

Carlton Skinner Oral History Interview—JFK #1, 11/17/1970
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Carlton Skinner (1913-2004) served as the governor of Guam between 1949 and 1953; and as the financial vice-president of Fairbanks-Whitney Corp. between 1958 and 1963. This interview focuses on Skinner's experience as governor of Guam, his views on the political and economic development in the South Pacific, and the legacy of John F. Kennedy (JFK)'s presidency, among other issues.

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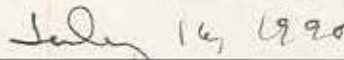
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Oral History Interview

with

CARLTON SKINNER

November 17, 1970
San Francisco, California

By James A. Oesterle

For the John F. Kennedy Library

OESTERLE: Governor Skinner, why don't we start out with a biographical sketch of yourself.

SKINNER: Very well. Are we on tape now?

OESTERLE: Yes.

SKINNER: I'm Carlton Skinner, born in Palo Alto on the Stanford [University] campus, April 8, 1913. My father was a professor at Stanford University. I moved east and lived most of my early life in New Jersey, Connecticut, and New England. I attended Wesleyan University, returned to California and graduated in 1934 from the University of California at Los Angeles. I went into newspaper work promptly, going to work in Washington, D.C. for the United Press where I covered all the major government departments and the Congress, and then for the *Wall Street Journal* where I covered the Supreme Court of the United States through all of the major New Deal decisions such as the AAA [Agricultural Adjustment Administration], the NRA [National Recovery Administration], the [National] Labor Relations Act, the Wagner Act cases and so forth. In 1938 or '39, I went into the government. I helped set up the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor and worked in the [United States] Maritime

Commission. In the summer of 1941, I went to sea as a [United States] Coast Guard officer, spending two years in Greenland on a Coast Guard cutter, ending my

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service in Greenland as executive officer of the cutter. Then being given command -- first duty and then command -- of the U.S.S. Seacloud. I had a most interesting sociological experiment which I'll discuss later in the tape.

Upon return from the war -- of which I spent four out of four and a half years at sea -- I went briefly into the Maritime Commission and then became director of information for the Department of the Interior, under Secretary of Interior J.A. Krug [Julius Krug], K-R-U-G. This was in, of course, the new administration of President Truman [Harry S. Truman]. I will describe now in some detail some of the events at that time because they have a bearing on my later interest in and activity in the Pacific Islands for the United States.

In about 1947, President Truman appointed a civil rights committee and it made a preliminary survey of the areas in the United States government and areas in the United States general society where civil rights were being denied to people and where governmental measures could help to restore or to reestablish civil rights. In my capacity as director of information of the Interior Department, I was also designated as a special assistant to the secretary and in that capacity I advised him on policy matters that the department should be looking into. Almost immediately after the issue of this report, I recommended to the secretary that the Interior Department had some very special civil rights problems. One was the American Indian problem for which there was a bureau which could be directed to address itself to increase the civil rights of Indians. But for the other area for which Interior was responsible, there was really no adequate governmental procedure for taking care of the civil rights. These were the Pacific territories of Guam, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. These were all under military rule.

In the case of Guam, the military rule had started in 1899, when Guam was captured by the U.S. Navy in the Spanish-American War. In the case of American Samoa, it started when the Samoan chiefs ceded American Samoa to the United States government and the Navy took responsibility there roughly in 1900; I don't have the precise date. But the Navy had ruled this island continuously ever since, and in my opinion, the people were denied their basic civil rights by being under military rule, various aspects of that, not the least of which was that they had no legislative bodies with legislative powers. They could only advise the naval governor. So with the approval of the secretary of the Interior and through the Office of Territories I was able to initiate an interdepartmental program. I think at that time it was the Interior Department, State Department, War Department, and Justice Department. I believe the Defense Department

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had not yet been created. In any case, the interdepartmental committee considered the problem, considered various reports. The secretary of interior himself, at my suggestion, made a month long trip and tour through the Pacific territories to Samoa, Guam, and the trust

territory and even went on up to Tokyo and consulted with General MacArthur [Douglas MacArthur] who was then the supreme commander for the Allied forces in Japan, and secured the consent and hearty concurrence of General MacArthur to the transfer of these territories from military to civilian government.

It may seem odd to people now to think that a cabinet officer had to go to Tokyo to see General MacArthur, but if you'll recall, even President Truman had to go to Wake Island to see General MacArthur. We, I think, sometimes forget the extraordinary responsibility which General MacArthur had and the unusual administrative measures which he deemed necessary to exercise there. In passing, it's interesting to note that General MacArthur was thoroughly familiar with this problem and stated that in his opinion a transfer from military to civil government in the Pacific territories would be a great help to his program for bringing home to the Japanese people the value of democracy and democratic rule.

Subsequent to this trip, the secretary of interior reported to the president for the interdepartmental committee. And the president approved a program by which Guam would be converted to civil government in 1949 -- starting in 1949 with the actual transfer in the summer of 1950 -- and American Samoa and the trust territory would be transferred in the summer of 1951. The arrangement allied for the Interior Department to nominate a civilian to be governor of Guam for the initial project, and for the Navy Department to appoint him as governor for an interim period which turned out to be about ten months, following which the President would sign an executive order transferring Guam to the jurisdiction of the Interior Department. Simultaneously the Interior Department had presented to Congress an organic act and the act was considered by the United States Congress and finally adopted in August of 1950, thereby creating in Guam a status of self-government with a legislature with full legislative powers.

