

A New China Threats Era? Weighing Strategic Position of Okinawa in 2022: A Content Analysis of Honshu Newspaper

By

Anju Taira

平良安珠

Submitted to the Faculty of
Department of International Affairs in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages
2022

WENZAO URSULINE UNIVERSITY OF LANGAUGES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

This senior paper was presented

by

Anju Taira
平良安珠

It was defended on

November 13, 2021

and approved by

Reviewer 1: Daniel Lin, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reviewer 2: Ren-Her Hsieh, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adviser: Yuan-Ming Chiao, Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copyright © by Anju Taira 平良安珠
2022

A new China threats era? Weighing strategic position of Okinawa in 2022: A content analysis of Honshu newspaper

Anju Taira

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, 2022

Abstract

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan. The new challenge for the Kishida administration will be how to balance the geopolitical importance of Okinawa as China threats increase, and Okinawans wish to break away from the "base island". The relocation of the Futenma base, which is opposed by more than half of the Okinawan people, is being pushed through. The government stating that bulding it on Okinawa "the only option". The deployment of the Self-Defense Forces to the Nansei Islands is proceeding rapidly. The Okinawa government has criticized Tokyo for building missile bases without explanation because of China's threat. Why is there such a difference between the Japanese government saying that it is strengthening its defense capabilities for the sake of security, and Okinawa saying that it is increasing the burden on Okinawa? The Japanese government, cannot reduce the burden on Okinawa despite the opposition of Okinawans, in other words, the Japanese government has reasons for not being able to reduce the burden on Okinawa. In this study, the researcher aims to explore the factors of how Okinawa is such an important place for Japan and the US military bases by reviewing discoused used in the *Nikkei Newspaper* which is said to be the most neutral press in Honshu

newspapers. The result of the data analysis shows the complex factors of how Okinawa became such a strategic point for the US military and Japan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	1
MOTIVATION	4
RESEARCH PURPOSE	5
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
CONTRIBUTION	5
LIMITS	6
DELIMITS	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
CHINA THREATS	7
THE LINCHPIN OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN	8
JAPAN AND AMERICA’S VASSAL RELATIONSHIP	9
DIFFERENT POLITICAL SPACE	10
NOT IN MY BACKYARD THEORY	11
THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA ON THE US MILITARY ISSUE IN OKINAWA	13
SUMMARY	13
METHODOLOGY	15
RESEARCH DESIGN	15
SOURCE OF DATA	16
DATA COLLECTION	18
DATA ANALYSIS	20
THE JAPAN-US ALLIANCE	21
THE SENKAKU ISLANDS DISPUTE	22
GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCE	22
LINCHPIN OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN	23
STRATEGIC BASES OF THE US TROOPS	24
THE IMPACT OF THE UKRAINE INVASION TO THE CHINA THREATS	24
THREAT TO NATIONAL EXISTENCE CRISIS	25
CHINESE MISSILE FELL INTO JAPAN’S EEZ	26
REVERSAL OF POWER	27
CHALLENGES OF THE KISHIDA ADMINISTRATION	27
FINDINGS	29
OKINAWA AS A STRATEGIC POINT FOR THE JAPAN AND THE US AGAINST CHINA	29

PROXIMITY TO THE CHINA THREATS	30
THREAT TO NATIONAL EXISTENCE CRISIS.....	31
SUMMARY	32
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 The Editorials of Major Newspaper Companies on The Revision of Constitution.....	17
Table 2 The Codes Appeared in The Firsrt Coding	21
Table 3 The Codes Appeared in The Second Coding.....	24
Table 4 The Codes Appeared in The Third Coding.....	26

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Major Honshu Newspapers Political Viewpoint	16
--	----

INTRODUCTION

Background

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan. Okinawa, which lost a quarter of its population in World War II, there is still a strong sense of victimhood in Okinawa that the central government sacrificed Okinawa to buy time to protect mainland Japan. After that, Okinawa was used as a base for the US military, and US military bases have continued to be stationed in Okinawa even after reversion to Japan. With the end of the Vietnam War and the collapse of the Cold War, it seemed the US military bases in Okinawa are no longer necessary. However, the importance of Okinawa has increased in recent years again due to the China threats. China has been emphasizing the One China Policy and aims to unify Taiwan, and it has actively engaged in military exercises near the Taiwan Strait in recent years.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February of this year showed the world that using military enforcement could still happen today. ¹After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan has been called the "Next Ukraine", and it is said that China could invade Taiwan at any time. ²Japanese politicians say that a Taiwan emergency is a Japanese emergency, and are concerned that when China attacks Taiwan, Japan may get caught up in it. There are two reasons. ³The first reason is the United States, Japan's ally, has declared that they will intervene militarily if China attacks Taiwan, and Japan also cannot ignore the fact that China's military exercises near Okinawa have increased in recent years. ⁴Okinawa has one of the largest US military bases in

¹ James Lee and Patrick Hulme, "Will Taiwan Be the Next Ukraine?," (June 09, 2022), <https://ucigcc.org/podcast/is-taiwan-the-next-ukraine/>.

² 日本経済新聞, "台湾有事に備えは十分か 政治家に覚悟迫る演習 政界 Zoom," (September 9, 2022).

³ Frances Mao, "Biden again says US would defend Taiwan if China attacks Published," (September 19, 2022).

⁴ 彰池上, "池上氏解説「米国 vs 中国が険悪」日本はどうか？ 両国の厳しい対立は日本にも大きく関係する," (May 08, 2022).

the Far East, which is the Futenma base in Ginowan City, Okinawa, and it is said that if the US intervenes to protect Taiwan, the US military bases in Okinawa would be the first to be attacked. The second reason is the geographical factor. ⁵Taiwan is only 600 kilometers away from Okinawa, which is closer than the mainland of Japan, the China's latest fighter jets are said that it can reach Okinawa in about five minutes. If the weather is good, it is so close that you can see Taiwan from Yonaguni Island. The China's latest fighter jets are said that it can reach Okinawa in about five minutes. In September, a Chinese ballistic missile fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone, demonstrating to Japan the geographical closeness of the China threat.

Okinawan newspapers are often criticized for their news being biased, and especially, they report uniquely the US military stationed in Okinawa, and it is very different from Honshu newspapers, as well as the impact of China Threats on Okinawa. ⁶The *Ryukyu Shimpo* (琉球新報) and the *Okinawa Times* (沖縄タイムス), which are the biggest and the most-read newspapers in Okinawa, commented on the increasing in Japan-U.S. joint training due to China's threat and the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces mainly in the Nansei Islands, saying that "Okinawa will become a battlefield again" and that "the government is promoting the construction of missile bases". They tend to use the expressions that the central government is threatening the peace of Okinawa, while Honshu newspapers report it as enhancing the national defense.

⁷However, in fact, 70% of Japan's US military bases are concentrated in Okinawa, Okinawa occupies only 0.6% of the country's land area. The concentration

⁵ 日経新聞, "日本の「有事」どう迅速に認定 明確な判断基準が不可欠—安保法体系の資格上," (April 05, 2022).

