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Representations of U.S. Military-related Matters in Major U.S. Newspapers (2015)

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Key words; Okinawa, U.S. military, U.S. newspapers

本論は米国主要新聞 2 紙（ワシントン・ポストとニューヨーク・タイムズ）による 2015 年の在沖米軍基地関連報道に焦点をあてた論考である。2015 年の両紙の報道は、普天間基地移設に伴う辺野古沖埋め立てをめぐる沖縄県と国の対立や、沖縄の住民や新基地建設に抗議する人々の声、沖縄における反新基地建設運動に対する安倍政権の強行的対応などのニュース・フレームが中心となった。

2012 年から 2014 年の報道にもみられたように、2015 年も沖縄の政治的窮状を伝える社説や沖縄の人々の声を反映する報道が顕著であったため、その傾向要因を分析した。しかし依然、地位協定、思いやり予算、環境問題、沖縄の経済そのものに関する情報が不足しており、沖縄の実情に関する米国の読者の理解促進には、より掘り下げた取材や網羅的な情報が必須であることを指摘した。

I. Introduction

Seventy two years have passed since the end of the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. However, to many residents who want to secure a safe and peaceful environment for the next generation, the battle is still going on.

Okinawa had been under U.S. military occupation for 27 years after W.W.II. Okinawa reverted to Japan in 1972, but, as of March 2015, 73.9% of military installations exclusively used by U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ)

were still concentrated on the Okinawa islands, which constitute only 0.6% of Japan's total land area. The U.S. military still occupied 18.2% of the main island of Okinawa (Okinawa Prefecture, 2016, 2).

In 1995, the gang rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen occurred. About 85,000 people rallied against this barbaric act and called for the immediate closure, or at least for the reduction in the number of U.S. military bases and revision to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in Okinawa. In 1996, the Japanese government announced the total return of the Marine Corps Air Station in Futenma (MCAS Futenma). However, the Japanese and U.S. governments decided that the function of MCAS should be transferred to the northern part of the island, Henoko, to Camp Schwab. Many in Okinawa perceive this relocation as the construction of new, fortified military facilities. Yet, due to local opposition, this construction had been halted for nearly two decades.

In 2009, then-prime minister Yukio Hatoyama was elected on the promise to relocate MCAS Futenma to another prefecture. Unfortunately, no other prefecture was willing to accept U.S. troops in their backyard. Even after the collapse of the 10-month-Hatoyama administration in 2010, a sense of “shouldering unfair burden of U.S. military bases in Okinawa” has grown stronger among residents of Okinawa. In 2012 and 2013, two dozen Ospreys were deployed in MCAS Futenma despite the opposition of the locals. (Ospreys are tilt-rotor transport aircraft which have caused more than 36 deaths before deployment to Okinawa.) Furthermore, the Abe administration decided to take forceful action to construct the new military base in Henoko. Under these circumstances, protesters held daily sit-ins at Henoko and the number of protesters from within and outside Okinawa soared between 1,000 and 3,000 people at times. Daily clashes between the police and protesters were reported in the local media while many protesters were forcefully removed by

police officers. People on both sides were physically injured and suffered emotionally.

On October 13th, 2015, Gov. Takeshi Onaga of Okinawa prefecture revoked his predecessor's permission for the land reclamation necessary for the construction of the new base at Henoko. On Oct 27th, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) suspended the revocation. On November 2nd, the prefecture asked the Central and Local Government Dispute Management Council (CLGDMC) to determine the legality of the suspension. On November 17th, the Minister of MLIT filed a lawsuit against the governor of Okinawa demanding retraction of his revocation after the governor rejected an order from the MLIT to reinstate the approval issued by his predecessor. On December 24th, CLGDMC rejected Gov. Onaga's request. On December 25th, Gov. Onaga sued Japanese central government, stating that the ministry illegally suspended his revocation.

The shortage or lack of media coverage of this issue has resulted in some misunderstandings about the situation in Okinawa: particularly so for non-Okinawans. I strongly believe that facts that are not reported in the U.S. media are crucial in understanding why approximately 80 % of Okinawans have been opposed to the U.S. military presence on their islands.

In this paper, I would like to present my analysis of major U.S. newspaper articles, editorial, and letters to the editor during 2015 retrieved from Lexis.com, on U.S. military-related issues in Okinawa from two U.S. newspapers: the *Washington Post (WP)*, and the *New York Times (NYT)*.