I think I should backtrack at this point long enough to say that my interest in civil rights stems from an experience during World War II when I had command of the first integrated Navy ship, with mixed Negro and white officers, mixed Negro and white petty officers, and mixed Negro and white enlisted men.

OESTERLE: How did this come about? This was quite unusual.

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SKINNER: Well this did not start in my interest as a civil rights program. It stemmed from an experience I had as executive officer of a Coast Guard cutter in Greenland. The executive office is responsible for recommending enlisted men for advancement. He convenes what's called a board of examination and usually the chief petty officer or the senior petty officers examine the enlisted man and then the examination results are sent to headquarters and he is recommended for his advancement. In this case, we had a Negro steward's mate who was a genius with diesel motors. He would spend all his time off duty in the engine room, loved motors and studied the text books and studied the manuals and wanted very much to have a rating as a motor mechanic's mate. It seemed to me very logical that he should be, and I had him examined for this and recommended him to headquarters and the headquarters sent back that he could not be

because he was a Negro. This irritated me, it infuriated me. I had him re-examined, and appealed, and finally he was rated as a motor machinist's mate. I thought I'd achieved quite a victory. But in the process I started to think about the problem of the use of manpower in World War II and to realize that the rule under which the Navy and Coast Guard were working -- that Negroes can only serve at sea as officer servants, that is stewards or steward's mates -- would eventually cause racial trouble in the United States for this reason: that the stewards and steward mates of the seagoing units of the Coast Guard and Navy makeup only 3 to 4 percent of the total complement of a ship. The Negro group was roughly 11 percent of the population. With seamen for the Coast Guard and Navy coming from the draft, over a period of several years, the other 8 percent who could not go to sea would be given shore duty and the percentage of Negroes ashore in safe jobs would rise very rapidly. And I felt that the white sailors coming home from dangerous duty could very well resent this and there could be race riots in the sea ports.

So at the appropriate time after I returned from Greenland, I recommended to the Commandant of the Coast Guard that he start a program for using Negro seamen in the general ratings at sea. And I pointed out that the seagoing is a skill learned partly by education but primarily by experience and that you could not take Negroes and give them seagoing duty without giving them a chance to learn aboard ship from other seamen. And so I proposed that a ship be sent up in which Negroes would be put into general ratings and could be trained on the ship. The Commandant of the Coast Guard, several months after I had made this recommendation, issued orders to send me to the U.S.S. Seacloud which interestingly enough was a weather patrol ship which had been a yacht belonging to Marjorie Post Hutton Davies and had been the yacht taken by Joseph E. Davies when he was ambassador to Russia. He had had it as a yacht in Leningrad and also Odessa in the Baltic Sea, but it was not converted entirely as a warship and was used on weather patrol in the North Atlantic.

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I had command of the Seacloud for about two years and the Seacloud was a very successful experiment. I had four Negro officers and about twelve white officers and mixtures in all the ratings and the enlisted group. The ship always passed its inspections with a very high mark, and I did not have a single case of racial friction or racial trouble. That's not fair to say not a single case of racial friction because when you have Negroes and whites and there's friction you could call it racial, but there was no incident of any sort and I was very proud of the fact that it was a functioning seagoing unit. I mention all this merely to say that as a result of this two years spent on this project, I had a deeper interest in civil rights than I would have had normally. And this may well have been what encouraged me to want to make the Pacific territories, have civil government, and could also have led to my willingness to accept appointment as governor of Guam. After the decision was made, as I say, to convert, and Guam was named the first of the territories to convert to civil government, I was offered an appointment as governor of Guam. And interestingly enough, since it was a presidential appointment and required political endorsement, one of my two

endorsers from the Democratic party was Joseph E. Davies who had owned the ship on which I had the experiment with the mixed Negro crew.

OESTERLE: Was that purely accidental?

SKINNER: Purely accidental? Well, I couldn't say purely accidental in the sense that I had kept Mr. Davies advised of -- within the limits I could under wartime security -- the activities of his ship and the fact that it had credit for sinking a submarine, or joint credit with a destroyer and other activities which he was very proud that his ship had served well. And so I had a somewhat personal, more of a personal relationship with Ambassador Davies than I would have had otherwise. But he was happy to endorse me for the post, as was the son-in-law of Vice President Barkley [Alben W. Barkley], a Max O'Rell Truitt, T-R-U-I-T-T, who was then a member of the U.S. Maritime Commission.

I went to Guam as the naval governor. And at the time, stepping into the post of naval governor even though I was a civilian and having all the rights that he had, I found, not only did I have the executive authority which stemmed from a military government following on a tradition of Spanish autocratic military government and even a period of Japanese occupation, I also had a legislative power. I could write my own laws and sign them, and my predecessor had signed most of the laws even though in the last few years the advisory legislature had been given concurrent legislative power. And there were even some judicial functions which the governor exercised. He was in the line of appeal. I considered that wholly

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alien to the American tradition of government and I set about to support the adoption by the U.S. Congress of an organic act which would set forth the powers of government in the traditional American separation of powers with a legislature with full legislative power and with a judiciary wholly separate from the governor and with appeals passing on up through into the federal judicial system.