⁶ 沖縄タイムス, "「沖縄また戦場に」台湾有事で南西諸島に攻撃拠点 琉球弧の住民や戦争体験者は…," (December 24, 2021).

⁷ NHK NEWS WEB, "国土の0.6パーセントの沖縄 在日米軍施設の70%が集中," (May 15, 2022).

of such military facilities in Okinawa is often seen as an “Okinawa’s issues” (沖縄の問題), and even though the US military exist for the sake of the whole entire Japan. Since Japan cannot own military, and they can’t exercise military forces until the government define an emergency as a “national existing crisis”. The U.S. Futenma Air Base in Okinawa is surrounded by residential areas and there are even schools near the base, is said to be the most dangerous U.S. military base in the world. ⁸In 1996, the Futenma base was decided to be returned to Japan based on the agreement between Japan and the United States after the 1995 rape incident. However, even 26 years later now, the return of the Futenma base has not been realized, because the relocation destination is the Henoko bay, the northern part of Okinawa, despite the original agreement was outside Okinawa. The Japanese government insists that Okinawa is the only place to relocate and is proceeding with the construction of a new base despite Okinawa's opposition.

The researcher was born and raised in Okinawa. The researcher who has been reading Okinawan newspapers about the US military base problem in Okinawa and the impact of China's Threats on Okinawa. However, newspapers in Okinawa tend to report on the negative side of US military bases and the increased burden on Okinawa due to the China threat rather than its geographical importance. So, ever since the researcher was little, she has thought that the Japanese government is a villain who won't listen to Okinawan opinions even though Okinawa is part of Japan. However, from a different point of view, the government should have reasons why they cannot reduce the burden of bases on Okinawa. However, from a different point of view, the government should have reasons why they cannot reduce the burden of bases on Okinawa. Okinawa is part of Japan and the government has an obligation to protect the

⁸ 朝日学情ナビ, “「世界一危険」な普天間飛行場…合意 25 年、なぜ返還されない? 【時事まとめ】,” (April 14, 2021).

⁹ 普天間基地の実態, “普天間基地移設問題の経過,” (2010).

security of Okinawa. ¹⁰Therefore, it is not reasonable that Okinawan newspapers report that "Okinawa is a sacrificial stone to protect Japan." Thus, there two research question for this research: "How is Okinawa important as a strategic point against China in 2022?", and "Does the risk of Okinawa change with the presence or absence of the US military?". ¹¹The researcher aims to answer the research question by conducting a content analysis of the *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞), the reason why the researcher picked the *Nikkei Newspaper*(日経新聞) for the research is because the *Nikkei Newspaper* is called the most neutral newspaper. The result of the data analysis reveals a new challenge for Okinawa and the Japanese government amid growing China Threats and helps understand how Okinawa become a indispensable strategic point against China.

Motivation

The issues of the US military bases in Okinawa have been controversial over decades. Due to the increasing the China Threats in recent years, the burden on Okinawa has increased more than ever such as deploying the self-defense forces in Okinawa and increasing the military exercise. Okinawa's newspapers have been criticizing the central government increasing the burden on Okinawa.

However, the researcher wants to see the situation from the central government perspective by analyzing the Honshu newspaper. By conducting a content analysis of the newspaper allows to reveal the importance of Okinawa as a strategic point against China for Japan and the United States.

¹⁰ 琉球新報, "「沖縄が再び捨て石に」 自衛隊演習の民間港使用に住民憤り," (November 12, 2021).

¹¹ 企業ログ, "新聞社とテレビ局の気になる関係図," (October 12, 2022).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative research was to understand how Okinawa has become such an indispensable strategic place for both Japan and the US military against as China threats increases, and to see how Honshu newspapers report the impact of the China Threats on Okinawa, and how they differ from Okinawan newspapers. The data source of this research is from the *Nikkei Newspaper*, which is one of major Honshu newspapers. Choosing the Honshu newspaper allows to reveal the importance of Okinawa as a strategic point against China while the newspapers companies of Okinawa tend to focus on the burden of Okinawa.

Research Questions

1. How is Okinawa important as a strategic point against China in 2022?
2. Does the risk of Okinawa change with the presence or absence of the US military?

Contribution

Although we cannot ignore the fact that there are too many military facilities concentrated in Okinawa, the researcher thinks that we also need to understand why the central government has not been able to reduce the burden on Okinawa by looking at this controversy from different angle. Most of scholar in Okinawa often focus on the burden of Okinawa in their research, however, in this research, the researcher aims to reveal the importance of Okinawa geopolitically by looking at Honshu newspaper while most scholars in Okinawa often look at *Ryukyu Shimpo* (琉球新報) and *Okinawa Times* (沖縄タイムス). By reaving the importance of Okinawa geopolitically, it gives us different perspective to see the situation in Okinawa rather

than just see it as a burden.

Limits

The result of the research might justify the burden of Okinawa under the name of national defense since the researcher only focuses on the Honshu newspaper rather than doing comparative research.

Delimits

The researcher conducts the content analysis of the *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞). All the newspaper for this research are from *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞), and the researcher collected the data after Russia's Ukraine invasion, February 24, 2022.

LITERATURE REVIEW

China Threats

The importance of Okinawa increases as China threats increase. ¹²Originally, the threat to Japan was Russia, so the Self-Defense Forces were deployed mainly in Hokkaido. However, in recent years, as China's threat theory has increased, Japan has hastened to deploy the Self-Defense Forces to the Nansei Islands from 2016. In recent years, not only the Self-Defense Forces, but also the US military has been actively conducting military training. Narahiko Toyoshita, a political scientist, criticizes the government for using China Threats to justify increasing the burden on Okinawa. ¹³He says that the China threat theory has "persuasiveness" because it exists in a place close to Japan, therefore, it is said that the security treaty and the existence of the US military, which are accepted by public opinion and criticized by Okinawa, are "justified" by the rest of Japan.

Most scholars say that the Japanese government needs the power of the United States as the threat of China grows because Japan only has a Self-defense force and Japan's national defense is based on the Japan-US alliance. ¹⁴However, Jian Teng points out that the United States also needs Japan to fulfill its obligation to maintain the peace of East Asia as a superpower, it is said that the positions of the United States and China will be reversed in the near future. ¹⁵In the fact, based on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Disarmament Treaty signed with the former Soviet

¹² 佳子栗原, "南西諸島で進む自衛隊配備,"

https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALiCzsbHgCXApVVuN0cAviGW151bhXiKjw:1666497718695&q=%E5%8D%97%E8%A5%BF%E8%AB%B8%E5%B3%B6+%E8%87%AA%E8%A1%9B%E9%9A%8A%E9%85%8D%E5%82%99&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjuu6rku_X6AhUy6mEKHSQrATcQBSgAegQIBxAB&biw=1440&bih=764&dpr=2.

