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Pipe Dreams

By Joe Murphy



Guam may be getting closer and closer to becoming the "Keystone of the Pacific," a title held by Okinawa up until now. We haven't seen any big deal about it in the papers, but the U.S. and Japan recently agreed (very quietly) to cut back nearly one tenth of the American military base holdings in Okinawa. The unannounced reductions, unintentionally, revealed that American troop levels had been quietly reduced by 8,600 men in the last 12 months.

There are still about 37,000 U.S. servicemen on Okinawa, with another 19,000 or so in Japan proper. So, we can't claim that Guam is the biggest base west of Hawaii yet, but it seems to be heading in that direction. The base-trimming program in Okinawa returned to Japan's use a total of 6,495 acres, according to the Los Angeles Times News Service. Now U.S. holdings on Okinawa have been chopped to 21.6 percent of the land there.