Among other things, when I arrived in Guam, I was the chairman of the board of directors of the Bank of Guam. There was \$18 million in it, and I was publisher of the only newspaper on the island, these all being relics of the naval government. With the approval of the Joint Committee on Printing, I offered the newspaper for sale and sold it to a Guamanian who had lived in the United States and had some experience as a publisher, and offered the Bank of Guam for sale to all the banks in the country that then had branch banking. The Bank of America finally made an offer which was accepted by the Department of the Interior and we sold the bank. In the process, we moved the government of Guam from a super powerful government in a small area to one of what I deem proper responsibility within the American system of government. And in the period I was governor, from the summer of 1950, when the organic act was adopted, until February of 1953, when I resigned after President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] was elected, I was able to establish a basic network of American state or territorial law -- such fields as land tax, zoning laws, building

codes, criminal codes, civil codes, uniform codes as recommended by the American Bar Association -- a whole series of basic laws which are still the basic laws of Guam.

In my period as Governor of Guam, I naturally concentrated entirely on the problems of Guam although I was aware of the contiguous trust territory which shifted to civil government in 1951. I did observe to my superiors in the Interior Department, and on at least one occasion in answer to a query from the press in Honolulu, that there was no reason why Guam and the trust territories should be separate administrations, that it would be far more efficient if it were one administration with one set of technicians in such fields as finance, law, public works, so forth. This was the kind of arrangement which was followed by Australia in the administration of New Guinea because the Australian responsibility in New Guinea is divided between its own territory of Papua and the trust territory -- by trusteeship from the United Nations -- of New Guinea. But the Australians, being much more practical, recognized that it was the same area, the same kind of people, and they combined the two administrations.

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For reasons which were never quite clear to me, the State Department, backed up by the Interior Department, very much opposed combining these two administrations. The only explanation I can think of is that they felt that if they combined them that they might be criticized in the United Nations particularly by the, then I think, committee of seventeen -- the so called decolonization committee [Special Committee on Colonialism], later expanded and called the committee of twenty-four. It's worth noting that if the two administrations had been combined at that time, I think it would have had the wholehearted support of the Micronesians themselves, the people in the trust territory, and of the Guamanians. And I think at this time the trust territory would be happily moving toward a permanent association with the United States in a joint territory in Guam. But since that was not done, the trust territory has developed a separate political life. And as I think you're aware, they are now debating what their future political status will be and there is at the moment only a minority sentiment for a permanent association with the United States. The majority sentiment appears to be for something called free association in which they have the right to terminate at any time their association with the United States. The vote is yet to come. There has been no plebiscite yet, but there have been discussions with a committee of the Congress of Micronesia and this is the basic feeling at this time.

OESTERLE: You're referring to the July 22, 1970 report, I believe.

SKINNER: Yes, it's from the Congress of Micronesia Committee on Pleas for Political Status. I left Guam in March of 1953, returned to the United States, and since I had served as a presidential appointee confirmed by the U.S. Senate, I concluded that it would be difficult if not impossible to work effectively again within the civil service in Washington. So I came to San Francisco and began to hunt for employment. It was not easy because the openings for unemployed governors are not very frequent. It was somewhat difficult, but I located a job finally in the shipping business, in

American President Lines, and after about a year in their freight traffic department I became assistant to the president and remained in that post until 1958 when I went to New York as the financial vice president of a large manufacturing company, Fairbanks-Whitney Corporation. I served in that post until 1963, when I decided that I did not wish to remain in New York; I didn't enjoy the New York life. I resigned from that post, moved back to San Francisco and opened my present business, Skinner and Company, which is primarily a management consultant business specializing in corporate contests with which I engage in a campaign to defend,

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elect, or defeat a board of directors on a retainer. It's a very unusual business; there are only five of us in the whole country that do it and the other four are located in New York City. I'm the only one headquartered west of the Hudson River. It's been described sometimes as very much like selling bridges; you don't sell very many of them but when you do it's a good sale.

I have also in the last few years become active in a business way in the Pacific in that an airline came to me in 1966 and asked me to assist them in planning for service in the trust territory. I suggested to them the program by which I felt they could successfully achieve the contract to provide the air service to the trust territory. This was a program of partnership with a Micronesian corporation. They accepted my advice and I have since that time functioned as a consultant to them. It's Continental Airlines which has a service in the trust territory, originating in Honolulu and proceeding through the islands of Johnson, Kwajalein, Majuro, Truk, Koror, Yap, Guam, Rota, Saipan and Okinawa. Part of the service is provided by an affiliate called Air Micronesia, of which a Micronesian corporation, United Micronesia and Development Association Incorporated, initially owned 49 percent and as of a few months ago, as of about a month ago, exercised an option to purchase an additional 2 percent from Continental Airlines. And so U.M.D.A. now owns 51 percent of Air Micronesia. Air Micronesia owns and operates a DC-6 which has the responsibility for the internal air service in the trust territory, and Continental Airlines owns and operates a Boeing 727 which provides the through service. Actually you cannot separate the two services that easily, because a through service also carries passengers between stops within the territory. But the concept was successful and provided the basis for the success in being awarded the original contract, and was maintained in the Civil Aeronautic Board's Pacific Islands local service investigation. And in this investigation, the examiner for the CAB recommended that Continental-Air Micronesia partnership be awarded the certificate permanently. Last May the Civil Aeronautics Board reversed this by a three to two vote and recommended Pan American [World Airways]. Subsequently, on the recommendation of the State and Interior Departments, and Defense Department, the president reopened the investigation and directed that further hearings be held to take testimony from the executive departments as to the effect of an award to Pan American. Those hearings have been completed and the examiner has again recommended Air Micronesia and Continental, placing great emphasis on this partnership with the Micronesian people. The matter is now before the Civil Aeronautics Board where they will be asked to rule again, and it will then go to the president because it's an international air service.