¹³ 豊下 梢彦, "安保条約と「脅威論」の展開," (2011).

¹⁴ 藤鑑, "「中国脅威論」の脅威," (2018).

¹⁵ 日本経済新聞, "日米と中国、近づく「軍事力逆転」 海上優位 2023年まで一日本防衛の実力," (March 23, 2022).

Union, the United States no longer possesses land-based missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometers. The United States scrapped the treaty in 2019, but cooperation with Japan is necessary to make China understand that "if you attack, we will counterattack."

Some scholars point out that the United States and Japan are abusing the China threat theory. Adam Grydehøj and his team say the U.S. military is justifying the relocation of the Futenma base to Henoko on the grounds of China's threat.¹⁶ They call the islands ruled by the United States "American colonies" and criticize the use of the islands by the United States for the sake of the United States in a way different from the colonies because of the threat of China as "neocolonialism". This year, the Okinawa government submitted a report to the central government titled "Towards Reducing the Burden of Okinawa's Bases in a New Security Environment."¹⁷ It also points out that the Japanese government continues to stop thinking about the burden of Okinawa's bases on the grounds of China threat.

¹⁸Paul O'shea showed in her research how conservative newspapers in Japan narrow the China threat to contextualize why the relocation of the Futenma should be in Okinawa. She criticized that the conservative newspaper in Japan reported "Base relocation delay will affect the American security guarantee". She criticized that rather than focusing on China's expanded military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, these newspapers focus on the negative impact of the delayed relocation of the Futenma base.

The Linchpin of the Pacific Ocean

¹⁶ Michael Lujan Bevacqua Adam Grydehøj, Megumi Chibana, Yaso Nadarajah, Aka´ Simonsen, Ping Su, Renee Wright, Sasha Davis, "Practicing decolonial political geography: Island perspectives on neocolonialism and the China threat discourse," *January 7, 2021*.

¹⁷ 米軍基地問題に関する万国津梁会議, "新たな安全保障環境下における沖縄の基地負担軽減に向けて," (2022).

¹⁸ Paul O'Shea, "Strategic narrative and US military bases in Japan: How 'deterrence' makes the Marine base on Okinawa 'indispensable'," (2018).

¹⁹This theory is often used to explain why 70% of US military bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa which only occupied 0.6% of the land of Okinawa. Okinawa is close to potential conflict areas such as China, and the Korean Peninsula, and after the world war it was used as a place to keep watch over mainland Japan, and during the Vietnam War, it was a military base for the United States. ²⁰Also, the central government has been insisting the place of relocation of the Futenma Air Base is Henoko, northern part of Okinawa, while 72% of Okinawan resident are against it. According to Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, the US military bases don't only exist to protect Japan, but also fulfill the obligation of Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, to maintain the security in the Asia-Pacific region. ²¹Although most strategists agree on the importance of Okinawa's location for U.S. security interests in East Asia, there is less consensus on the particular number of marines necessary to maintain stability.

Japan and America's Vassal Relationship

Japan is called a vassal state of the United States, for allowing the deployment of US military Ospreys despite the Okinawan people's opposition, and for not even applying to the United States to revise the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement despite Okinawa has been petition repeatedly. Japan and America's vassal relations can also be seen from how Nobukatsu Kanehara, former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, commented on what measures Japan should take if China invades Taiwan.

²²He pointed out that the relationship between the Japan-US alliance would fall into a

¹⁹ 沖縄タイムス, "「沖縄また戦場に」台湾有事で南西諸島に攻撃拠点 琉球弧の住民や戦争体験者は…."

²⁰ BBC, "Okinawa: Tokyo to overrule referendum on US base," news release, 25 February, 2019.

²¹ Ian E. Rinehart Emma Chanlett-Avery, "The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy," (20 January, 2016).

²² 日本経済新聞, "日本の「有事」どう迅速に認定 明確な判断基準が不可欠ー安保法体系の

crisis if Japan did not move even if the US forces fighting near the Nansei Islands applied for military cooperation. ²³Hiromori Maedomari, a professor at Okinawa International University, criticized such Japan-U.S. relations, citing the closure of the crash site when a US military helicopter crashed into Okinawa International University. ²⁴The Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Association stipulates that the Japanese government cannot interfere with the "property" of the U.S. military, so if the US military calls helicopter parts and debris "property," they can shut down the area around it and deny Japanese entry.

Shigeaki Ijima criticized Japan's inability to make the US military in Japan obey Japanese legislation, saying that Japan is still not a sovereign country. The number of accidents caused by the U.S. Forces in Japan has not decreased at all since, and due to the Japan-US SOFA, Japanese laws cannot be applied to the US personnel in Japan, and sometimes it is not fair to the victims. Activists of Okinawa and the government of Okinawa have been protesting to such unfair agreement, and have been petition for the reversion of the Japan-US SOFA.

Different Political Space

Okinawa newspapers and Honshu newspapers often use different words to explain the same topic. For example, the Japanese government comments on deploying the self-defense forces in Yonaguni Island in Okinawa, saying "increasing the national security", while the local government of Okinawa commented

死角," (April 05, 2022).

²³

²⁴ Hiromori Maedomari, 本当は憲法より大切な「日米地位協定入門」 (November 20, 2018).

“increasing the burden on Okinawa again”.²⁵ Why is there such a difference between the Japanese government and the Okinawa government? Masahiro Takasaku criticizes this difference, calling Okinawa the “absolute pacifism”, and calling the central government the “realist pacifism”.²⁶ The “absolute pacifism” is an idea that don’t allow any sacrifices to maintain the peace, and the “realist pacifism” is an idea that some sacrifices can be caused to maintain peace. The increasing number of Japan-US joint training exercises due to the increasing threat from China, and the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces to the Nansei Islands are the Japanese government's claim for peace in Japan. Okinawa, which does not understand that, has a different ideology, which makes them impossible to communicate.

Not In My Backyard Theory

It is a coined word delivered from Walter Rogers, the American Atomic Industrial Forum, for those who enjoy the benefits but oppose the location of facilities that bring negative impact.²⁷ The meaning of NIMBY (Not-In-My-Backyard) is in favor of the idea, but it turns against the fact that it affects oneself as a matter of fact. Most of the researchers use the Not-In-My-Backyard theory to explain the reason why the SOFA has never been revised since 1960 and the issues of the US military bases in Okinawa remain the same.

Hiroki Tsuchiya, Hiro Noha, and Kunitoshi Sakurai explain the issues of the US military bases in Okinawa by using the theory of NIMBY.²⁸ They picked up the U.S.

²⁵ 沖繩タイムズ, “「戦争に巻き込まれる」根強い不安の声 防衛相と沖縄知事 「有事」巡って温度差,” (September 29t, 2022).

²⁶ 高作正博, “日米地位協定の立憲的統制：基地の提供・返還の場面,” (March, 2003).

²⁷ 鈴木晃志郎, “NIMBY から考える「迷惑施設」,” (July 2015).

