jeans and running shoes but not as the leader of a protest delegation. We'd just sit and talk. He unfortunately knew the little girl and her parents very well and that made it worse. He wanted to talk it out. It was a nauseating crime.

Q: Had anybody made an official apology to the parents?

O'NEILL: There were public apologies from me, Ambassador Mondale and Lieutenant General Myers, the U.S. Forces Japan commander. These weren't made directly to the parents. For one thing, Mayor Yoshida and the family did not want the girl's name to come out at all. He kept telling me that the Tokyo weekly news magazines were desperately trying to find her name because they wanted to have that big scoop. He was doing everything he could, and I think the people of Kin were doing everything they could, to prevent that. To the best of my knowledge, the little girl's name never came out.

Of course, U.S. Forces Japan provided what is called a "solatium payment" as an initial token gesture. The military families, the various military families' organizations throughout Okinawa and the rest of Japan were putting together voluntary donations for scholarship funds for the girl. I can't remember the total amount collected or the exact mechanics of how this was done, but it was substantial. There was an arrangement whereby these funds were given in a way that did not reveal the family's name. It was really hard to describe how the Americans felt about this. The ordinary rank and file Marines were as disgusted by the rapists as anybody else would be. We knew that those creatures were lucky they were in solitary confinement in the Camp Hansen brig.

Q: Maybe it was after you left, but what happened to the Marines, the perpetrators?

O'NEILL: Well, usually the Japanese judicial system is extremely slow. It goes on and on. Between being charged and actually being indicted and then tried in the Japanese system can take months or years. Those three were indicted in record time for several crimes. The actual names of the crimes in Japanese law sound kind of peculiar to us. One was something like apprehension which was roughly equivalent to kidnapping, and then there was one that equated to sexual assault. But those were just about the only charges.

Once the police investigation was finished, the three were certain to be indicted. They would then go straight into Naha District Prison. They were indicted, tried and convicted all in record time. I think it was not later than mid-November that they were convicted of these several crimes. The Japanese prosecutors were asking for what they thought was a tough sentence. They wanted 10 years each, if you can imagine that in such a case. In the end, two of them got seven years in Yokosuka civil prison, and one of them got six and a half years. They got amazingly light sentences by American standards although these were considered relatively heavy sentences for child rape in Japan. In fact, a few months earlier in June 1995 two Japanese men had abducted and raped a 15 year old Okinawan girl. Just by coincidence, they were convicted shortly after the September rape. Those two Japanese got two and a half and three years for abducting and raping a 15 year old.

If the Marine Corps had been able to try those people they would have been jailed for the rest of their lives, in part because there would have been so many more charges that a Marine general court martial could have brought against them. There really are no conspiracy statutes in the Japanese legal system, for example. So even though they conspired to kidnap, conspired to assault and conspired to rape, that wasn't part of the legal equation in the Japanese system. The Marines could have gotten them on all those charges plus any number of other ancillary charges that really would have added to their sentences. I couldn't imagine them getting less than 50 years each and they probably would have all would have gotten life at least as an initial sentence of a Marine general court martial. Two of them were married, so the Marines could even have, if they thought about it, charged two of them with adultery on top of everything else. But they would have put them away forever.

Some Okinawans understood this, but with the intense emotion of the time, there was no conceivable way the Marines could have tried those people. The demand throughout Japan was to follow the SOFA and have them tried in a Japanese court which was exactly what we intended

from the start. There was absolutely no question in our mind that that was going to happen – a Japanese criminal trial.

Q: I'm looking at the time now, Al, and it's probably a good place to stop. We'll pick it up… Is there anything more you want to talk about after that just to mention a little about what we'll be doing?

O'NEILL: Not now, but later on we can talk about the process, the results such as they were, of the SACO process and the changes that took place in Okinawa, the involvement of President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto in signing the agreement in the spring of 1996.

Q: Today is the 26th of November 2008 with Al O'Neill. Al, we were talking about the aftermath of his horrible rape. You've gone through the legal things, but just one last question on that. Do you know what the final fate? Did these guys get out or what?

O'NEILL: I'm sure they're out because they had very light sentences of seven years in the case of two of them and six and a half years in the case of the third one. They served this in a civil prison in Yokosuka in the same town where the big naval base is. I'm sure, although I've lost track, that all of them were released at the end of their sentences. I would be surprised if they had gotten out early. After release they would have gotten dishonorable discharges from the Navy and Marine Corps. The ringleader was a Navy hospital corpsman of all things, and the other two were Marines. I think it would have been legally possible for the U.S. forces to prosecute them further without double jeopardy because there several crimes that they had committed that aren't even in the Japanese legal system: conspiracy to kidnap, conspiracy to assault and conspiracy to rape. I think the Marines reluctantly just decided they had better just let things go with the Japanese punishment, mild as it was by our standards for such a loathsome crime.

