

***The Big Picture – Okinawa: Bastion in the Pacific***

Announcer: The United States Army presents *The Big Picture*, an official report produced for the armed forces and the American people.

Text: *Okinawa: Keystone of the Pacific*

Narrator: A small, rocky typhoon-swept island, this is Okinawa, principle link in the Ryukyus chain, which stretches more than 340 miles over the vast Western Pacific, from Japan to Formosa. Unimportant? Perhaps at first glance, but Okinawa's role in today's tense world is far out of proportion to her size. In area equal to half that of Rhode Island, Okinawa is a vital outpost in the free world defense network, less than 400 miles from the coast of communist China.

But Okinawa has not always played the important world role it plays today. For many centuries it slept, an island off the beaten track of world affairs. Feudal lords ruled over scattered straw hut villages, where life centered around two things: rice and religion. Ancestor worship was the dominant faith. Here peaceful peasants lived and worked. And children played, with little brother or sister a perennial passenger.

It was a contented culture that looked backward rather than forward...