²⁸ 土屋博樹、野波寛、桜井国俊, “NIMBY としての在日米軍基地をめぐる多様なアクターの正

Forces Japan base policy in Okinawa Prefecture and justified various actors over the policy-making power in the NIMBY issue between Okinawans who are deeply involved in it and people in the mainland who are not involved in it, examined the determinants. The actors who most accurately understand the benefits and disadvantages that U.S. military bases bring to the area are the Okinawans in the suffering area. And because they understand them accurately, they are reliable and legitimate in deciding measures for U.S. military bases. In comparison, mainlanders are unaffected by the disadvantages of US military bases, are less interested in policies on the US military base issue, and are less motivated to consider. This means that by entrusting the decision-making power of NIMBY facilities to Okinawans, it is easy to avoid the time and effort involved in the US military base problem.

Hiroki Tsuchiya, Hiro Noha, and Kunitoshi Sakurai use NIMBY to explain the attitude of mainlanders who are imposing decision-maker responsibilities on Okinawans who are disadvantaged by the U.S. military base problem. However, Hiroyuki Teruya uses NIMBY to explain the situation that mainlanders enjoy the advantage of remaining the US military bases in terms of national security while Okinawans are threatened their everyday life. ²⁹In his research, he also quotes the former prefectural governor saying, "If national security is so important, place a US military base next to your house.", he states that if national security is important to all the people, then all the Japanese people should take responsibility, not only Okinawans.

当性：公共政策の決定権に対する当事者・非当事者による承認過程," (March 28, 2014), https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jjesp/54/1/54_1211/_pdf.

²⁹ 照屋寛之, "米軍基地 75%の悲劇," (2005).

The Role of the Media on The US Military Issue in Okinawa

Newspapers in Okinawa often give different reports than those on the mainland. The most conspicuous of these is the issue of US military bases. Okinawan newspapers cover the US military base issue almost every day. You Nomaguchi criticizes that Okinawan media are misleading the public opinions by not reflecting those who are "neutral" or "not interested" by asking the question whether they agree or disagree.³⁰ He also criticized the tendency of Okinawan newspapers to report critically rather than just the facts. However, Katsuya Gushiken points out that the reason why the Okinawan and Honshu newspapers report different way is because Okinawa faces the negative side of US military bases every day, and the mainland doesn't.³¹ He criticizes that the newspapers in Honshu have little interest in the US military and do not report the US military base problem as much as in Okinawa, and it is leading the mainlanders to a lack of interest.

Summary

Reviewing the literatures help the research have a solid structure by supporting with theories. The researcher employs the theory that was introduced by Masahiro Takasaku to support the attitude of the central government. It is explaining the different attitudes towards the US military bases in Japan between the central government and the local government Okinawa. It allows the research to explain why they report the US military issues in Okinawa differently. In response to the

³⁰ 野間口 陽, "メディアは世論を誘導しているのか ~沖縄米軍基地問題を事例として~," (March 25, 2014).

³¹ 具志堅勝也, "米軍基地問題とマスコミ報道 60年安保時から今日までの基地報道の変遷について."

government's insistence that the defense force must be increased to protect Okinawa's peace, Okinawa is citing the threat of China as the reason for the relocation of the Futenma base, the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces, and the increased burden on Okinawa due to Japan-U.S. joint training. In order to understand the impact of the China threats in 2022 in Okinawa from the central government perspective, the researcher also employs the theory that was introduced by You Nomaguchi, which is Okinawa's newspapers tend to criticize policies and measure that were implemented by the government rather than just report the fact. Finally, the researcher uses Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart's theory to understand the importance of Okinawa as a strategic point.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research paper, the researcher employed the quantitative content analysis. The researcher conducted content analysis of a Honshu newspaper to answer the research questions: “How is Okinawa important as a strategic point against China in 2022?”, and “Does the risk of Okinawa change with the presence or absence of the US military?”. The researcher only focused on one of major newspaper companies in Honshu newspaper, and it allowed to reveal how the Honshu newspaper narrow the increase the national defense around the Nansei Islands while Okinawa’s newspapers often report it saying the central government is increasing the burden on Okinawa. The reason why the researcher picked the content analysis of newspaper is previous scholars used this method in their research that is related to how the media reports on one topic and how it affect public. ³²For example, Kenzo Shinoda, Yukiko Ogawa, Naoko Otani, Tetsuhiko Shimazaki, they used the content analysis in their research to understand how three major newspaper companies in Japan report the Japan-China relation and how it affects the public opinion towards China.

The researcher picked the *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞) for the data analysis of this study, all the newspapers were collected from the *Nikkei Telecon*, and issued after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The unit of the analysis is by each news article.

The researcher searched the newspaper with four keywords: China threats, Okinawa, the US military bases, and the government. 26 articles were found in total, and all the coding were conducted by the researcher’s hand with excel. Reliability was

³² 小川 祐喜子 信太 謙三, 大谷 奈緒子, 島崎 哲彦, "日中関係における日本側の問題意識 : 朝日新聞・毎日新聞・読売新聞の社説の内容分析から," (March 2022).

ensured by narrowing down data collection to Nikkei newspaper, a major Japanese company, and collecting data from Nikkei Telecom which is the largest database platform in Japan published by Nikkei Shimbun. In addition, collecting all the data from the Nikkei Telecom with four keywords to ensure its validity.

Source of Data

The researcher searched the newspaper with four keywords: China threats, Okinawa, the US military bThe researcher chose the Nikkei newspaper to representing the Honshu newspapers, all the articles were collected from the Nikkie Telecon.

According to Akira Ikegami, the *Nikkei newspaper* is the most neutral newspaper in Japan, was presented in his journal book.³³ He mentioned that regarding the revision of the constitution, the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Mainichi Shimbun* have covered many protest rallies and critical comments, and the comments of those who support it are not conspicuous, on the contrary, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and the *Sankei Shimbun* tend to only publish opinions in favor of it.

Figure 1. Major Honshu Newspapers Political Viewpoint



³³ 池上彰, "池上彰が解説「今さら聞けない新聞の読み方」," (November 19, 2019).

When it comes to the constitutional revision, it is easy to see the differences in tone between the left and the right. Let's compare the May , 2022 Constitution Day editorials of each of major Honshu newspaper companies.