II. Data Collection

I have selected seven articles, two letters to the editor, and one editorial from the *NYT*, nine articles, two letters to the editor, and one

editorial from the *WP* in 2015.

I have selected those three newspapers since they are considered politically influential especially in Washington, D.C. and they have correspondents or special contributors in Japan. In addition, they also influence other media agendas (see Maedomari-Tokuyama, 2013).

By illustrating the discrepancy between the U.S. media coverage of U.S. military-related matters in Okinawa and the real plight of Okinawans, I would like to show that U.S. citizens have an inaccurate understanding of Okinawan views on the U.S. military presence. This has consequences for Okinawans when they ask for help from Washington with regards to the U.S. military presence here in Okinawa.

III. News Frames

Shanto Iyengar explains that “framing refers to the way in which opinions about an issue can be altered by emphasizing or de-emphasizing particular facets of that issue” (Iyengar, 254). I pointed out in my previous paper that this type of framing will result in the alteration of the opinions of U.S. readers about the U.S. military presence in Okinawa when the media emphasize seemingly-positive facets and de-emphasize negative facets of the U.S. military presence (Maedomari-Tokuyama, 2017, 221). The political representations of U.S. military-related problems in Okinawa start with two different types of news frames.

According to Iyengar, news coverage of political issues comes in two genres of presentation: thematic and episodic news frames. A thematic news frame usually employs in-depth background reporting and presents a public issue in a general context whereas episodic framing depicts issues “in terms of individual or specific events” (Iyengar, 255). In the U.S., he explains, due to market pressures, presentation of political news largely depends on episodic framing (Iyengar, 255).

Iyengar refers to the difference in viewers’ attributions of

responsibility for political issues depending on news frames as follows:

Most political issues are capable of being viewed either as the creation of societal and/or governmental forces or as the result of private actions of individuals. Rising unemployment, for instance, might be attributed to the changing nature of the job market or to government economic policies (societal responsibility). Alternatively, unemployment might be attributed to the unwillingness of the unemployed to work for low wages (individual responsibility). (Iyengar, 255-256)

Although Iyengar refers mainly to TV viewers, I apply his theory to print news media and its online version accompanied by photos, videos, and audios. This is because, I believe, his theory of thematic and episodic news frames seems extremely useful when exploring the American newspaper readership. As for reporting of the American military presence in Okinawa, episodic framing of military-related crimes and accidents as well as anti-U.S. base rallies are more dominant than thematic framing that deals with the politics and history of the long-standing U.S. military presence in Okinawa.

IV. News frames of the 2015 coverage on the issues in Okinawa by U.S. newspapers

Unlike the news frames of earlier coverage (between 1995 and 1996, 2009 and 2010, 2012 and 2014 except for a few articles), the news frames of the *NYT* and *WP* in 2015 are similar in being sympathetic towards the plight of Okinawa while the importance of the Japan–U.S. alliance is less emphasized. Instead, highlighted are (A) the clash between the Japanese and Okinawan governments regarding the ‘Henoko issue’ (Okinawa governor’s revocation of permission for the

landfill that are necessary to construct a new base in Henoko); (B) demonstrations around Camp Schwab in Henoko; and (C) the forceful stance of the Abe administration on the ‘Henoko issue.’ I elaborate these three examples below.

A. The clash between the Japanese government and Okinawan prefectural government

News frames of the papers analyzed include issues surrounding the Okinawa Governor’s revocation of the permit that allows land reclamation for the construction of the new base in Henoko. I believe that the news frame of few articles regarding the Henoko issues implies the structural discrimination by the Japanese against Okinawans. The selection of quotes from Gov. Onaga in the articles enables reporters to convey the reason why Okinawans are against the U.S. base presence. Anna Fifield, Tokyo bureau chief of the *WP*, selected powerful comments by Gov. Onaga as shown in the following:

Onaga said that Okinawa, long considered a backwater in Japan, has been treated badly for too long. The island chain was occupied by the United States for almost three decades after the end of World War II, and the bases remained even after it was handed back to Japan in 1972. “We think that they deprived us of our own land with force,” Onaga said. “Now they say Futenma air station is not functioning and needs to be replaced and that the new facility should be built in Okinawa. Frankly speaking, I have to say that they are terrible thieves. (Fifield, *WP*, 5/22/2015)