OESTERLE: Pan American had originally been under contract throughout the trust territory during the military days and the earlier part of the Interior administration; is that not correct?

SKINNER: That is correct. They flew what they called a "bus driver" contract; they flew two DC-4s which belonged to the trust territory government, and by the testimony of the present president and chairman of the board of Pan America it was a very poor service that they provided. Their explanation is that they lived up to their contract. However, they have admitted before the CAB that nothing in the contract prevented them from giving better service, promoting tourism, or improving the equipment, or training Micronesians. They did not do any of those things when they had the service.

OESTERLE: Now one of the obligations of Continental Airlines through Air Micronesia is also to develop a hotel in each district; is that not correct?

SKINNER: Yes, that is correct. In the investigation for proposals, in 1967, the trust territory government asked for proposals on hotels. And again, without being immodest, I must say that I wrote the entire proposal to Continental Airlines and made the basic policy decision other than purely airline operations as to what would be proposed. And I propose on behalf of Continental, with their authority of course, that there be six hotels, one in each district. And no other airline applicant proposed to build one in each district. Two of them proposed to build two hotels each, and Pan American itself merely offered to assist local people in securing a government loan or a government guarantee so that they could build hotels. The proposal to build six by Continental obviously also influenced the award.

OESTERLE: Who owns the forty-nine or fifty percent of the American side of Air Continental?

SKINNER: Of Air Micronesia? Continental Airlines initially owned 31 percent, and Aloha Airlines of Hawaii owned 20 percent. As of the present, with Continental having sold 2 percent to U.M.D.A., the ownership is U.M.D.A. 51 percent, Continental 29, and Aloha 20.

I mentioned this, if you recall, I mentioned this merely to indicate that I have in the last few years become more active in economic activities in the Pacific. It was not my initial plan, and I say it came about somewhat accidentally in the sense that Continental

initially asked me to lead an investigation team through the trust territory. And I said to them that if they were serious about wanting the contract, that I felt I had the program that could get it for them. And I see that turned out to be right.

I am a director of U.M.D.A. representing an ownership interest that Continental took in U.M.D.A. The basis for this was that U.M.D.A. was organized initially to market the copra from the trust territory. Always before, the copra had been marketed by an all American firm located in San Francisco, and U.M.D.A. being 60 percent Micronesian wanted to market the copra. The trust territory government demanded a financial level of resources which was beyond U.M.D.A. at that time, and so when I proposed to Continental that they join with U.M.D.A. -- one of the conditions which made U.M.D.A. willing to and happy to join with Continental was that Continental put in the additional cash in stock and equity position in U.M.D.A. plus the prestige with the bank to allow U.M.D.A. to qualify for a line of credit sufficiently high to be able to market the copra. And so Continental owns about 30 percent of U.M.D.A., individual Americans about 10 percent and Micronesians exactly 60 percent. As I say, I serve as a director of U.M.D.A. representing the Continental interest there.

I have been asked to do a number of other activities in the Pacific. I am also a director of M.I.L.I., Micronesian Inter-ocean Line Incorporated, which is a shipping company, ocean shipping company, which had a franchise to provide ocean shipping from Japan and the United States into the trust territory. It is created somewhat on the same principle of partnership with 50 percent of the beneficial interest owned by Micronesians and 50 percent by an American shipping company, the name of which is Marine Chartering. I'm not active in other business affairs in the Pacific although I am consulted from time to time by some of the leaders of territories or independent countries in the Pacific, among them are Nauru, Western Samoa, and Fiji. When I say consulted by them, I don't mean to imply that I make any policy for them, but from time to time I have been asked to assist in one way or another based on my long experience in the Pacific.

I have given you now the nature of my business. I should now explain how I came to be appointed by President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], as a United States Commissioner on the South Pacific Commission. Having left government in 1953 somewhat unwillingly in the sense that I felt I still had a program to complete in Guam -- if a Democratic president had been elected I would have stayed at least another year and a half, perhaps another four year term -- I started many programs which I have not been able to bring to a conclusion,

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and I felt somewhat frustrated as a result. I maintained my interest in the Pacific by reading primarily, but was unable to exercise it because naturally with a Republican administration there was no use -- by the tradition of American politics -- for my services.

While living in San Francisco, I became active in the Democratic party and I was initially asked to run for Congress when I came back in 1954, but I felt I could not do so because I did not have the financial resources to take the risk. However, in 1956, I became the coordinator and the actual executive of the Independent Citizens Committee for Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson, Jr.] and Sparkman [John J. Sparkman] -- Stevenson-sparkman. In that capacity I worked quite closely with the leaders of the

Democratic party here: at that time Senator Clair Engle or Congressman Clair Engle, later to become senator; Attorney General Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] later to become governor; Elizabeth Smith [Elizabeth Gatov], then Democratic National Committeewoman later to become treasurer of the United States by appointment of President Kennedy; Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] who was a campaign manager for Governor Brown, for Attorney General Brown in his campaign for governor, and who was active in the Democratic campaign of '56. I retained my interest in Democratic politics and participated in a number of political activities: attending dinners, organizing committees on behalf of individual candidates. I also worked closely with Roger Kent who was state chairman and then later national committeeman.