Table 1 The Editorials of Major Newspaper Companies on The Revision of Constitution

Newspaper Company	Editorials	Attitude
Asahi Newspaper	We would like to make tenacious efforts based on the pacifism advocated in the Constitution of Japan.	Efforts should be made based on the current Constitution (Left-wing)
Mainichi Newspaper	What is worrisome is the move to link the invasion with constitutional revision.	Defense capability should be reviewed without constitutional amendment (Left-wings)
Nikkei Newspaper	Through calm and polite debate in the Congress, we should reach a conclusion while gaining the broad understanding of the public.	Should deepen discussion (Neutral)
Yomiuri Newspaper	In order to protect national security, it is necessary to deepen the discussion on revising the constitution.	We should discuss constitutional revision (Right-wing)
Sankei Newspaper	The current constitution is a flawed constitution that does not specify how to deal with the reality that there are countries that do not protect peace internationally.	Efforts should be made based on the current Constitution (Right-wing)

The table 2 was taken from an article by Naomi Oyama, the editor, she compared 5 different major newspaper companies in Tokyo on a website called the Enterprise Log. As you can see from the table 2, the *Nikkei newspaper* focuses on what public opinion thinks about government policies and how to make politics acceptable in the public. In this research, the researchers didn't select the right-wing, *Yomiuri newspaper* and *Sankei newspaper*, which support the opinion of the Japanese government and accurately reflect the government's intentions, because this study is not a comparative research, and the researcher doesn't want the result to justify the burden on Okinawa, or being criticized towards the policies, but just telling the fact.

Data Collection

All the data were collected from the Nikkei Telecon. ³⁴It is a Japan's largest membership business database platform, focusing on newspaper and magazine articles for the past 40 years, it contains a wide range of business information such as domestic and foreign company databases and personal profiles.

The researcher collected the data with four keywords: China threats, Okinawa, the US military bases, and the government. The scope of the data collection is from 24th February to 15th September, and 26 articles were collected in total. 26 articles may seem a small number, but there are three reasons for that. First of all, the researcher searched the articles with four keywords only from the *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞) to make sure that all data are relevant to the research questions. Second, all the data were collected after the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That is because the invasion of Ukraine showed the world that there is still the use of force in this era, and Taiwan came to be called the next Ukraine. And, finally, the most importantly, the

³⁴ 日経テレコン, "サービスと機能."

Honshu newspapers tend to be overwhelmingly less likely to report on Okinawa-related issues. ³⁵Itaru Yoshioka used the example of a major accident in which a U.S. military helicopter crashed into Okinawa International University to explain the difference in response between newspaper companies in Okinawa and Honshu. He pointed out that the coverage of the helicopter accident in Honshu newspapers was much smaller than Okinawa's, and he criticized that Okinawa and the mainland differ in their attitudes toward the US military base issue.

Newspaper companies in Honshu rarely report on Okinawa from the beginning, and moreover, "Okinawa" is included in the keywords. As a result, the researcher was only able to collect 26 articles, but it is enough and appropriate data to answer the research questions.

³⁵ 吉岡至, "日本のなかの沖縄の新聞—ローカルジャーナリズムの立ち位置—," (1st June, 2022).

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher conducted the content analysis of newspaper, the unit of analysis of the data was sentence. The data were collected from the *Nikkei newspaper* (日経新聞) with four keywords: the China Threats (中国脅威), Okinawa, the US military troops (米軍), and the government. ³⁶According to Akira Ikegami, a journalist, the *Nikkei newspaper* is the most neutral newspaper in Japan. The researcher collected the data from February 24th, when Russia invaded Ukraine and showed the world Taiwan could be the next Ukraine, to 15th September when the researcher finished the data collection. All the newspapers were collected from the *Nikkei Telecon*, a database platform of *Nikkei newspaper*, it is the most reliable database source when you collect newspapers of the *Nikkei newspaper*. 26 newspapers were collected in total with the four keywords.

The researcher conducted three rounds of coding. Five codes emerged in the first coding, three codes emerged in the second coding, and two codes emerged in the last coding. The researcher uses the Excel to make a table to make it visualized to see which newspaper include which code. You can see the codes in the below table 1. In the first coding, there are already two significant codes appeared: Distance from Taiwan to Yonaguni Island, and Strategic Bases of the US Troops, and it can also directly answer the research question.

³⁶ 池上彰, "池上彰が解説「今さら聞けない新聞の読み方」."

Table 2 The Codes Appeared in The First Coding

Codes	Frequency
1. Japan-US Alliance	7
2. The Senkaku Islands Dispute	6
3. Geographic Distance	17
4. Linchpin of the Pacific Ocean	6
5. Strategic Bases of the US Troops	10

The Japan-US Alliance

Based on the Japan-US alliance, Japan builds a defense system consisting of the Self-Defense Forces and the US military. Article 5 of the Japan Security Treaty stipulates that both Japan and the United States will defend against armed attacks against Japan. Former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobukatsu Kanehara explains that even if the US forces fighting in the vicinity of the Nansei Islands ask for military cooperation, if Japan does not move, "the relationship between the US and Japan will fall into a critical situation." Japan's ally, the United States, may intervene militarily to protect Taiwan. Mr. Kishida reaffirmed with Mr. Biden that the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-US alliance need to be urgently strengthened. In addition, in order to ensure that the extended nuclear deterrence of the U.S. military remains unwavable, he agreed with Mr. Biden that Japan and the U.S. should communicate more closely, including at the ministerial level. It is essential to further strengthen the Japan-US alliance in order to not allow military force in Asia such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They emphasized aligning strategies and strengthening joint capabilities, and joint exercises with the U.S. military, which will strengthen "extended deterrence."

This code appeared in seven articles. Japan's security treaty stipulates that both Japan and the United States must defend Japan, and cooperation between Japan and the United States to increase military power will also help maintain peace in Asia. In addition, there is a possibility that Japan's ally, the United States, will intervene militarily to protect Taiwan, and as long as Japan is an ally, it must cooperate with the

United States.

The Senkaku Islands Dispute

China, which aims to unify Taiwan, is the biggest threat to Japan. There is concern that Okinawa Prefecture, the Senkaku Islands, and Japan's surroundings will be forced to change the status quo. If China attacks not only Taiwan but also Japanese territories such as Okinawa and the Senkaku Islands, it will be recognized as an "armed attack situation." Recently, it has become a common occurrence for Chinese ships to intrude into Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands in Okinawa Prefecture. Therefore, Japan and the United States attach importance to exercises in the East and South China Seas, where China is stepping up its maritime advances, as well as the Senkaku Islands and Sakishima Islands in Okinawa Prefecture.

The Senkaku Islands Dispute has appeared in six articles, but they are often mentioned as examples of China's threat and how the Self-Defense Forces will act in the event of an emergency. Also, the Senkaku Islands are located in Okinawa Prefecture, and are used as an example of the need to strengthen the defense force in the vicinity of Okinawa.

Geographic Distance

Okinawa is 600-1,000 kilometers from mainland Japan, mainland China, the Taiwan Strait, and the Korean peninsula respectively. China has shown a willingness to unify the military force of Taiwan, which is close to Okinawa. Taiwan is about 110 kilometers from Yonaguni Island in Okinawa Prefecture, it is about five minutes away by China's latest fighter jet. If China attacks Taiwan, there is a risk that Yonaguni Island, which is about 110 kilometers from Taiwan, will be involved as well. Japan's exclusive economic zone, where the missile landed, is only 60 kilometers from Yonaguni Island. Because of its location,

Okinawa would be involved in a Chinese attack on Taiwan regardless of the presence or absence of US military bases.