From Okinawan perspectives, this news frame is effective in illustrating the issue because readers can learn the historical and social background of the current situation. In my previous paper, I wrote about the

possibility of this news frame being perceived by some readers as “Japan’s domestic issue, in which the U.S. or international community does not necessarily have to interfere” and in which “the U.S. military-related issues in Okinawa are domestic issues for Japan, which the Japanese government has to negotiate with the Okinawa prefectural government” (Maedomari-Tokuyama, 2017, 230). However, the difference in this 2015 news frame is that structural discrimination against Okinawans by the Japanese is implicated. Thus, this implication may help readers understand that Okinawans have constantly been placed in a difficult position and that their voices have been ignored by the central government in most cases.

In October, Gov. Onaga revoked his predecessor’s permission for land reclamation at the construction site. The *WP* and the *NYT* reported the issue. The *WP* had equal word counts for the argument for both Japanese and Okinawan sides. But for the first time, within the scope of my research over at least five years, the paper used the figure that Okinawa “comprise[s] less than one percent of the country’s land mass but house[s] 75 percent of the American military bases in Japan” (Fifield, *WP*, 10/13/2015). It also referred to the CH53 helicopter crash at Okinawa International University in 2004. The *NYT* reporting was also sympathetic towards Okinawan perspective and quoted Gov. Onaga and a law professor who said Gov. Onaga has the upper hand in court (Soble, *NYT*, 10/14/2015).

In November, the Japanese government filed a lawsuit demanding the governor retract his revocation. On Nov. 5, the *NYT* put out an editorial, “Denying the Will of Okinawans,” calling for proper resolution of the Henoko standoff. The editorial touched upon environmental destruction, the Battle of Okinawa, post-war U.S. military occupation, and the current heavy burden of U.S. military bases on Okinawa. Although this is not an article, the editorial reflects the sympathetic

stance of the *NYT* towards the Henoko issue.

Okinawa, the poorest and most put-upon of Japan's prefectures, has long chafed under the American military burden. They say it will just shift the dangers, noise and environmental degradation of militarization to another part of the island. They are particularly alarmed at the plan to build giant runways on landfill dumped into a pristine ocean bay, home to coral reefs and an endangered population of a manatee-like creature, the Okinawan dugong.... There is a great injustice at the heart of the Okinawans' resentment. Japan wants the security of America's military presence, but it wants Okinawans to pay for it. This has been true since the end of World War II, when the bloodiest battle of the Pacific war left Okinawa shattered and a quarter of its civilians dead. It was the only part of Japan invaded and occupied by Americans, who never left. Okinawa, which is less than 1 percent of Japan's land mass, has more than half of the 50,000 American military personnel in Japan. The island is choked top to bottom with military bases—built on land seized from Okinawans—and the problems that come with war machinery and troops: noise, deadly accidents and assaults against women by American troops. (*NYT*, 11/05/2015 editorial)

To counter this *NYT* editorial, Yasuaki Kawamura, press secretary at Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry, wrote an opinion piece for the *NYT*, 'Acting in Okinawa's Interests.' It reads: "In no way is the Japanese government "denying the will of Okinawans" (Kawamura, *NYT*, 11/25/2015). Nevertheless, the residents in Okinawa have longed for the removal of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma (MCAS Futenma)

because it is in the middle of a densely populated area and pose a great danger to the residents and the area. This is referred to as ‘Okinawa’s interests’ by Kawamura and the Japanese government. His counterargument in fact emphasizes one dimension of Okinawa’s political voice alone: the Japanese government has underscored the relocation of MCAS Futenma by ‘acting in Okinawa’s interest.’ However, he does not emphasize the fact that the majority of residents in Okinawa want the closure and withdrawal from Okinawa of the MCAS Futenma, not its relocation within Okinawa.

Kawamura also states that the “government of Japan will, with utmost care for the area, proceed with the construction based on laws. At the same time, it will listen to local voices concerned about the environmental impact” (Kawamura, *NYT*, 11/25/2015). Local protesters argue that the construction itself is the cause of environmental destruction. The forceful stance of the Abe administration against the protesters in Henoko, which is portrayed in the *NYT* editorial on Nov.5, proves Kawamura is incorrect in his letter.