In the 1960 election, while I had already moved to New York, I still had very friendly connections with the California political leadership based on the lengthy service that I had had in '56, '57, and '58, and active political activity. So I asked both Fred Dutton and Elizabeth Smith -- now Mrs. Elizabeth Gatov -- for their support if President Kennedy were elected. If Jack Kennedy were elected, I asked for their support in being appointed to the South Pacific Commission. They both happily agreed to that and said they thought it was actually fortunate the Democratic party could be able to find somebody who was well qualified in a field like that who would be willing to serve.

So upon the election, I communicated with Libby Smith and Fred Dutton and reminded them of the interest I'd had in this position. And they said, yes, of course, they would be happy to suggest my appointment. And on August 11, 1961, I was appointed to the United States Commission in the South Pacific Commission for a term of two years by President Kennedy. The position was the second position on the United States delegation in the South Pacific Commission. By the peculiar nature of this body which was created in 1947, and which at the time of my appointment included the United States, the United

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Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.... Is that six? The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, that's six. By the peculiar charter called the Canberra Agreement, the body was composed of six voting commissioners called the senior commissioner -- translation from the French term of premier commissaire. And all decisions were made in the commission by vote of the senior commissioners. But there was always a second commissioner, and in the case of the United States a third commissioner.

The South Pacific Commission, as I say, was created in 1947, by act of these six governments taken in Canberra with the document deposited in the Australian archives in Canberra. It was the result of a conviction in the closing days of World War II among the political leadership in Australia, New Zealand, United States and Great Britain that the Pacific Islands could no longer remain a sleepy backwater of world population. There had been several million American and Allied troops in the area and certainly almost that many Japanese troops. Many islands had been completely inundated by troops whether peaceful troops without combat such as New Caledonia and Samoa, or the ones that were fought over bitterly, such as Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, Saipan, and Guam. So the political leaders felt

that in order to help the people of the non-self governing territories of the Pacific to make social, economic, and health advances, it would be desirable to have a common body where the governments could deal with the common problems of what they called then the non-self-governing territories of the Pacific. These were originally all islands below the equator. Subsequently, 1951, Guam and the trust territories, since they had very similar problems even though they were north of the equator, were added to the membership. A rough list of them would go as follows: Guam, trust territory, American Samoa, Western Samoa, Fiji, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, New Caledonia, and the New Hebrides. Tonga participated but did not formally join as a territory. Tonga was at the time a protected country with Great Britain as the protector.

Shortly after I became the United States commissioner, the country of Indonesia demanded from the Netherlands government the western half of New Guinea, so called West Irian. After some rather bitter diplomatic arguments with threat of warfare, threat of Indonesia attaching the Dutch to capture West Irian, the United States presided over a series of conferences which ended up with Holland agreeing to leave West Irian and turn it over to Indonesia with a promise that after ten years there would be an act of self determination. This decision was taken without consulting the people of West Irian. There was already a legislative assembly created

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by the Dutch, with native members. There was a strong local political movement and the native members, some of whom attended the South Pacific Commission meetings representing the territory of West New Guinea, were very bitter about this transfer to Indonesia without consulting them. They did not wish to go to Indonesia; they did not consider themselves racially which is, of course, ethnically, linguistically, religiously or in any way connected with Indonesia. And they are not, of course. They are Melanesian and they are ethnically identical with the natives of Papua, New Guinea, on the Australian side.

The action that was taken in encouraging the transfer to Indonesia was done with the active support of our State Department, and if I recall correctly, the State Department diplomat who was in charge of the final negotiations was Ellsworth Bunker and our present ambassador in Vietnam. I considered at the time that it was a great mistake from our standpoint, a negation of many of our commitments to self-government and self-determination to encourage the handing over of several million people or at least a million people in West Irian to the Indonesian government without consulting them as to their wishes. But it was a decision which was taken within our State Department and of which I do not know whether President Kennedy knew about it or not. But certainly it was a decision taken and effectuated, as I say, by negotiations presided over by Ambassador Bunker, and there was no attempt made to consult the people of the territory. And they are very bitter and remain very bitter about it. There is still a freedom movement for West Irians, presently headquartered in Holland, and I feel that sooner or later there will be difficulty in West Irian because the people of that area do not take kindly to the Indonesian government.

Indonesia has done very little for West Irian, in terms of education, including them in the government, setting up organs of self-government. They have, if anything, redacted the

amount of self-government and the amount of native participation in the government in West Irian below what it was when they took it over. There are some signs of improvement. Adam Malik, the foreign minister of Indonesia, has made a trip there and has publicly stated that he is personally appalled at the backwardness of the territory and the failure of the Indonesian government to encourage and assist in greater self-government. However, Indonesia has very serious financial problems left over from the Sukarno [Achmed Sukarno] administration and whether the new government can find the funds to implement a development program, economic and social, in West Irian is, in my opinion, debatable.

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OESTERLE: Is there an inside story on the reason behind the turnover of this area on the part of the United States?