The three rapists certainly triggered almost an earthquake you might say, in U.S.-Japan security relations. As I explained earlier, Japan was very vulnerable in September of 1995 when this rape took place and when the Okinawans began protesting as they naturally would at such a disgusting crime, it resonated unusually strongly in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan. The Okinawans found themselves getting an unusual amount of support for their protest against the American military presence, more so than they did when they were protesting against accidents or other crimes in times past. That further encouraged particularly the anti-base Okinawans led by Governor Ota to further protests and to further attempts to parlay this horrible crime into decisions by the national government to curtail training, to demand the return of training areas, etc., and other base areas to Okinawa. This reverberation back and forth continued for some while.

Prime Minister Murayama quit in the first week of January 1996. He just couldn't handle the conflicts between his 50 year long pacifist ideological stance and the demands of being prime minister of Japan and, therefore, a defender of the security relationship. His replacement was from the LDP, Ryutaro Hashimoto who was a conservative politician in the LDP mold but who realized that there had to be visible adjustments in the security relationship in order to preserve it.

Even before Murayama quit, the two governments had formed what they called the Special Action Committee on Okinawa known as SACO or "Sacko." This was headed on the U.S. side by deputy assistant secretary of defense Kurt Campbell and on the Japanese side by North American Affairs deputy director general Hitoshi Tanaka. It involved State and DOD and U.S. Forces Japan on our side and the Japan Defense Agency with the Foreign Ministry in the lead on the Japanese side.

The deliberations of SACO continued for several months. The initial stage of negotiation between the Japanese and the U.S. sides, took place mostly in Tokyo there were lots of visits to Okinawa by everybody. The foreign minister was coming down; lots and lots of members of the Diet, particularly those Diet members who fancied themselves as experts on the security relationship were coming down in quite good numbers. I learned from dealing with them that some of these experts knew a lot less about the mechanics of the security arrangements than they thought they did.

But anyway, it was an opportunity to try to instruct, and so I wound up going with more than a few Japanese visitors to meet with my military counterparts. There was value in this anyway in terms of a learning experience for the Japanese and also to bring home — though I don't think it needed to be — to the U.S. military people just how serious this whole thing was. The SACO process produced a statement that was ultimately endorsed in April of 1996 by President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto to curtail a number of training activities, remove certain training activities to other locations, and make commitments to reduce the size of bases and training areas.

This interim SACO report that was issued when President Clinton came to Japan in the spring of 1996 was followed up by a final report in December of 1996. I'll just run down some of the main items. There were 30 major recommendations on training and on facilities. One of the biggest, the centerpiece of these SACO decisions, a decision in December of 1996 that has still not been carried out as of November 2008 was to return Marine Corps Air Station Futenma after a suitable replacement was completed in northeastern Okinawa. Futenma is still in operation. It's a very important facility for the Marines and also gets some use by the Air Force under certain circumstances, but it is right in the middle of the City of Ginowan.

Just as an aside, every consul general since reversion in 1972 had a very clear view of Futenma and its operations because the consul general's residence is on a ridge which is one kilometer from the south end of the Futenma runway. The house is on a straight line to the end of the runway, so every airplane that either lands or takes off from Futenma goes over the consul general's residence.

SACO was the big issue and it still hasn't been completed. About half of the northern training area which is in a very remote rugged area in northeastern Okinawa, the Pacific coast side, was to be returned, and I think some of that at least has been. The northern training area can't be developed commercially because it's so rugged and forested. It's also the watershed area for Okinawa, which suffers from water shortages from time to time. They did move parachute training from Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield which is at the 1945 invasion site. The parachute

training, which was the minimum possible to allow people to remain qualified, was moved over to Ie Shima, an island which can be seen just off the coast from Yomitan.

Q: That was where Ernie Pyle was killed?

O'NEILL: Exactly. That is where the famous war correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed in 1945. There's a little monument there. I've been to that, too. Also at Yomitan there was — probably still is — a large antennae array called the "elephant cage." This is run by the U.S. National Security Agency for its purposes. Under SACO it was to be returned once a much smaller more modern facility was built within Camp Hansen, a Marine base.

The Marines had been asking for years to move their very minimal artillery training to one of the mainland artillery ranges for more realistic training and the Japanese finally agreed. The reason for the delay was that until the rape case and the uproar over it, Tokyo was simply not willing to spend the political capital to persuade the Japanese towns near the mainland ranges to accept a few more days of gunfire noise. In the aftermath of that horrible event they finally mustered the courage to do this.

The last big ticket item, if you will, was to relocate Naha Military Port just up the west coast from Naha to the next city which was Urasoe. To the best of my knowledge that still hasn't been done even though, as I explained before, the Urasoe Chamber of Commerce welcomed the idea for a new port that would be dual use; that is, both for military purposes and for their purposes.

