

## French Nuclear Tests

By Suetsune Takashi

**F**rance's nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll have demonstrated one nation's sadly egoistic character. The tests have also revealed problems the world has been unable to solve and must tackle perhaps for many more centuries to come.

As long as the world is made up of sovereign, independent countries, military confrontation is always a possibility. Wars have mostly been fought between neighboring countries. As a matter of fact any defense policy is built on the premise that neighboring countries are potential enemies, even though nobody openly says so. We know that it is too naive to believe that neighbors are always friends. Therefore, French president Chirac's argument that France needs a strong military capability because his country has been invaded three times in this century is understandable. He is free to think that Germany may again become an unfriendly neighbor for France. But the argument that France may be attacked unless nuclear-armed is the most disappointing and the least convincing. The argument is not only unrealistic but entirely betrays humanity. His argument is based on the so-called nuclear deterrence theory which was developed and used by nuclear powers. It may be true that the Cold War never became hot because of the nuclear balance between the United States and the former Soviet Union. Even if that was the case, we decided to make the world eventually nuclear-free by agreeing to the extension of NPT last May. The NPT is an unequal treaty which prohibits non-nuclear countries from having access to nuclear weapons while admitting the right to possess them to nuclear powers. We agreed to the extension of the treaty because we have come to the conclusion that a nuclear war would bring about the end of the world. The French nuclear tests are nothing but a manifestation of arrogance of a nuclear power. They have also proved how even a country like France with its rich cultural background and tradition of

humanism can easily become egocentric.

The French nuclear tests have also unveiled an ugly aspect of the past history of colonialism. Mururoa Atoll is far away from France. If it is a French territory today because it was colonized by France, conducting nuclear tests there was a poor choice. It was taken as an insult or even as racism by the indigenous population in the area. It is hard to understand why a great politician like Mr. Chirac has committed such an error.

Among the reactions from countries the world over, that of Japan was carefully watched and there was undue criticism about the alleged inconsistency of the Japanese attitude to France's tests and those conducted by China. Critics questioned why Japan is severer to the French tests while keeping mute on the Chinese tests. Such criticism is wrong. The Japanese reaction to the Chinese tests was quick and clear by announcing freezing of a part of aid to that country. All in all, however, the French tests were much more controversial. Why? The French tests were conducted, not in continental France, but in the Pacific, on its overseas territory which was colonized by force against the will of the native population.

Fortunately more than half of the French people were reported to have been against the nuclear tests.

### COMING UP

Apart from problems like economic restructuring and deregulation, Japan has a lot of homework, some of which has been longstanding and wearying. The constitution, the northern territories issue and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty are some of the exemplary problems Japan is asked to challenge. The cover story in the next issue will update readers on these issues. Also a new column dealing with Japanese economic history will start and a feature on *dango* will provide an interesting insight into the Japanese business practice.

## Japan-U.S. Alliance Shaken By U.S. Servicemen's Misconduct

The rape of an elementary school girl by three U.S. servicemen in Okinawa is shaking the Japan-U.S. alliance. The incident touched off a demand for revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and in turn threatens to undermine the very foundation of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the cornerstone of the bilateral relationship.

It all started when the three servicemen abducted a 12-year-old elementary school girl who passed their parked rental car in northern Okinawa Island on the evening of September 4 and later raped her. Japanese police informed U.S. military officials of the incident and sought their cooperation in the investigation. The following day the U.S. authorities identified the suspects and detained them inside a U.S. military base. The Japanese police obtained warrants of arrest from a Japanese court and sought the extradition of the three U.S. soldiers on September 7 but the U.S. side failed to comply with the request under the terms of SOFA.