SKINNER: To the best of my understanding, and I cannot at this point tell you exactly what I base it on, but I believe I recall this correctly as being the explanation given to me. The United States communicated with the Australian government and asked them: If the Netherlands resisted an Indonesian assault on West Irian, would Australia participate in the defense? In other words, if the Netherlands came to the United States and asked for help, the United States was not prepared to be the sole government helping the Netherlands defend West Irian. And they asked the Australians, and the Australians, I'm told, refused and said they were not prepared to send ships or troops to help defend West Irian against Indonesia. The new result of course was that very quickly they got Indonesia on their own border in New Guinea because, as you know, New Guinea is sliced down the center with the western half belonging to Indonesia and the eastern half being in Australian territory. Anyway, that was the explanation that was given to me, that the United States, before it decided whether or not to agree to the Dutch request, consulted with Australia, and when Australia said they would not contribute, the United States was unwilling to help defend alone.

As we look now back on six or eight years of activity in Vietnam, perhaps the decision was not a wrong one, but at the time I certainly felt that West Irian would have been better served by the Dutch continuing their program of rapid political and social development and then giving them the right of self-determination. I think it would have been more nearly in accord with our commitment to self-determination and self-government for peoples of the former colonies of the world.

To return to the South Pacific Commission. As I say, when this was transferred to Indonesia -- and I think this was roughly 1962. I think it was late 1962 that the transfer was made -- Netherlands withdrew from the South Pacific Commission. At the same time, the New Zealand territory of Western Samoa became independent and it applied for membership as a country in the South Pacific Commission. The independence of Western Samoa was a result of a statement made by the prime minister of New Zealand at the United Nations shortly after the war, saying that New Zealand promised to its colony, Western Samoa, that it would have independence within a few years. The story is told in New Zealand that the prime

minister was not very articulate and came from a labor background and that he meant to say self-government but he got his terms confused.

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In any case they made a commitment to independence, and they carried it out. Western Samoa, if you recall, historically had had some rather violent native uprisings and political movements against the New Zealand government, movements I think called the Mau, M-A-U, similar to the word used in Africa -- in Kenya I think. This had largely subsided, but still there was a strong desire for independence in Western Samoa and then it became independent, I believe, in January '62 or January '63." It's not vital. I can get it out of the yearbook if you want it. Otherwise....

OESTERLE: Let it go.

SKINNER: This required an amendment to the Canberra Agreement. And so the remaining five governments consulted through their embassies in the various capitals and agreed to adopt a so-called short amendment, or Western Samoan amendment, which provided that countries which had formerly been non-self-governing territories within the scope of the commission as set up in 1947, could join as full members. The United States government adopted this by executive action, deeming it as not necessary to go to the Senate. It would be an executive agreement rather than a treaty. Of course, in the Anglo-Saxon or in the English system, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, these things are done by the executive anyway and the executive and the legislative are combined, and so if the executive agrees to something, why the legislative approves it or the government falls.

In the case of France, this required action by the French parliament. And this was delayed for over a year which led to a great deal of bitterness on the part of Western Samoa. And the Western Samoan delegate at the session in the fall of '62, made a very bitter speech about the unwillingness of the major powers to recognize Western Samoa's right to full membership as a full partner at the table. Subsequently, France did adopt the amendment, and in 1963 Western Samoa did join the commission. Let's see, I.... Can you cut this off for a moment? [Interruption]

I found on checking my records that Western Samoa was seated in the commission for the first time in the second of October, 1964, which would indicate to me that it was.... Well, I see by my records that the Western Samoan amendment to the Canberra Agreement was signed by the other five nations in London in early October 1964. So I believe the bitter speech by the Western Samoan delegate, whose name was Laufo Meti, M-E-T-I....

OESTERLE: How do you spell his first name?

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SKINNER: Laufo. L-A-U-O-F-O. Interestingly enough, Laufo Meti's name is Mike

Meredith, but when Western Samoa became independent, all of the Samoans who had had English or American or Australian fathers and who carried the English name converted quickly to using the Samoan name which came from the mother's side. In any case, there had been considerable bitterness on the part of Lauofo Meti and the Western Samoans about the fact that we, the Metropolitan countries, were so delayed in adopting this amendment. The delay was primarily the French, and it was indicative of a French attitude toward the South Pacific Commission. All through my experience in the commission, the French had in almost every case been very rigid about the forms of activity, about the budget, about the selection of personnel. In every way they attempted to treat the South Pacific Commission very much as if it were one of their own governmental bodies.

However, as I say, Western Samoa joined in 1964. In 1968 Nauru became independent, the Republic of Nauru which had previously been an Australian trust territory from the United Nations. AND in 1969, Nauru was seated. So that the South Pacific Commission now consists of the five nations that I mentioned earlier, Western Samoa and Nauru, and with the independence of Fiji, achieved in October of this year, undoubtedly Fiji will become a member next October. And I anticipate that other countries will become members as they achieve independence. Tonga is now independent. It has not yet decided whether it will join the South Pacific Commission, but it does participate in its activities and in some ways has the best of all possible worlds because it doesn't have to contribute any money but it can have the technical work in the field of economic and social development and health development performed for them by the commission staff.

The South Pacific Commission's area of jurisdiction covers 20 percent of the earth's surface. Naturally, most of it water, but still is active in an area which is $\frac{1}{10}$ of the earth's surface and contains approximately 1/10 of 1 percent of the world's population. It's interesting for another major reason. It is the only definable geographic area of the world, easily definable geographic area of the world, with no communist influence or activity. There is not in the Pacific Island area, the Pacific Island region which the South Pacific Commission encompasses, a communist government, a communist political party, a communist newspaper or even an active communist -- recognizably communist led -- trade union. And perhaps as a matter of emphasis, this cannot be said about North America, South America, Africa, Europe or Asia. I've speculated at times on why this should be the case, and I

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think it is not an accident. It is certainly not for any lack of interest by the communist powers in this part of the world.