It might be worthwhile to talk a little bit about why some of these base returns take so long; not just Futenma. But some of the points are also germane to relocating Futenma out of the center of Ginowan City and moving the air operation up the east coast to Camp Schwab which is where the Marine infantry division's units are based now.

One factor is that in some cases the Japanese government is unwilling to pay the costs whether they're financial or political, or both. Another factor is Japanese requirements for environmental studies which can take a minimum of three years. These regulations often involve not only Tokyo's equivalent of the Environmental Protection Agency but also the prefectural government and in some cases cities have their own environmental rules.

There were also numerous NGO's — Non Governmental Organizations — on Okinawa, and others from the mainland that has been active in trying to block the move of Futenma's operations to the new location near Camp Schwab. They profess concern about coral reefs in the area, for manatees and other marine life. Then sometimes there are cases where the U.S. military force involved is reluctant to make the change on the grounds that it could be disadvantageous for training and readiness.

There were also political and economic cross currents within Okinawa itself. One good example concerns Futenma. The anti-base activists wanted Futenma to be closed immediately whether or not there was a replacement facility which would allow the helicopters to work. It's important to note that when you have Marine infantry you've got to have Marine helicopters because the helicopters move the infantry in Marine Corps doctrine. You couldn't, for example, keep the

infantry in Okinawa and move the helicopters to Hawaii or to the mainland of Japan. That would be one of the virtues of moving the helicopters to Camp Schwab where they would be co-located. Instead of flying from central Okinawa to northern Okinawa simply to pick up the Marines and move them to the northern training area, they would be right near the troops and the training area. So this move would be an improvement, if it ever happens.

Another example of the cross currents in Okinawa was also related to Futenma relocation. Governor Ota and his anti-base activist following wanted to get Futenma returned by moving the Marine aviation operations to Kadena Air Base which is just a couple miles away. Ota was busily lobbying Prime Minister Hashimoto, the Japan Defense Agency, and the Foreign Ministry to co-locate the Marine air units to Kadena and then to close Futenma right away and return it. He was forcefully ignoring the mayors and the people of the three towns whose land comprises Kadena Air Base: Kadena Town, Chatan Town, and Okinawa City. Those mayors were adamantly opposed to taking on Ginowan's aviation burden when they already had three F-15 squadrons, an air refueling squadron, P-3s and other air units operating out of Kadena.

Since I was talking with the mayors, I knew this directly. They kept trying to go see Governor Ota to present their opposition to him. He adamantly refused to see the three mayors. He didn't want to hear from them because he wanted to get the credit for closing Futenma faster than anybody thought possible. A big part of my job was to explain these complexities through reporting cables to Embassy Tokyo, U.S. Forces Japan and Washington agencies because Ota was the one who had the bully pulpit as the governor. He was the most famous Okinawan figure outside the prefecture. We had to make sure U.S. officials knew that not everything that Governor Ota said was shared throughout Okinawa, especially about Futenma.

The three mayors were all very nice people and fundamentally accepting of the need for the bases despite their constant lobbying for restrictions on training and other measures that would have reduced the burden of the bases on their people. Ota's idea was a non-starter for them; Mayor Miyagi of Kadena for example, told me that if Tokyo and Washington decided to move the Futenma air operations to Kadena, the people of Kadena Town led by him would block the entrances to the base to prevent it from happening. He said it in the very nicest way, and he would have done it in the very nicest possible way, and there would be no animosity toward the Americans on the bases. After they were repeatedly stonewalled by Governor Ota the three mayors saw their chance when Prime Minister Hashimoto went to a conference in Okinawa. The three mayors cornered him at the meeting site and made clear that none of them or their people supported Ota's plan. I might add, too, that the total population of these three municipalities that hosted Kadena was about 12% of the population of the island, so it's not insignificant in voting terms.

But Ota was prey to other influences. Ota himself was a very complex character. In the beginning of 1996 I wrote a long biographical cable about Ota which I sent to everybody in Washington and all the military addressees from Japan to Hawaii giving his background including his combat service during the war. Even though he was wounded, Ota the student soldier didn't surrender till November 1945, two months after the surrender of the rest of the Japanese forces. He was one of the holdouts. Also, after the war he went to Syracuse University on an U.S. scholarship.

Ota was a pacifist, and he came I think by his pacifism reasonably honestly even though he was sort of a charlatan in certain respects. Kurt Campbell, the DOD deputy assistant secretary for Asia, told me one time that Anthony Lake, the national security advisor, had said that President Clinton had read my cable on Ota. So our reporting which was voluminous was getting a pretty good audience. People were really beginning to look at reporting from this little tiny post in the middle of nowhere. Winston Lord was the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and during the remainder of my tenure there, we got more than a few personal cables from him congratulating us on the quality of our reporting. That made very pleasant reading.