Another major point in the letter was a reference to the 1996 Special Actions Committee (SACO) agreement to relocate MCAS Futenma to Henoko. This is almost always emphasized by the Japanese government and by the media in both the U.S. and Japan referred to as “Tokyo and Washington agreed on the relocation in the 1990s” (*NYT*, 10/14/2015). The missing fact is that the agreement was reached by both the Japanese and U.S. governments against the request of Okinawa prefecture. Although the return of the eleven military facilities was promised by the Japanese government, the SACO agreement was reached on the condition that eight facilities including MCAS Futenma be relocated to the other military installations within Okinawa (H.Maedomari, 2011, 30). The people in Okinawa believed that the Futenma air field will be relocated to other prefectures or totally

withdrawn because that means ‘reducing the burden of Okinawa,’ as the Japanese government reiterates every time major crimes and accidents occur.

B. Reflecting more voices of residents, mainly protesters in Henoko

In 2015 more articles reflect voices of residents, mainly protesters in Henoko, than in previous coverage. Albeit brief, the articles refer to environmental destruction, seventy years of the U.S. military presence and current unfair military burden on Okinawans.

On Feb. 23rd, Martin Fackler from the *NYT* covered the detention of three protesters in Henoko. He reported from Tokyo gathering information through social media and local newspapers as follows:

The protesters have pledged to obstruct construction of the runways, saying the airstrip will destroy pristine coral and the habitat of the dugong, a sea mammal similar to a manatee. The new air field is widely opposed by Okinawans, who blame the huge American military presence here for causing crime and pollution. (Fackler, *NYT*, 2/23/2015)

By writing about the protesters’ assertion, Fackler reports the environmental destruction involved in construction of the new base, crimes committed by the US soldiers and water and soil contamination from the U.S. bases. To enhance readers’ understanding, thematic news frame to explain the historical and social background in depth will be necessary.

On May 17th, a rally in favor of stopping the construction of the new base was held in Naha and about 35,000 participants gathered. Anna Fifield from the *WP* interviewed Gov. Onaga about his lobbying against U.S. bases in Okinawa and his effort to take this issue to the

Obama administration and wrote a piece most of which was devoted to remarks by the governor.

“In the United States, I would like to talk about the contradiction they [U.S. military officials] are making. I would also like to correct their misunderstanding about the situation,” Onaga said in an interview Thursday. “I think the United States still believes that the Henoko construction is feasible and possible. However, their attitudes and actions are not in line with protecting human rights and freedom and democracy in Okinawa.” (Fifield, *WP*, 5/22/2015).

The WP reporter has readers understand the circumstances in Okinawa and its people through the words of Gov. Onaga. His remarks are a harsh criticism of the U.S. government.

C. **Emphasis on the forceful stance of Abe administration against the residents of Okinawa**

A third news frame emphasizes the forceful stance of the Abe administration against the residents of Okinawa. It is important to note that by stressing the forceful stance of the Abe administration against the residents of Okinawa and protesters in particular, the *NYT* refers to the passage of the Secrecy law and the reinterpretation of the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to enable deployment of Japanese Self-Defense Forces overseas at the request of Japan’s allies.

Also, in the *NYT* editorial mentioned earlier, graphic portrayal of the protesters in Henoko may have grabbed readers’ attention:

Japanese police officers in riot gear are dragging away grandparents; protesters are linking arms and lying down in front of military trucks. A local mayor is accusing the central government

of lawlessness, and a governor is denouncing “iron-fisted rule” from Tokyo. That is the tense and ugly situation in Okinawa, where an old battle is intensifying over Japan’s plan, hatched with its strategic partner the United States, to vastly expand an American military base over the long-held, impassioned objections of Okinawans. (*NYT*, 11/05/2015 editorial)

In order to convey the contentious situation that protesters face, it is imperative that journalists visit the site by themselves and report the issue. The journalists from the *WP* and *NYT* combined an episodic news frame with the partially thematic news frame to deliver the views from Okinawans and protesters.