The Peking radio broadcasts directly to these islands; it's heard by people. I've heard the Peking radio in the islands; Soviet fishery vessels and research vessels ply these waters. A Soviet research vessel was tied up at the dock in Fiji recently when I was there. I think most people are aware that the Soviet government has had a spy ship three miles and 100 yards off the entrance to the harbor at Guam for the last five years. Its movements are so regular that it can be predicted by the people in Guam when it will be replaced by a reserve vessel so it can go back to port and get fuel and supplies. The Soviet embassy in New

Zealand regularly sends Soviet films and other propaganda material up to in Western Samoa. These films are shown in the Western Samoan Public Library.

There are numerous instances of young men who have been invited to study either in Red China or in Moscow: Two young men from the trust territory who were invited to Moscow, entered the Lumumba University and later came back. No one knows whether they came back of their own volition or whether they were ejected as not being adequate or good material.

There is in Moscow a Polynesian institute, I suppose the word polynesian is a rough translation but it would be essentially an institute which concentrates on Pacific island affairs. I've seen translations of some of their articles. They are the standard communist rhetoric, talking about "coffin nails of imperialism driven into the bodies of the Pacific islanders." I mention all this to say that the lack of communist activity or a communist presence in the Pacific island region is not, in my opinion, the result of any lack of interest on the part of the communist powers, and I think that they would jump at a chance to come into the Pacific. I'm able to attribute it only to a few favorable factors from the standpoint of the Western powers.

First, in the administration of these territories, there never was the kind of raw, naked exploitation that was found in Africa such as was exemplified in the development of the Belgian Congo by the Belgian government. There were instances for a while of the blackbirding recruitment of indentured labor for plantations in Queensland, and there were some abuses for a while with men being shanghai'd as sailors for ships in the Pacific. But, by and large, the abuses that the imperial powers, if we wish to call them that, exercised in Africa or Asia or South America were not found to any degree in the Pacific islands.

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Second, you have in the islands essentially a climate and an environment where, with any reasonable amount of work, the food is not short. On a subsistence economy basis; the food is not difficult to come by. In other words, the struggle for existence is not that harsh.

Third, you have a society, certainly in Polynesia and Micronesia, where cooperation among peoples was traditional and accepted and necessary for survival. And the chief system, the extended family, all of these things led to a closeness. So that I think anybody coming in to say that the people would agitate on behalf of a communist program would have great difficulty in getting followers. And I add to all this the fact that the western powers saw in the end of World War II that they did have a responsibility. But instead of trying to exercise it by saying, "This is what you should do, and we will do this to you; this is what's good for you," they created the South Pacific Commission. This allowed the islanders to see people from the western powers doing useful work which was helpful to them, work in fields of health, eradication of epidemics and plagues, quarantines, elimination of malaria, educational projects, insect control, all sorts of things that were essentially valuable to the people rather than an attempt to impose anything on them. I think this has contributed very materially to a better image for the western powers. I think also it can be said that...

[INTERRUPTION]

[TAPE I, SIDE II]

While the South Pacific Commission is not a political body and has no political authority, it still is symptomatic of an interest which has led the major powers with territories in the Pacific to develop and inaugurate constantly increasing measures of self-government. Many examples of this: the organic act of Guam, the civil government in American Samoa. Guam and the trust territory would be good examples because with that civil government came greatly increased powers for legislative bodies and precise procedures for electing legislatures. In the Cook Islands, New Zealand established a somewhat unique experiment by which the Cook Islands are autonomous; the Cook Islands elect their own legislature and their own chief of state, but the Cook Islands are within the New Zealand sovereignty. The Cook Islanders are citizens of both the Cook Islands and New Zealand and they have full local legislative power.

In New Guinea, the Australians have established a house of assembly with the majority being elected members as against the

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former British system whereby the majority were appointed members or official members. Gilbert and Ellice Islands have had a progressive increase in legislative authority for their legislative council. Fiji, in the last eight or ten years, has gone from a legislative council now recently with a majority of elected members. And now under independence their lower house will be completely elected; their upper house will be an appointed house, but appointed not by Great Britain, but appointed by terms set by the lower house to represent essentially the Fijian chiefs. I could give other examples. Even in the French territories legislative powers have increased and the rights of the islanders to elect their own people, to make their own decisions have increased rapidly.

So I feel that the lack of communist presence in the Pacific primary is because the western powers have handled it properly and have constantly encouraged self-government and inaugurated greatly increased measures of self-government. Whether these have resulted finally in independence as in the case of Fiji and Western Samoa or whether they have resulted in self-government within the framework of the metropolitan power as in the case of Guam and the Cook Islands, in either case, I think the ordinary Pacific Islander feels that he is very largely determining his own destiny, his own political destiny. And I think myself that there will be great difficulty for the communists to get a foothold in the Pacific.

The only possibility that I see for the communist to get a foothold is if one of the island territories, with very limited economic resources, is at some point denied an adequate financial support and assistance from the metropolitan power from which it formerly had jurisdiction. And at such time the political leadership is by chance antagonized by reason of some tactless handling of the problem in the metropolitan power, I can see the possibility that the Russians, with an emphasis on fisheries, could come into one of the newly independent countries and propose to establish a fishing industry for the country. And in return for establishing a fishing industry in the country, they could ask for the assignment of a port to

put their fishery vessels in, and their shore side activity and, in the process, establish a naval presence in the Pacific which they do not now have.