Added to the complex currents regarding Futenma was that Nago City, the northernmost large city in Okinawa, was to get the replacement aviation facility and they were basically lobbying for it. There was some opposition from some groups within Nago but Nago's mayor and the generally conservative people of northern Okinawa saw this as a big opportunity for jobs, for business. They expected that the air facility would be dual-use both for civil and military, and they resented Ota for hogging too much of Japanese government largesse in central and southern Okinawa where there were more people and, therefore, more voters. So there were lots of reasons why the good folk in Nago were interested in getting this new facility and they were doing what they could for it.

One of the things that Tokyo did to assuage Okinawan feelings in the aftermath of the rape was to have the Foreign Minister set up a Foreign Ministry office in Okinawa. Since Okinawa was a Japanese prefecture that was somewhat like a U.S. embassy in Hawaii. But anyway, that's what they did with an ambassador in charge. He had two or three diplomats with him.

When this was announced, the U.S. generals and admirals were alarmed because they saw themselves as getting dragged into an arena that they didn't want to be in at all. They worried about what this new office would do and how it would interact with them. So I asked the DCM in Tokyo, Rust Deming, to make sure the foreign ministry understood that as the U.S. consul general I was to be the counterpart of the head of this MOFA office, not the generals. The first chief of the office was an ambassador named Harashima who was a fine person to work with. He was also a real aficionado of American western movies to a degree that no American could possibly fathom!

So I relieved the generals of their worries on this score. In addition to the new Foreign Ministry office, there were other three institutions of much longer standing that dealt in one fashion or another with Okinawa base issues. The first one was called the Joint Committee which was set up under the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA, for dealing with issues related to military bases, military training, and military operations. That organization of course dealt with U.S. Forces Japan countrywide, not just in Okinawa and I would say that the Okinawans didn't understand it very well. Nonetheless, when the SACO final report was issued in September of 1996 the U.S.-Japan Joint Committee was designated by the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (the foreign minister, the defense agency director, the secretary of state, and the defense secretary) to be the implementing agency for the SACO process.

There was also a U.S.-only grouping called the OACC or the Okinawa Area Coordinating Committee. It was made up of the senior Marine officer, the Marine Expeditionary Force commander, then a two star general; the Marine Corps base commander who was usually a brigadier general; the consul general; the commander of the Army's Tenth Area Support Group and the Navy captain who commanded Fleet Activities Okinawa. In addition, the commander of the amphibious forces Seventh Fleet was normally invited to these meetings. He was located on Okinawa for ease of planning with the Marines, although his ships were at Sasebo on the mainland.

That committee met both formally and informally usually quarterly but other times as needed. It was kind of the central means for doing two things: One was working out some fairly large issues with the prefectural government and also sometimes coordinating within the services certain things that needed to be worked out because of what might be called cultural differences between, for example, the Air Force and the Marines. The OACC also handled things that overlapped the various services, and there was a lot of this. When you look at the names of the bases on Okinawa, you see one is a Marine base, another one is an Army post and another's an Air Force base, but in fact almost all these bases had people of the other services on them. For example, at Kadena you had the Navy P-3 Orion squadron and the headquarters of the Navy's Fleet Activities Okinawa. When the 7th Fleet's carrier would go into port at Yokosuka, the carrier air group would often do bombing practice off the west coast of Okinawa. The Marine air wing from Iwakuni sometimes would have its F/A-18s go down for the same purpose.

One example of OACC action involved Chatan Town, which comprised the west side or East China Sea side of Kadena Air Base. There was a good bit of graffiti writing and trash, etc., along Chatan's sea wall. There were also some incidents of drunken U.S. service members urinating in people's yards, which was totally unacceptable anywhere. So when the mayor of Chatan brought this to the Kadena Air Base commander's attention we knew this would involve all the services. We had an OACC meeting very quickly.

Two things happened: One, the OACC imposed a curfew on military people in Chatan Town and perhaps some of the other areas, too, to limit the amount of time they were allowed to be out at night. Two, there was a very visible cleanup campaign where service members volunteered their time to clean up the graffiti off the seawall, clean up trash, which went over very well with the local population. I remember some of the generals saying in the media that they're homeowners, too. They wouldn't put up for any of this bad behavior in our own neighborhoods. Why should the people of Chatan have to, especially with foreign military people? So there was no question about the need for action, and that was one of the things that the OACC handled.

There was another more specialized group; I suppose you could say, the Tripartite Liaison Committee or TLC which combined the OACC, the prefectural government represented by the governor and his senior staff and the Japanese government which was represented by the Defense Facilities Administration Bureau in Naha, an organization under the Japan Defense Agency. Those were the officials who worked on base issues for the Japanese government with the towns and the prefectural government.

This TLC had been set up originally at the behest of the long-serving conservative governor Junji Nishime in the 1980s, and its purpose was to bolster Governor Nishime's credentials as somebody who could deal with base issues. In other words, it gave U.S. support to a conservative governor of Okinawa who was indeed still trying to limit training and to get land returned where possible but was going at it from a perspective that was in favor of the security treaty and recognized the need for the continued existence of certain essential bases.