V. Insufficient Coverage of Environmental Pollution and the Okinawan Economy

The perilous environmental contamination around U.S. bases is only briefly touched upon by the papers discussed here. Dan Lamothe reports on the *WP* Blogs about a drunk Marine triggering a fire suppression system in a hangar at Kadena Air Base on May 23, citing the source as the *Stars and Stripes* and the *Marine Corps Times*. He added that the *Times* reported that “military officials were not releasing the name of the Marine and the detailing the damage caused” (*WP*, 6/16/2015). No further information was provided in the article. In fact, Jon Mitchell, a journalist who has continued extensive reporting on Agent Orange in Okinawa for *the Japan Times (JT)* since 2011, reports that the drunk Marine released 1,510 liters of fire suppressant foam, “which can contain carcinogens, chemicals known to cause reproductive and neurological disorders, and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)” (Mitchell, *JT*, 4/9/2016). Mitchell discovered from the 8725-page document he requested U.S. Air Force to disclose under the Freedom of

Information Act in 2016, that approximately 415 environmental incidents in Kadena Air Base between 1998 and 2015 were cataloged. The water contamination in Kadena Air Base poses a great risk on the health of U.S. service members and local residents since there are 23 wells inside Kadena Air Base and the installation drains storm water into “local rivers including Hija River, which supplies drinking water for six municipalities and Okinawa’s Capital, Naha” (Mitchell, *JT*, 4/9/2016). From the standpoint of a local media researcher, the *WP*’s reporting of the drunk Marine’s release of fire suppressant foam in Kadena Air Base was a good attempt to raise the issue. Nevertheless, in-depth reporting with the approach to the issue from environmental perspective was necessary, for such accidents could cause health damages not only to U.S. service members and their dependents but also to local residents and our future generation. What is worse, the environmental destruction could be irreversible unless preventive measures are implemented.

According to Article IV of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), U.S. military forces assume no liability in decontaminating the land when they return it to Okinawa even though highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals such as cadmium, arsenic, Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, methyl bromide, perchlorate, TCE, PCE, asbestos, and depleted uranium have been, and still are, uncovered in the soil (The Ryukyu Shimpo, 2003, 1-70.).

In 2015, Japan and the U.S. signed an environmental agreement that allows the Japanese authorities to visit military installations in the case of chemical spills. However, the Pentagon has not allowed such checks. (Mitchell, *JT*, 2/3/2016).

Jon Mitchell’s long studies of the uses of Agent Orange in Okinawa have yielded much information about the toxins deployed during the Vietnam war era. All of these chemicals are highly toxic and carcinogenic, damaging genes and causing birth defects and other

congenital illnesses. These facts were neither reported in U.S. nor in Japanese media during my study.

As for the reporting regarding the Okinawan economy, the depiction of Okinawa as ‘the poorest’ prefecture misleads American readers. For example, in 2012, Okinawa was the second ‘poorest’ prefecture following Kochi prefecture. The annual income of the residents in Okinawa was 2.04 million JPY and that of Kochi was 2.01 million JPY (approximately 20,000 USD). The third ‘poorest’ Miyazaki prefecture’s figure was 2.06 million JPY. There is not much difference among the ‘poorest’ prefectures in Japan, as argued by a journalist, Tomohiro Yara (Yara, 2012, 42).

The stereotypical image of Okinawa is that its economy depends largely on U.S. military bases and it cannot do without the U.S. military presence. On the contrary, the U.S. military-related income in the Okinawan economy has been about 5% in recent years, decreasing from 15% in 1972 when Okinawa reverted to Japan. The military-related income in 2015 is 208.8 billion JPY. Employees on U.S. bases account for only 1.4% of employees in Okinawa. On the other hand, the tourism-related income in 2015 was 591.3 billion JPY, which is around 2.5 times the U.S. military-related income in recent years. These figures have not appeared in the 2015 articles in the major U.S. newspapers. Furthermore, the use of the land returned from the U.S. bases is much more profitable than when it was used by the military. For example, Mihama (Chatan) and Shintoshin (Naha) areas are now successful commercial districts. In Naha Shintoshin area, the direct economic effect is estimated 32 times and the number of employees is 93 times more than when the land was used as a U.S. base (Okinawa Prefecture 2015). Many economists have recently pointed out that the U.S. bases are actually the obstructive factor in the Okinawan economy (Okinawa Times, 2017, 49). Therefore, Okinawan people have come to

realize that the Okinawan economy can be viable without U.S. bases. These facts are essential in thematic news frames to describe the issues in Okinawa to make American readers grasp the whole picture of the Okinawan economy.