This code emerges the most, and this is a key code for the data analysis. It is explain that how close the China Threats is to Okiawa and Japan. Okinawa, especially Yonaguni Island, the westernmost island of Japan, is only 110 kilometers from Taiwan. From this distance, it can be seen that if China attacks Taiwan, it would not be someone else's problem for Japan either. This is why the government is rapidly deploying the Self-Defense Forces to Okinawa since 2016.

Linchpin of the Pacific Ocean

Okinawa is 600-1,000 kilometers from mainland Japan, mainland China, the Taiwan Strait, and the Korean peninsula respectively. For this reason, the U.S. military has consistently emphasized the stationing of troops in Okinawa even after Okinawa's reversion. Okinawa, located about 650 kilometers northeast of Taiwan, is a strategic point of security for the Asia-Pacific region. Okinawa has an intellectual superiority not only in the defense of Japan but also in responding to contingencies in the Asia-Pacific, North Korea, and the Taiwan Strait. Okinawa became a base for Japan and the United States to face China now. For this reason, the U.S. military has consistently emphasized the stationing of troops in Okinawa even after Okinawa's reversion.

This code explains why Okinawa is called "only option". The Futenma base is relocated to Okinawa, and the Self-Defense Forces are rushing to deploy it to Okinawa due its geographical superiority. Its geographical superiority means that Okinawa is close to a conflict-prone region in East Asia, making Okinawa an indispensable location for the US military, which requires immediate action in the event of an emergency.

Strategic Bases of the US Troops

The U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa is the largest U.S. Air Force base in East Asia, and the U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters is located in Uruma city, the only U.S. military headquarters outside of Japan. For the U.S. Marine Corps, which requires mobility to rush to the scene first in an emergency, Okinawa, where they are stationed, is an irreplaceable strategic point overlooking the entire Indo-Pacific, including Southeast Asia. China has become a major power both militarily and economically, and Okinawa has become a base for Japan and the United States to face China. If China attacks Taiwan, Okinawa, where the Self-Defense Forces and US forces are based, could become the front line of the conflict. There are concerns within the government as US military bases in Japan are related to security strategy. Because if China attacks Taiwan, there is a possibility that US military bases will be attacked, and Japan is not immune to being involved.

This is a code that explains how the US military established military bases on Okinawa and how the presence of US military bases changes the risks on Okinawa. It is said that Okinawa will be involved geographically, but it can be seen that the presence of the US military is increasing the risk.

Table 3 The Codes Appeared in The Second Coding

Code	Frequency
6. The Impact of the Ukrain Invasion to the China Threats	8
7. Threat to National Existence Crisis	6
8. Chinese missile fell into Japan's EEZ	8

The Impact of the Ukraine invasion to the China Threats

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, concerns about security around Japan have increased. Russia's invasion of Ukraine made the world aware that a unilateral armed attack is a reality even today.

The international situation changed with Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The increase in joint exercises between Japan and the United States this year is due to concerns that China and Russia have stepped up their military activities around Japan after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. An article issued on August 12, 2022, compiled by the Nikkei newspaper, counts the number of Japan-U.S. joint

training exercises based on information released by the Ministry of Defense. From January to July 2022, 51 Japan-U.S. joint exercises were held. In the same period in 2021, it will be 34 times, and in 2020, it will be 23 times, which is an increase of 30% compared to the same period in 2021.

This code shows how Russia's invasion of Ukraine affected Japan's security. The sentence containing this code supports the researchers' data collection since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shown the world that the use of force is possible even now, and the Chinese threat theory has come to be viewed not as a theory but as a real threat. This can also be seen from the increase in Japan-US joint exercises this year.

Threat to National Existence Crisis

Six articles contain this code, but they all explain how the Japanese Self-Defense Forces would act if China attacks Taiwan.

The actions taken by Japan's Self-Defense Forces are based on security-related laws that came into effect in 2016. It depends on how the government recognizes the emergency situation.

1. "Significant impact situation" that will affect Japan's peace and security if left unchecked. It is possible to provide logistical support such as replenishment to the U.S. forces
2. "National existence crisis situation" in which an armed attack on a country with which Japan has close ties is threatened and Japan's survival is threatened. It is possible to exercise the right of collective self-defense and use a minimum amount of force.
3. "Armed attack situaion" in which an armed attack on Japan occurs. The right of individual self-defense is effectively exercised which means all-out war.

The article issued on September 9, 2022 depicts a tabletop exercise that was

held on September 6 and 7, inviting members of the Diet and senior members of the Self-Defense Forces. During the exercise, they explained that if China landed on the Senkaku Islands, the government would declare it an "armed attack situation." And if Taiwan and the US military are attacked, it will be described as an “national existence crisis situation”

Chinese Missile Fell Into Japan’s EEZ

China's ballistic missile dropped into Japan's EEZ for the first time, heightening the urgency of a Taiwan emergency. China fired a ballistic missile into Japan's EEZ during exercises around Taiwan, reminding us that a Taiwanese emergency would directly affect Japan. Japan's EEZ where the Chinese missiles landed is only about 60 kilometers from Yonaguni Island. The fishery cooperative on Yonaguni Island called for self-restraint from fishing from August 5 to 8 after the missile was dropped on August 4.

Chinese missiles fell into Japan's exclusive waters on August 4th, and by September 15th there were 10 articles, eight of which were written about Chinese missiles falling. This is a significant incidents for Japan. After Chinese missiles landed in Japan's EEZ, the government is said to be holding tabletop exercises, and Okinawa is preparing a missile shelter, mentioned in the article issued on August 7th.

Table 4 The Codes Appeared in The Third Coding

Codes	Frequency
9. Reversal of Power	2
10. Challenges of the Kishida administration	10

Reversal of Power

Now that China has risen militarily and economically and is now threatening the US military, and eroding U.S. military superiority is no longer possible to say that the US military power alone is enough to ensure security. So, Japan and the United States need to work together to narrow the missile gap with China.

This code shows you how the power shifting, and how it affects Japan-US relations. Japan's security depends on the US military as you can see from code No. 1, The Japan-US Alliance, Japan is not capable of defending its own country without the US. But this code also shows that the US military also need Japan to ensure security and peace in Asia.

Challenges of the Kishida Administration

It is necessary for the government to share the burden of the bases with all of Japan, while gaining a full understanding of the Okinawa government when dealing with the base issue. In the war memorial service held on June 23rd of this year, Prime Minister Kishida emphasized that he would promote diplomatic efforts, including summit diplomacy, to protect peace in Okinawa. Also, in order to prevent Okinawa from becoming entangled in the ravages of war again, it is essential for the government to discuss strengthening deterrence, such as the relocation to Henoko and deployment of the Self-Defense Forces. The new challenge for the Kishida administration is to take measures aimed at both reducing the burden on Okinawa and ensuring national security.

This code is an important code for the researcher to proceed with this research. This is because this code supports Yo Nomaguchi's theory that Okinawan newspapers report with prejudices. The article issued on August 25th mentions how the governor of Okinawa reacted to the deployment of self-defense forces around Nansei-island. He said, "The government is building missile bases without explaining." However, six articles mentioned about Okinawa's geographical importance.