During the time that I was there, you had largely leftist, or reformist as they're called, mayors in most of the major cities in Okinawa and a very reformist, pacifist governor who was very active in anti-base issues. This was sort of a different situation for the TLC. The TLC met only one time during the three years that I was in Okinawa, on St. Patrick's Day in 1995. Basically the military people were quite reluctant to give Governor Ota a big forum for his anti-base activism. I supported them because I'd been dragged in with Governor Ota to some examples of his on-camera anti-base activism, so to my mind the TLC was not a useful organization during his tenure. I think it was revived under his successor, Governor Inamine, who was a more moderate person on base issues.

These were all institutions that were peculiar to Okinawa to address base issues. In addition it's important as I've touched on a couple of times, to note that frequently during the course of a week and sometimes almost daily, there was contact between the mayors of the various towns that hosted the bases and senior base personnel in things large and small. The issue could be a complaint about some particularly loud noise or an accident that took place or a request to curtail certain training because school examinations were taking place. Almost invariably, unless there was some crucial training reason why they could not agree, the bases acceded to whatever adjustment that was needed.

As one example of this continuing cooperation between the bases and townships, one of the high schools in Ginowan City was having its gym rebuilt, and the school officials asked the Futenma commander if the kids could use one of the gyms on Futenma for their gym classes while construction was underway, and it was done. This was typical.

I left in July 1997 after a very good tour. I want to mention several items that happened there, one of which was a very sad situation and the other three were kind of unexpected for Okinawa. A few months before we left in 1997, my wife and I went to a concert by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra in one of Okinawa's very fine concert halls. On another occasion, I met the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip who was there in his capacity as the president of the World Wildlife Federation looking at endangered coral reefs. Separately from his visit, the royal yacht *HMS Britannia* came to Naha civilian port, and the Commodore Royal Yacht Squadron invited all the generals and their wives and me and my wife to a reception aboard *Britannia* which was a 450-some foot long yacht, now out of service. They had a small Royal Marine band contingent on board, and after the reception they did a formal "beating of retreat" twilight ceremony on the dockside, too. It was quite an unusual thing, totally unexpected for Okinawa.

The sad story is an example of the kind of thing that can crop up in any Foreign Service post, I suppose. It was a miniature tragedy in August of 1996. One Friday night about midnight I got a call from my newly arrived vice consul. The Kadena command center had just told him that a C-

141 transport had arrived from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In the nose wheel well of the airplane the crew found two Mongolian kids one of whom was dead and the other of whom the Air Force security police managed to revive on the tarmac. The two were transported immediately to Lester Naval Hospital next to Kadena.

I told him to call the Department's Op Center, of course, to be put through to our embassy in Ulaanbaatar immediately to say that this had happened. Also, to tell them that I was going to call the Mongolian ambassador in Tokyo in the morning, Saturday, and ask him to send an embassy officer down to Okinawa that day so we could deal with this. I also called our embassy's duty officer right away, and I called our deputy chief of mission (DCM) on Saturday morning and told him what happened. I did get in touch with the Mongolian ambassador and explained who I was and what had happened, and asked for an officer to come down. I said I would meet the officer at the airport. He sent a Mrs. Nasanbuyan, their commercial attaché to Naha that Saturday night. She spoke very good English and she stayed overnight at my house.

The first thing Sunday morning I took her to Lester Naval Hospital where Captain Don Anderson the hospital commander escorted us to see the kids, the body of the one that was in the mortuary and the other boy who was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). One boy had on shorts, a short sleeve shirt and shower shoes, and the other one had sneakers, a long sleeve shirt, and long pants. They looked like they were about 12 years old. They had no identification, so we had no idea who the boys were.

The hospital people took photographs of both of them which we had faxed to our embassy in Ulaanbaatar so that they could put the photographs on Mongolian national TV in hopes that somebody could identify them. The hospital people were doing just everything they could. The pediatric doctors in the intensive care unit were briefing Mrs. Nasanbuyan and answering all her questions about the surviving boy who was in a coma.

I then drove her up to Kadena where we met Brigadier General John Baker, the 18th Wing commander, and a colonel from Military Airlift Command because the C-141 transport was a Military Airlift Command plane. Before the four of us went out to see the airplane, John Baker gave a briefing of the flight from Ulaanbaatar. Basically, for more or less five hours those kids had been at the elevation of Mt. Everest because the plane was mostly at about 29,000 feet and sometimes higher. Of course, they had no oxygen. They had no proper clothing. General Baker and the colonel took us to the tarmac to see the airplane, and Mrs. Nasanbuyan looked into the nose wheel well, and could see where the boys stowed away. She met the air crew and also the Air Force security policeman who had revived the one boy.