VI. Discussions

Although the number of the articles in 2015 dealing with Okinawa and the U.S. military for each paper remains low, I must say that the *WP* and *NYT* articles reflect the plight of Okinawa more accurately than their previous reportage, devoting most part of the stories to providing perspectives from the Okinawan side.

While that is a step in the right direction, there are also notable gaps in the presentation of relevant information necessary to fully understand the current situation of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa.

In this section, I would like to explore the possible reasons why recent U.S. media coverage reflected more Okinawan residents' voices, discuss the urgent necessity to correct misinformation, fill the information gap, and stress the importance of understanding news frames.

A. Why did recent U.S. media coverage reflect more Okinawan residents' voices?

a. The heightened level of awareness among Okinawan residents about the unfair burden of U.S. military presence

There is some hope out there already. Ordinary citizens have participated in the demonstrations in Henoko and the rallies against the new base construction to continue an anti-U.S. military demonstration at the gate of Camp Schwab. There are shuttle buses that run between

Naha and Henoko every day and once a week from Ginowan, Uruma, Okinawa and Nago cities to Henoko.

b. Voices from politicians and business leaders of Okinawa

Not only the local residents but also Takeshi Onaga, the Okinawan governor, actively voiced his opinion and accounts of Okinawan history regarding the U.S. military occupation. His articulateness made it possible for the U.S. reporters to quote him directly. This played a vital role in making readers in the U.S. aware of their misconception about the U.S. military presence and people's protest against it in Okinawa.

In addition, business leaders openly supported Gov. Onaga's political stance against the construction of a new base. Business leaders and their supporters created '*Shimagurumi Kaigi*,' or 'All Okinawa Meeting,' in April and the 'Henoko Fund' in May (on May 13, 2015), which amounts to about 544 million JPY (roughly 5 million USD) from 85,757 donators as of Feb. 17, 2016. They pledge to support the movement for the withdrawal of U.S. military bases from Okinawa and stop any efforts to promote the construction of a new base in Henoko by using the donation for this fund.

In their understanding, the U.S. military presence has hindered rather than contributed to the development of the local Okinawan economy. The members of '*Shimagurumi Kaigi*' visited the U.S. in November to convey the real plight of Okinawa and the will of Okinawans who are against the new base construction. They were able to meet with senators and congresspersons, members of a city council, labor unions, peace and environmental organizations and participated in demonstrations in Washington, D.C. As a positive outcome of their actions, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) has passed a resolution to cooperate with the "*Shimagurumi Kaigi*" in protesting against the new base construction.

c. Supports from the international community

Several celebrities and intellectuals from overseas have visited Okinawa and raised their voices against the new base construction. Oliver Stone and Peter Kuznick, a film director and an American University professor respectively, have visited the Henoko protesters and gave a speech at the Ginowan convention center in 2013. Noam Chomsky and Michael Moore are among the more than 100 intellectuals from all over the world who have gotten together to petition against the construction of the base (The *Ryukyū Shimpō*, 01/08/2014).

d. The heightened level of awareness among foreign journalists

It is crucial for foreign correspondents to visit Okinawa when reporting the ‘Okinawa problem’ because they can see at firsthand the scale of U.S. bases in Okinawa. After visiting Okinawa, some journalists’ framing of the news changes. For instance, in 2015, the *NYT* conveyed the abnormal state of Okinawa more closely than before, deploying correspondents to Okinawa, and/or closely following the Okinawan local media. That means that the *NYT* reported on their own and did not depend solely on reports from wired services such as AP and Reuters.

On the other hand, three out of nine articles in the *WP* were written by the foreign correspondents of the *WP*, two of which are identical on the paper and online. The *WP* has six short articles (less than 400 words): five from AP and one from Reuters.

Each individual journalists’ efforts to listen to not only the accounts of experts in the field, bureaucrats, and politicians in the central government, but also to voices of residents in Okinawa could result in a better understanding of the issues in Okinawa. In doing so, they will be able to serve the public interest and contribute to the creation of a peaceful environment.

B. Urgent necessity to correct misinformation and fill the information gap

Although there has been progress in the reporting of the situation in Okinawa by the U.S. papers, it is still essential to provide more accurate information and not omit information for complete understanding of the issues; Only with full information, it might be possible to bring some changes in the situation of Okinawa.