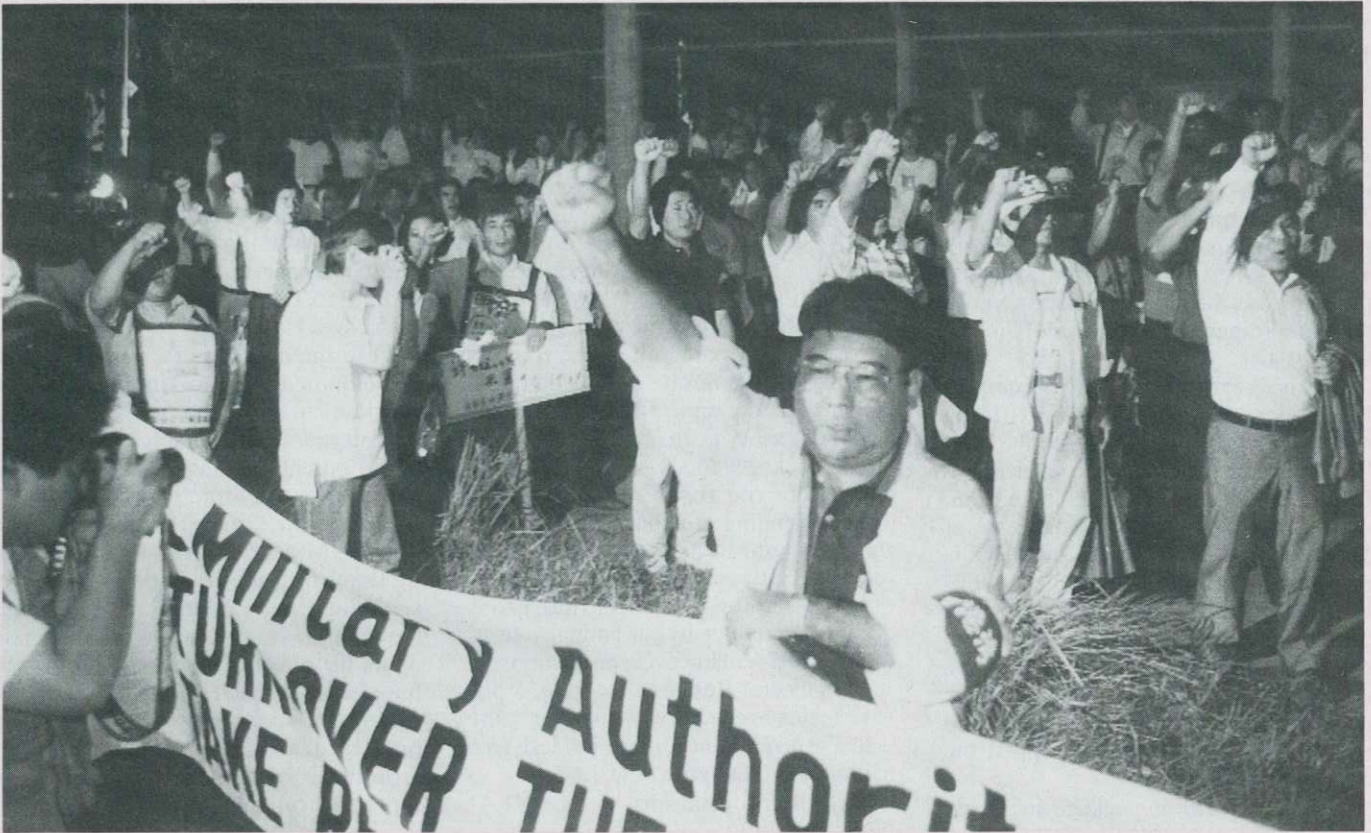
Article 17 of SOFA, concluded in 1960 and based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, allows U.S. forces to detain U.S. serviceman involved in crimes committed on Japanese territory until they are indicted by Japanese prosecutors.

People in Okinawa violently reacted to the rape case which they deemed a vicious offense and strongly protested

**Correction:** Due to an error in translation, the ANALYSIS article, *Current Affairs in the Middle East, a View from Tokyo*, in the September/October issue incorrectly identified Amos Radian as Mayor of Jerusalem. His correct title is political advisor to the Mayor of Jerusalem.

**Correction:** The address listed in the TABLE TALK article in the September/October issue should read: 1-13-1 Mita. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

The *Journal* welcomes letters of opinion or comment from its readers. Letters, including the writer's name and address, should be sent to: Editor, Japan Economic Foundation, 11th Floor, Fukoku Seimei Bldg., 2-2 Uchisaiwai-cho 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100 Japan. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.



Local citizens shout in unison in front of a U.S. military base in protest of the abduction and gang rape of a 12-year-old Japanese girl.

against the existing arrangement under which the U.S. side retains what they claim amounts to extraterritoriality. The Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously approved a motion seeking a review of SOFA.