Then, in relatively short order two things happened: One, the boy who was on life support died, which sadly was a blessing because he would have stayed in that condition, if he had been moved back to Mongolia somehow. Also the Mongolian authorities identified the boys fairly quickly. It turned out they were not brothers as they seemed, and they were teenagers, a bit older than they looked.

It turned out that they lived on the outskirts of the Ulaanbaatar airport, and the older boy had seen a movie called Passenger 57 with Wesley Snipes. In the movie he's a counter terrorist

operative. A 747 is hijacked and the hero gets into the nose wheel well of the 747, gets inside the airplane, and eventually overcomes the hijackers and wins the day. Over the following days, I got more information through our embassy in Ulaanbaatar and also from Mrs. Nasanbuyan during the night or two that she was at my house and calling back to the Foreign Ministry. The older boy came up with the idea that they would fly to Germany. So while the crew was offloading the humanitarian aid from the rear of the airplane, the two kids managed to get through the security fences, and into the nose wheel well. The crew chief, when he did his preflight check, just couldn't see them.

The crew was devastated. They were staying at Kadena because there was going to be an investigating officer flown out from Dover Air Force Base. I met with them and made clear that the Mongolian government did not blame them at all. In fact, it fired the airport security chief at Ulaanbaatar Airport and punished several other officials involved but did not blame the air crew. Then we had to work with the mortuary people at Kadena to get the bodies back to Ulaanbaatar. In Okinawa, you just never knew what was going to be in store when you picked up the telephone late at night.

By the way, there was a chapel service for the Mongolian boys at one of the Kadena chapels. The Officers' Wives Club organized a service for them. I sent the leaflet from the service to the Mongolian embassy in Tokyo. It was a sad little story, and that is where it came from — a movie. Mrs. Nasanbuyan, when she was first looking at the boys in the hospital said sadly "We teach our boys to be brave."

Q: Al, was there any… You may have covered this right from the beginning, but what was the rationale for our troops on Okinawa? Was this ever questioned, moving to Guam or something like that, while you were there?

O'NEILL: Oh, well, it is now. The bases are a combination of both history and geography. The U.S. forces occupied Okinawa after perhaps the bloodiest battle of the entire Pacific war. In 82 days of constant combat, 240,000 were killed; most of them were Okinawan civilians. A huge base complex was built up particularly during and after the Korean War. The U.S. kept Okinawa under occupation for another 20 years. Reversion didn't take place until 1972.

While I was in the embassy in Tokyo from 1980 to '84, there was a considerable consolidation of U.S. bases in the Tokyo area and Yokohama, from north to south, Tokyo to Yokohama to Yokosuka. Even during that same approximate period there were some consolidations of U.S. military bases and closings of U.S. military bases on Okinawa but it was not nearly as sweeping.

To hop back in time a bit, during the Vietnam War those Okinawan bases were very valuable because we had B-52s stationed there which were taking off from Kadena and doing bombing missions in Vietnam. That could not have happened had reversion taken place. So again, there was this enormous feeling of the importance of these bases. If you look at a map you can see Okinawa is closer to Pusan than it is to Tokyo, and so it's also straddles the space between Kyushu, the southernmost main island of Japan and Taiwan. It's a keystone between northeast Asia and Southeast Asia in a physical sense. From a strategic standpoint, it's a thousand miles closer to the mainland than Guam. All these strategic, historical, and political factors militated

towards continuing a large and robust base presence on Okinawa even while there were returns and cutbacks, etc.

You asked about Guam. In the meantime, and I don't know exactly the time frame but certainly after the Vietnam War and all the Indochina involvement was over, we largely closed down a lot of the facilities in Guam. This was in part because of Guamanian opposition to the bases. Even while I was in the Philippines from 1997 to 2000, to the best of my recollection there were no U.S. Air Force flight units assigned to Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, and few if any U.S. warships at the naval base. There were pre-positioned ships which are large supply ships that can be sent anyplace. They've got vehicles and repair parts and all kinds of supplies, but overall there was a much reduced military presence on Guam while that significant presence continued in Okinawa.

I don't think I mentioned this before but there is in Japan something called the UN Command Rear which is directly linked to Korean contingency planning and the UN Command in Korea. These UN Command Rear bases include Yokota Air Base in Honshu and Sasebo in Kyushu, where the amphibious force ships were based. On Okinawa, Kadena, White Beach Naval Station, and Futenma Marine Corps Air Station were the UN Command Rear installations. They flew the U.S., Japanese and UN flags to symbolize that status. There was a separate SOFA or Status of Forces Agreement with the Japanese that governed the use of these UN Command Rear bases. So you had this factor as well, the concern about the availability of the bases in Okinawa for a Korean contingency. In fact, there's a 6,000 acre ammunition storage area adjacent to the 5,000 acre Kadena Air Base, where a huge amount of ammunition for a Korean contingency was stored.