Sayo Saruta argues that “the U.S. military issues in Okinawa will gain headway if anti-U.S. military base demonstration takes place on a six-figure scale. Therefore, it is quite significant to approach civic organization” in the USA (Saruta, 81). In this regard, accurate media coverage of Okinawa is a must for the U.S. citizens who know almost nothing about Okinawa. I strongly suggest that the U.S. media cease from relying on the U.S. government, U.S. military organizations, and what we call ‘Japan Handlers.’ For these three parties primarily seek to promote U.S. national interests. Many of them, as a matter of fact, have slim knowledge of the real conditions of Okinawa.

In this sense, it must be indispensable for the U.S. media to deliver not only the facts but also detailed accounts of the situation in Okinawa. Without those details, ordinary U.S. citizens are unable to picture Okinawa the way it is. Rather, they are most likely to assume that the U.S. military bases are in the same condition as or at least similar to these on American soil: military bases are located and military training is conducted far away from residential areas; the military facilities are contributing to a regional/local economy by hiring local residents and by positive economic impacts (e.g. spending U.S. dollars at local stores and subsidies from the Japanese government); environmental pollution and destruction related to the U.S. military bases are carefully considered and taken care of if some preventive measures are necessary. If U.S. readers suppose the U.S. bases in Okinawa are the same as those in

America, they can never comprehend why the majority has expressed strong opposition to the U.S. bases on a small island.

C. Understanding news frames

Full information alone won't do. I believe it is important to analyze the news frames of the U.S. military-related issues in the U.S. media from the standpoint of local media researchers because they are able to observe firsthand the real plight of Okinawa and committed to living and working for the betterment of the situation of Okinawa for the next generation. Understanding the news frames will also enhance U.S. readers' awareness of the issue and help them realize there are many pieces of information which are pushed out from the news frame. This might alter their opinions on the issue.

Conclusion

The issues deriving from the U.S. military presence in Okinawa are too complicated for those who live outside of Okinawa, American citizens, in particular. As Hiromori Maedomari, a former newspaper reporter for *the Ryukyu Shimpo* and currently a professor at the Okinawa International University, explains, the Japanese government and the great majority of Japanese citizens support the U.S. military presence in Okinawa despite the fact that Okinawa strongly opposes the construction of a new runway and facilities in Henoko and has been for the past two decades. To construct these U.S. military facilities, enormous amount of Japanese tax money is being spent. At the same time, Japanese (Okinawans) have been confronted with each other over the construction of a new base for a long time. The Japanese government has forcibly accelerated the construction by sending a battleship and by stationing the riot police officers. The worst-case scenario might possibly come about: the confrontation between the protesters and the policy force

will eventually lead to bloodshed (Gekkan for NET pp.136, 137 & 146). This real condition of Okinawa under the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty has never been described in the articles in the U.S. major newspapers. Furthermore, it is evident that for more than 70 years Okinawa has been in a postcolonial condition under which the ‘colonizers’ (the U.S. and Japan) divide local people. Both have imposed the role of the military colony upon the island for their national defense at the expense of the basic human rights of Okinawans. In general, U.S. citizens are hardly aware of such problems Okinawans face both because they are indifferent to remote places such as Okinawa and because they have almost no chance to learn about it from the U.S. mainstream media.

Compared to previous reporting in these three major U.S. newspapers, it is evident that the 2015 coverage I analyzed reflected more of the voices from residents of Okinawa and anti-base protesters. However, I believe the papers should employ thematic framing of the U.S. military presence of Okinawa and include more in-depth reporting of the history, culture, and society of Okinawa. I argue that only episodic framing of the issue will not suffice to make U.S. citizens aware of what the essence of the U.S. military-related issue is and how those incidents have been affecting the daily lives of the citizens in Okinawa. Episodic framing may only serve to have readers attribute responsibility to individuals, whether it is the governor of Okinawa or the anti-U.S. military protesters or U.S. soldiers and local residents involved in some incidents and accidents. In order for American readers to fully grasp the intricate conditions of the issues surrounding the U.S. military presence in Okinawa, a balanced combination of thematic and episodic frames are crucial because this will reveal the structural discrimination that Okinawans have observed under postcolonial condition imposed by both the U.S. and Japan.

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