Finally, the researcher looked at the title of each articles to see which cords often

appeared in which titles. They were categorized into three groups: Okinawa (沖縄), the Japan-US alliance (日米同盟), and the national security (安全保障). No pattern was found in the Okinawa and the Japan-US alliance group. However, eight out of ten codes for the Kishida administration's new challenge were found in articles that were grouped into Okinawa.

Due to its geographical advantage, Okinawa has become a strategic base for the US military. Okinawa is 600-1,000 kilometers from mainland Japan, mainland China, the Taiwan Strait, and the Korean peninsula respectively, and Taiwan is about 110 kilometers from Yonaguni Island in Okinawa Prefecture, it is about five minutes away by China's latest fighter jet. Okinawa has an intellectual superiority not only in the defense of Japan but also in responding to contingencies in the Asia-Pacific, especially North Korea and the Taiwan Strait. For this reason, the U.S. military has consistently emphasized the stationing of troops in Okinawa even after Okinawa's reversion. The U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa is the largest U.S. Air Force base in East Asia, and the U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters is located in Uruma city, the only U.S. military headquarters outside of Japan. The President Biden has also said that he will defend Taiwan if China invades it. At that time, there is a huge possibility that the supply of weapons will be from Okinawa since it is the closest the US military bases to Taiwan.

However, now that China's military power is said to exceed that of the United States in a few years, it is dangerous for Japan's national security to depend on the United States. China's aggressive military expansion and modernization are eroding U.S. military superiority. Now that China has risen militarily and economically and is now threatening the US military, it is no longer possible to say that the US military power alone is enough to ensure security. So now, Japan needed America, but now America

needs Japan as well. Japan and the United States will work together to narrow the missile gap with China. It means Japan also need to expand its national defense as China Threat grows.

Findings

After three round of coding, all the codes except Challenges of Kishida Administration were categorized into three groups.

Okinawa as a strategic point for the Japan and the US against China

There are linkages between code Linchpin of the Pacific Ocean and Strategic Bases of the US Troops, and Reversal of Powew and Challenges of the Kishida Administration. It all explain how Okinawa became such an import strategic point against China.

Due to its geographical advantage, Okinawa has become a strategic base for the US military. Okinawa is 600-1,000 kilometers from mainland Japan, mainland China, the Taiwan Strait, and the Korean peninsula respectively, and Taiwan is about 110 kilometers from Yonaguni Island in Okinawa Prefecture, it is about five minutes away by China's latest fighter jet. Okinawa has an intellectual superiority not only in the defense of Japan but also in responding to contingencies in the Asia-Pacific, especially North Korea and the Taiwan Strait. For this reason, the U.S. military has consistently emphasized the stationing of troops in Okinawa even after Okinawa's reversion. The U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa is the largest U.S. Air Force base in East Asia, and the U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters is located in Uruma city, the only U.S. military headquarters outside of Japan. The President Biden has also said that he will defend Taiwan if China invades it. At that time, there is a huge

possibility that the supply of weapons will be from Okinawa since it is the closest the US military bases to Taiwan.

However, now that China's military power is said to exceed that of the United States in a few years, it is dangerous for Japan's national security to depend on the United States. China's aggressive military expansion and modernization are eroding U.S. military superiority. Now that China has risen militarily and economically and is now threatening the US military, it is no longer possible to say that the US military power alone is enough to ensure security. So now, Japan needed America, but now America needs Japan as well. Japan and the United States will work together to narrow the missile gap with China. It means Japan also need to expand its national defense as China Threat grows.

Proximity to the China Threats

Linkages between code Geographic Distance, Chinese Missile Fell Into Japan's EEZ and Challenges of the Kishida Administration. By combing these three codes, it allowed to reveal how close Okianwa is to China Threats, and why it is important deploy the Self-Defense Forces in Okiawa.

Taiwan is about 110 kilometers from Yonaguni Island in Okinawa Prefecture. Because of this proximity, Yonaguni Island, Okinawa, would be involved in the event of a Chinese attack on Taiwan regardless of the presence or absence of US forces. From this distance, it is not hard to imagine the impact on Okinawa, especially Yonaguni Island if China really attacks Taiwan. But when five Chinese ballistic

missiles fell into Japan's EEZ made it even more real.

China's ballistic missile dropped into Japan's EEZ for the first time, h. The Japan's EEZ where the Chinese missiles landed are only about 60 kilometers from Yonaguni Island. It reminding us that a Taiwanese emergency would directly affect Japan. Therefore, the government is promoting the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces near the Nansei Islands, and building breakwaters on the Nansei Islands means protecting Okinawa. It is necessary for the government to share the burden of the bases with all of Japan, while gaining the full understanding of the prefectural government when dealing with the base issue.

Threat to National Existence Crisis

The code Senkaku Islands Dispute, Strategic Bases of the US Troops, and Threat to National Existence Crisis were categorized into the same group. These codes explain how the Seld-Defense Forces take actions in an emergency situation, and why the government has been deploying he Seld-Defense Forces near the Nansei Island.

The actions taken by Japan's Self-Defense Forces are based on security-related laws that enforcement in 2016. It depends on how the government defines the emergency situation. The government says it divides emergencies into three levels: Significant impact situation, National existence crisis situation, and Armed attack situation. The Nikkei Newspaper classified an attack on the Senkaku Islands as an

“armed attack situation” and applied the right of personal self-defense. However, if China attacks Taiwan, what is said to occur the most is the National Existence Crisis Situation. It is a situation that an armed attack on a country with which Japan has close ties is threatened and Japan's survival is threatened. その場合には、It is possible to exercise the right of collective self-defense and use a minimum amount of force. In that case, it is possible to exercise the right of collective self-defense and use a minimum amount of force. The Nikkei Newspaper explains it by taking examples of when Taiwan was attacked and when the US military was attacked. When Taiwan and the US military are attacked, if the Self-Defense Forces are deployed in Okinawa, they will be able to act quickly. And as long as the US military bases are in Okinawa, deploying the Self-Defense Forces in Okinawa and strengthening its defense capabilities will lead to the protection of Okinawa.

Summary

Okinawa's geographical advantages cannot be ignored, and Okinawa has been playing an important role as a strategic point to ensure Asia's security even after its revision to Japan. As China threats increase, Okinawa has become an indispensable strategic point for Japan and the US against China. The *Nikkei Newspaper* (日経新聞) constantly repeated the geographical advantages of Okinawa and how Okinawa close to the China Threats. Therefore, the government is hastening the deployment of the

Self-Defense Forces to the Nansei Islands, and it will directly lead to protect Okinawa.