Following through from the SACO process, the two governments have reached some agreements on relocating some of the Marine units from Okinawa to Guam. I think there's a target date of 2013. In any case, in the natural course of things in the SACO process I think it's fair to expect that any such plans are going to be slipped by many years. The Japanese government is supposed to spend several billion dollars, and it may be six billion, but don't quote me. Several billion dollars to build facilities on Guam for the forces that will be relocated out of Okinawa. This would result in a significant reduction in the manpower in Okinawa and, therefore, the noise levels and the kinds of disruption that the noise levels produce. A very visible gesture, assuming it takes place.

Q: Was having this force there in some manner a warning to China about Taiwan?

O'NEILL: There were various operations out of Okinawa aimed at learning about what the Chinese were up to, including the operations of the P-3 Orion anti-submarine squadrons there. Not only was there the U.S. P-3 squadron at Kadena but the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force had two squadrons of P-3s at Naha International airport. There was also what I'll euphemistically refer to as the acquisition of information through some of the U.S. facilities on Okinawa which I'm sure involved the Chinese.

Q: Actually, one of those planes landed on Hainan Island.

O'NEILL: That was, of course, much later, and that was an EP-3. The ones that normally operated out of Okinawa were plain P-3 anti-submarine planes. The EP-3 that was involved in this collision with the Chinese fighter in what, spring of 2001, was strictly surveillance. It had no weapons as the regular P-3s can carry. It was also marked very differently, too. The U.S. news media very annoyingly called the EP-3 a spy plane. Well, the P-3s on anti-submarine patrol are painted a pale flat grey with slightly darker grey U.S. markings on them, very low visibility. The EP-3 that was knocked down by the Chinese fighter was painted a bright glossy white on top, with shiny dark grey undersides and big red, white, and blue U.S. markings on the sides and the wings. They were not trying to hide anything.

Anyhow, China figured more in national thinking at the Tokyo level than it did in the thinking of Okinawans. The 7th Fleet amphibious group did at least one visit to Shanghai, and the group commander at the time, Rear Admiral Walt Doran, told me that as they were heading into the roads at Shanghai, he didn't know if the port visit was on or not. There was always something going on in U.S.-China relations that made these things uncertain but that particular port visit to Shanghai did take place. So there was a combination of positive interaction and also watchfulness, I guess, with respect to the Taiwan Strait situation and China on the part of the U.S. forces in Okinawa. It was an enormously interesting place. I couldn't have asked for a better assignment.

Q: With your Japanese experience, did you sense any changes in the way the mainland Japanese regarded Okinawa? I'm thinking that Okinawa was treated the same way that the Germans in the northern part of Italy were viewed from Rome, as being a bunch of peasants who didn't really speak the language, etc. Did you see any change in this?

O'NEILL: There was a certain amount of change. To my mind the prejudice that you're speaking of toward Okinawa was quite strong, and I think that something of a change occurred in the aftermath of the horrible child rape case in September 1995. There was more sympathy on the part of mainlanders for the Okinawan situation in the aftermath, which was a good thing because largely the mainlander view of Okinawa was just similar to what you mentioned: They're not exactly Japanese; they speak funny, and they have weird customs and all that. In their dialect, the Okinawans call the mainland Japanese *Yamatunchu* or Yamato people and themselves *Uchinanchu*.

A lot of prejudices continued to linger particularly among the older generation of mainlanders. That awful crime did generate a certain amount of sympathy and a recognition that there did have to be adjustments in the base situation. Part of the equation was the NIMBY syndrome, the "not in my backyard" syndrome: "We're so glad those bases are down in Okinawa because that's what Okinawans are for. We don't want Marines and airmen wandering around our neighborhoods and making noise nearby."

During that time, and it may have been coincidental, maybe not, Okinawan musical groups playing Okinawan music got a much wider hearing and much larger audiences in Tokyo and Osaka for concerts and for CD sales and all that. So there was a beginning of greater appreciation of the richness of Okinawan culture. In lots of ways despite the small population and tiny size,

it's very rich in sculpture and pottery, weaving, textile dying, and distinctive lacquer work that's often very pretty.

There's also a generational element into it, too to mainland Japanese thinking about Okinawans. Younger Okinawans tend to be non-political to a degree that was surprising to anybody who served in Seoul and knows how spectacularly political younger Koreans have traditionally been. Also, I think, younger mainland Japanese, are more accepting and open to Okinawans particularly because of tourism. The largest component of the Okinawan economy in recent decades — the last 15 or so years — has been tourism, which is almost all from other islands of Japan, rather than from the outside. So younger Japanese have been there for tourism, for honeymoons, etc., and they have encountered Okinawans as being Japanese like themselves, people who do not think that they should be separate from Japan. So that's been a leavening influence as well, a good effect.

Q: Speaking of cultural changes and all, I've seen reports from time to time that Japanese teenagers, particularly girls, seem to get on to fads, which has become quite an element in Japanese society. How did the teenage girls from Okinawa and our troops there get along?