The Japanese government moved cautiously, deciding not to seek a review of SOFA. Foreign Minister Yohei Kono agreed with U.S. Ambassador Walter F. Mondale at a September 21 meeting to set up an expert panel to study procedural improvements, including court proceedings, within the framework of SOFA.

The three U.S. servicemen were indicted by the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office on September 29 and placed under the custody of Japanese law enforcement authorities.

Mindful of local people's resentment, however, Okinawa Governor Ota Masahide refused to comply with a cen-

tral government request for cooperation in a case which urgently required his action. The central government was just about to requisition lands owned by "anti-war" land owners for use by U.S. forces. The governor's signature is required in legal procedures so that the national government can forcibly use the lands, but Ota refused. If the procedure is delayed beyond the required time frame, the government will be forced to use the land illegally.

The Okinawa incident triggered a controversy in Japan over the inequality of the Status of Forces Agreement, advisability of keeping U.S. military bases in Japan, and the position of Okinawa people who frequently become targets of criminal offenses by U.S. servicemen.

There is a growing argument both in Japan and the U.S. that now that the Cold War has ended, U.S. troops should

be pulled out of Japan and other parts of Asia. Against such a background, the two countries could split over the way the bilateral security arrangement is to be maintained in the post-Cold War days, which could impair the basis of the bilateral relationship based on mutual trust.

Given China's continual military buildup, the unstable China-Taiwan relations and other unstable factors in the Asia-Pacific region where there is no regional security structure, the Japan-U.S. security arrangement in a way offers stabilization. A Japan-U.S. summit meeting to be held in Tokyo in November when U.S. President Bill Clinton attends a general meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Council is expected to provide a good opportunity for the two leaders to reflect on the current situation and strive for a better future in the bilateral relationship.

## Massive Stimulus Measures Unveiled To Spur Economy

The government announced on September 20 a ¥14.22 trillion pump-priming package to boost the stagnant Japanese economy. A second supplementary budget for fiscal 1995 worth ¥5.3 trillion which incorporated the package was submitted for approval to an extraordinary session of the Diet on October 4.

The package was the sixth comprehensive economic measure involving budgetary appropriations since the bubble economy began to collapse. Coupled with the 0.5 percentage point discount rate announced by the Bank of Japan on September 8, the initiative is aimed at putting economic recovery back on track during the current fiscal year. The action came as business confidence has dropped and the onset of a deflationary spiral threatens on the back of the rise in the yen's value since spring, which at one point topped the ¥80 to the dollar level.

The ¥14.22 trillion package surpassed

the largest stimulus package to date, a ¥15.25 trillion disbursement unveiled in February 1994, if tax cuts worth ¥5.8 trillion are excluded from the latter. The latest initiative is one of the largest stimulus measures ever taken in Japan. Of the total appropriations, spending on public projects amounts to ¥12.81 trillion, ¥1.29 trillion will be used to assist small and medium-size companies and ¥110 billion will be made available for the development of new businesses. Fresh fiscal spending on public projects that directly generate actual demand, which the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) describes as the "pure water" part of the package, totals some ¥8 trillion, more than the former largest "pure water" spending of about ¥7 trillion that was incorporated in the April 1993 package. It is estimated by EPA to effectively push up nominal gross domestic product by an annual rate of more than 2%. However, projections by Japan General Research Institute, a private sector research body, put the "pure water" spending at a more modest ¥6.6 trillion and GDP growth at 1.6%.

Major appropriations include ¥1.41

trillion for projects related to reconstruction of areas hit by the January 17 Great Hanshin Earthquake and ¥910 billion for upgrading Japan's scientific and telecommunications infrastructure, as well as projects to improve education and social welfare facilities. Among other measures are 1) deregulatory steps, such as an easing of limits on building space in major urban areas to promote effective use of land; 2) an additional appropriation for urban development projects by the Urban Development Promotion Organization (UDPO), an affiliate of the Construction Ministry; and 3) an easing of conditions on the purchase of land by UDPO.

In a departure from its usual preoccupation with financial balance, the Finance Ministry agreed to take a drastic fiscal measure in the latest package, seeking a "surprise" effect. Nevertheless, not a few economists doubt the effect the largest package will have, arguing that it was devoid of a recipe for disposal of accumulating problem-loans, deregulation and other structural problems that shadow the Japanese economy.



Prime Minister Murayama and colleagues at cabinet meeting on economic countermeasures.

Photo: Kyodo News Service