But it is important to communicate with the government of Okinawa and gain the understanding of the people of Okinawa. The Nikkei Shimbun concludes that, as a Japanese citizen, the government should communicate more with Okinawa to find a balance between Okinawan people who are resistant to the increased burden and Okinawa's geographical advantage.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conducting the qualitative content analysis of the *Nikkei Newspaper* revealed how Okinawa become such an important strategic point for both Japan and the United States. It gave the researcher a new perspective to see the impact of China Threat.

Due to the experience of World War II, Okinawa tends to have negative feelings toward the Japanese government. As the China threat increases, the government has newly deployed the Self-Defense Forces to Okinawa and forced the relocation of the Futenma base against the opposition of more than half of the Okinawan people.³⁷ As Narahiko Toyoshita mentioned, it feels like the government is justifying the increased burden on Okinawa by using the China threat theory.

However, the environment around Okinawa shift dramatically as China threat increases. Okinawa has been used by the US military as a military base during the Vietnam War and has been used to keep watch over the Korean Peninsula. But what makes the China threat different from before is the proximity of the China threat to Okinawa. In particular, Yonaguni Island is at a distance of 110 kilometers from Taiwan, and the risk is high regardless of the presence of US military bases.

Furthermore, the most frightening aspect of the Chinese threat is that China's military power is about to overtake the US military in a few years. Japan's security would not be possible without the US military, and many people think that Japan's security will be guaranteed by the United States. But in fact, Japan also need to enhance its national defense to be able to protect its own country by itself. And finally, Okinawa's geographical superiority. This is the theory that has been used to explain why the US military is concentrated in Okinawa. Although Okinawan scholars tend to avoid focusing on Okinawa's geographical advantages, this is too important a

³⁷ 榎彦, "安保条約と「脅威論」の展開."

factor to ignore. ³⁸According to Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, the US military bases in Okinawa don't only exist to protect Japan, but also fulfill the obligation of Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, to maintain the security in the Asia-Pacific region. It is also mentioned in articles published on May 23rd, 2022 and May 24, 2022. What is different than when Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart wrote their study is the rapid expansion of China's military. Their research pointed out that the United States is stationed in Okinawa to fulfill its obligations to ensure and maintain peace and security in Asia, but the United States may now need Japan to fulfill its obligations.

Due to changes in the environment surrounding Okinawa, the burden on Okinawa may be connected to protecting Okinawa from now on.

38

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam Grydehøj, Michael Lujan Bevacqua, Megumi Chibana, Yaso Nadarajah, Aká Simonsen, Ping Su, Renee Wright, Sasha Davis. "Practicing Decolonial Political Geography: Island Perspectives on Neocolonialism and the China Threat Discourse." *January 7, 2021*.
- BBC. "Okinawa: Tokyo to Overrule Referendum on Us Base." news release, 25 February, 2019.
- Emma Chanlett-Avery, Ian E. Rinehart. "The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy." (20 January, 2016).
- Hulme, James Lee and Patrick. "Will Taiwan Be the Next Ukraine?". (June 09, 2022).
<https://ucigcc.org/podcast/is-taiwan-the-next-ukraine/>.
- Maedomari, Hiromori. 本当は憲法より大切な「日米地位協定入門」. November 20, 2018.
- Mao, Frances. "Biden Again Says Us Would Defend Taiwan If China Attacks Published." (September 19, 2022).
- O'Shea, Paul. "Strategic Narrative and Us Military Bases in Japan: How 'Deterrence' Makes the Marine Base on Okinawa 'Indispensable'." (2018).
- WEB, NHK NEWS. "国土の0.6パーセントの沖縄 在日米軍施設の70%が集中." (May 15, 2022).
- 沖縄タイムス. "「沖縄また戦場に」 台湾有事で南西諸島に攻撃拠点 琉球弧の住民や戦争体験者は…." (December 24, 2021).
- . "「戦争に巻き込まれる」 根強い不安の声 防衛相と沖縄知事 「有事」巡って温度差." (September 29, 2022).
- 佳子栗原. "南西諸島で進む自衛隊配備."
https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALiCzsbHgCXApVVuN0cAviGW151bhXiKjw:1666497718695&q=%E5%8D%97%E8%A5%BF%E8%AB%B8%E5%B3%B6+%E8%87%AA%E8%A1%9B%E9%9A%8A%E9%85%8D%E5%82%99&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjuu6rku_X6AhUy6mEKHSQrATcQBSgAegQIBxAB&biw=1440&bih=764&dpr=2.
- 企業ログ. "新聞社とテレビ局の気になる関係図." (October 12, 2022).
- 吉岡至. "日本のなかの沖縄の新聞—ローカルジャーナリズムの立ち位置—." (1st June, 2022).
- 具志堅勝也. "米軍基地問題とマスコミ報道 60年安保時から今日までの基地報道の変遷について."
- 高作正博. "日米地位協定の立憲的統制：基地の提供・返還の場面." (March, 2003).
- 彰池上. "池上氏解説「米国 vs 中国が陰悪」日本はどうなる？ 両国の厳しい対立は日本にも大きく関係する." (May 08, 2022).
- 照屋寛之. "米軍基地 75%の悲劇." (2005).
- 信太 謙三, 小川 祐喜子, 大谷 奈緒子, 島崎 哲彦. "日中関係における日本側の問題意識：朝日新聞・毎日新聞・読売新聞の社説の内容分析から." (March 2022).
- 池上彰. "池上彰が解説「今さら聞けない新聞の読み方」." (November 19, 2019).
- 朝日学情ナビ. "「世界一危険」な普天間飛行場…合意 25 年、なぜ返還されない？【時事まとめ】." (April 14, 2021).

土屋博樹、野波寛、桜井国俊."Nimby としての在日米軍基地をめぐる多様なアクターの正当性：公共政策の決定権に対する当事者・非当事者による承認過程." (March 28, 2014).
https://www.istage.ist.go.jp/article/ijesp/54/1/54_1211/pdf.

檜彦, 豊下."安保条約と「脅威論」の展開." (2011).

日経テレコン."サービスと機能."

日経新聞."日本の「有事」どう迅速に認定 明確な判断基準が不可欠—安保法体系の資格 上."
." (April 05, 2022).

日本経済新聞."台湾有事に備えは十分か 政治家に覚悟迫る演習 政界 zoom." (September 9, 2022).

———. "日米と中国、近づく「軍事力逆転」 海上優位 2023 年まで—日本防衛の実力."
(March 23, 2022).

———. "日本の「有事」どう迅速に認定 明確な判断基準が不可欠—安保法体系の死角."
(April 05, 2022).

普天間基地の実態."普天間基地移設問題の経過." (2010).

米軍基地問題に関する万国津梁会議."新たな安全保障環境下における沖縄の基地負担軽減に向けて." (2022).

陽, 野間口."メディアは世論を誘導しているのか ~沖縄米軍基地問題を事例として~."
(March 25, 2014).

琉球新報."「沖縄が再び捨て石に」 自衛隊演習の民間港使用に住民憤り." (November 12, 2021).

鈴木晃志郎."Nimby から考える「迷惑施設」." (July 2015).

滕鑑."「中国脅威論」の脅威." (2018).