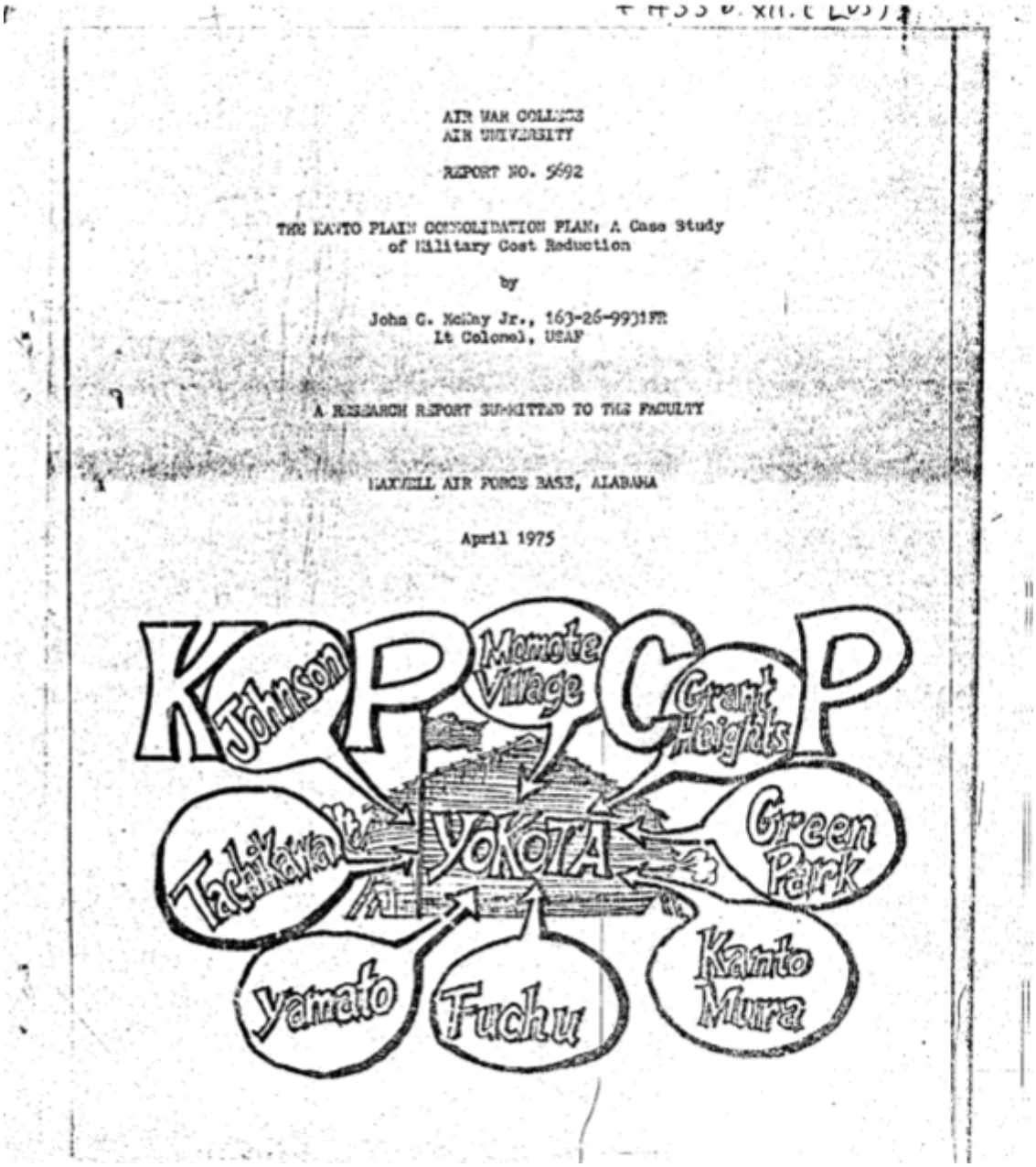
The Kanto Plain Consolidation Plan: A Case Study of Military Cost Reduction



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THE KANTO PLAIN CONSOLIDATION PLAN: A Case Study of Military Cost Reduction

by

John C. Kelly Jr., 163-26-9931FR
Lt Colonel, USAF

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Following the end of World War II, U.S. troop presence in Japan has varied in size as a result of periodic buildups from events such as the Korean conflict in the early 1950's. United States military presence in Japan came under increasing scrutiny at home and abroad following public discontent over America's unpopular involvement in Indochina, as well as the need to reduce defense expenditures. Large numbers of U.S. military personnel in densely populated Tokyo, as well as a widely scattered constellation of air force facilities were viewed by the Japanese public as excessive and served as fuel for Japanese opposition parties. Lessons learned from this period in U.S.-Japan relations remain relevant given the need to counterbalance local pressures for base withdrawal in areas such as Okinawa with the need for a continued military presence in order to maintain U.S. commitment towards regional security under its proposed strategic pivot towards Asia.

Lt. John G. McKay, Jr.'s 1975 report studies the political and economic pressures in both Japan and the U.S. which led to a reassessment of the U.S. Air Force's basing posture in Tokyo, Japan. The report describes the formulation and implementation of the Kanto Plain Consolidation Plan, and how its design was to both reduce costs and better consolidate widely scattered Air Force facilities without diminishing mission capability in the region.

McKay, Jr. writes:

"All U.S. military installations overseas were scrutinized for possible reductions as a result of public dissent expressed over U.S. involvement in the Indochina war and increasing Congressional pressures to deflate expenditures. To accommodate this budget pressure, the United States Air Force (USAF) embarked on an extensive realignment of its forces in Northeast Asia." [page 3]

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org