O'NEILL: Well, they often were very friendly, and there were more than a few marriages of service members and Okinawan young women. There was the usual bar culture, too, that you have around any military installation of any nationality anywhere in the world and any time, going back to Caesar's legions. This was less prevalent in Okinawa than it had been, say, during the Vietnam War era. The reduction in such activities from an economic standpoint, whatever the concern from a moral standpoint may be, had a very depressing effect on a number of the towns of Okinawa that didn't necessarily have a lot of other things to substitute for the townspeople's' livelihoods.

The number of marriages between Okinawan women and American servicemen was perhaps less than in the past because a lot of the American military people were on accompanied tours. The Department of Defense school system ran 13 schools on Okinawa including two four-year high schools. The consulate general used to issue 100 "reports of birth abroad" per month, month after month, year after year, because of births at Lester Naval Hospital. Lester Hospital also had extremely good neo-natal intensive unit. Despite the fact that the hospital itself was rather shop-worn, its people and equipment were really first rate.

In the Okinawan language the word for a stir-fry dish is *champuru*, and they call their culture "*champuru* culture" because they have mixed in so many elements from different places in the world including Southeast Asia. They're allowed to import Thai rice to distill *awamori* which is their rice whiskey. Nobody else in Japan could import foreign rice, but the Okinawans for historical reasons are allowed to do it for that purpose. Some of their musical instruments look similar to ones from Southeast Asia. Some of the original court dress and the formal dress have Southeast Asia elements particularly the caps that resembled the ones that used to be worn by Vietnamese mandarins. Their tombs that they call "turtleback tombs" are unique to Okinawa. You don't see them anyplace else in Japan. They're from Fujian Province in China across the East China Sea.

Okinawans who were descended from Korean potters or Japanese or Chinese traders would tell you this with some pride. If you had that situation among mainland Japanese, they'd hide it from you. One of the stir-fry dishes in Okinawa has vegetables and corned beef hash in it which is obviously not a traditional Japanese delicacy, but that's a literal example of their "stir-fried culture." They're a very easygoing people. There were Americans who married Okinawan women before reversion and after, and these mixed families and their children are not seen as odd by Okinawans. It's a very refreshing situation in comparison to the generally more rigid views of mainlanders on such things.

Q: One last question on this. How did you find the relations with the embassy? Was the embassy happy that you were there? But sometimes the greatest joy of a consul general is not to have to have the embassy pay much attention to him or her.

O'NEILL: Well, it was basically inevitable that the embassy would pay a lot of attention to Okinawa during that period. I was very fortunate. Ambassador Walter Mondale was wonderful. He was a great believer in the U.S.-Japan security relationship.

He and Mrs. Mondale, Joan Mondale, were great people to be with, too, and they made several visits mostly for ceremonial occasions having to do with the Iwo Jima 50th anniversary and the Okinawa 50th anniversary. During the June 1995 50th anniversary events, they stayed at our house for three nights. Mrs. Mondale, who is an artist and a potter in her own right, was very interested in all the arts of Okinawa. She came down one time on a visit of her own — she was with us for two or three days, visiting potters and weavers, etc., and it was a tremendous thing, got huge publicity in Okinawa. That the wife of the American ambassador and ex-vice president was clearly interested in the arts in Okinawa was tremendous. We couldn't have designed something better than that.

Rust Deming, the DCM, was one of the foremost Japan hands in our Foreign Service his entire career. His father, Ambassador Olcott Deming, had been on Okinawa; his title probably was political adviser to the U.S. military commander. He — Olcott Deming — was very fondly remembered even by people like Governor Ota, the scholar and pacifist, for what he had done to try to ease the base burden on Okinawa in the 1950s.

Another thing, in consular operations we had one potential problem that I was able to defeat with the support of the embassy consular and administrative sections and ultimately, the ambassador and DCM. The Department was moving toward electronic visas that would be printed out on a serial-numbered visa sheet and then pasted into the passport as opposed to being stamped as the old non-immigrant visas were. These things would have a photo of the visa applicant electronically imprinted in the visa itself.

As the State Department was moving to this system worldwide, its initial view was that non-immigrant visa processing at Consulate General Naha would end. Okinawans would have to go to Fukuoka on Kyushu to get their visas, not the most convenient place. I argued that we should continue the non-immigrant visa operation. My argument was that much of what the U.S. represents to most Okinawans is the bases. There are a few narrow areas in which we could do something other than operate bases. An obvious one was convenience of visa processing for

Okinawan visitors. I forget the exact number, but it was a reasonable number. It would have sent a bad signal in that era to take it away from them and say they had to make a special trip to Kyushu and then maybe fly to Tokyo and then to the U.S., because direct flights from Okinawa to the U.S. were closing out. There were just a lot of reasons, and fortunately the embassy agreed with me, lobbied the State Department, and we retained the non-immigrant visa processing. So that worked out well.

End of reader