I have expressed these thoughts quite clearly to the members of the State Department during both the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations and I don't know whether they were impressed with it or not, but I think they understand my thesis. And I have, fortunately, a classic example to be able to give them. Some years ago Western Samoa wanted to develop a harbor on the island of Savaii,

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and the New Zealand government sponsored -- or more than that, more than sponsored -- the New Zealand government itself applied for a loan from the United Nations Development Fund and having secured the loan, turned it over to the Western Samoan government for harbor development. The harbor was to be developed, as I say, on Savaii, the big island, not the one that Apia is on. There's very little development there; it was also supposed to support a timber industry. The contract was let and the harbor facilities were all completed. But in the process, due possibly to inadequate engineering -- certainly the engineering was not properly studied -- all the harbor facilities were completed, but nobody cut a hole through the reef. So there was a beautiful harbor, dock, warehouse, et cetera; there was still a ten foot minimum draft over the reef to get into the harbor, which meant that all the big ships that the harbor was designed for couldn't get in.

About this same time, an American forestry company, Potlatch Forests [Inc.], contracted with the Western Samoan government to develop, on a perpetual yield basis, a forest industry on the island of Savaii. And as part of that activity surrounding that negotiation of that contract, they invited the then prime minister of Western Samoa Mata'afa [Fiamē Mata'afa Faumuina Mulinu'u II] to the United States to see the planes at Potlatch for industry.

OESTERLE: How do you spell his name?

SKINNER: Mata'afa, M-A-T-A' A-F-A. Mata'afa was brought to Washington partly at the insistence of the then governor of American Samoa, Rex Lee [H. Rex Lee], who had established and maintained very close relations with him because American Samoa is very close to Western Samoa and the families are all related. And in Washington, Mata'afa was entertained by the Interior Department; they borrowed the secretary of the navy's yacht and gave him a trip on the Potomac. And they took him over to the State Department where he had a conference with Mr. Solomon [Anthony M. Solomon], the author of the Solomon report, who was then at this time within the State Department as a director of economic development or some such title. Mr. Solomon conferred with him at length and very properly and kindly said, "I think you should meet our secretary of state, Mr. Rusk [Dean Rusk]." So Mata'afa, who was accompanied by his finance minister, Freddie Betham, said he would be glad to.

An appointment was quickly arranged and they went up to see Secretary Rusk who was very gracious and very happy to meet the prime minister of the newly independent Western Samoa. And as they

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were about to leave, in a very gracious manner Secretary Rusk said, "Now, Mr. Prime Minister, if there's anything we can do for you in the United States, please let us know. We'd like to make your stay here as comfortable and happy as possible." Whereupon Mata'afa said, "Yes, Mr. Secretary. We'd like \$750,00 to complete the harbor in Savaii." And the secretary, never having heard of the project before, and the briefing officer, never having heard of the project, the secretary trying to be courteous said, "Well tell us about it. What is it?" So he said, "Well, we have this harbor which is all been completed, but the American engineering firm that did the job didn't cut a hole through the reef and we think it'll take about \$500,000 to dredge a hole through the reef." So Secretary Rusk said, "Well, I don't know, but we certainly should have dredges in our government and let's see if we can't do this." So Mata'afa went on his way.

Secretary Rusk sent a note down through the department saying, "Call up the navy and borrow a dredge. Sent it over to Western Samoa. We'll do this little favor for this new country." The department went into a flap because the navy doesn't have any dredges. The army is the body that has dredges in this country. The navy, if they need a dredge, they rent one.

OESTERLE: Seabees don't have dredges either.

SKINNER: No. No. And the army's dredges are all sand sucking dredges for rivers, rivers and harbors. This is a very different kind of a dredge to cut a hole through a reef. So this went back up through the channels, "Mr. Secretary the navy doesn't have a dredge." The secretary sent back down through the channels, "Yes, but somebody in the government must have a dredge. Find a dredge." So, nobody could find a dredge. So finally in desperation the department sent a message, apparently on a Friday, a message to the embassy in Wellington recounting all this and saying, "Please go to see the New Zealand government and ask them if they can help. We are unable to help."

Well, with the dateline the message went out on Friday and could arrive in Wellington on Saturday. The officer on duty in the embassy in Wellington walked over to the foreign office with the message in his hand because it was a very detailed message, and he didn't know the details -- wasn't familiar -- and he wanted to be able to refer to it. But apparently he was unaware of the fact that the New Zealand government was very, very sensitive about the fact that Mata'afa had gone to the United States without consulting them.

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In the treaty between Western Samoa and New Zealand, signed at the time it became independent, New Zealand undertook to represent Western Samoa in foreign affairs on such

matters as it was requested to do, to carry out foreign affairs duties for them. They interpret that to mean that they will carry out all foreign affairs and, I know, that the New Zealand ambassador in Washington was very unhappy when he found that Mata'afa was coming to Washington without it being handled through him.

So anyway the New Zealand government was very, very sensitive about America's relations with Mr. Mata'afa. So apparently the Saturday officer on duty in the external affairs department in Wellington promptly messaged the New Zealand commissioner in Apia, saying "American government refuses appeal of Mata'afa for help on the harbor," whereupon the New Zealand commissioner in Apia, walked across the street to Mata'afa and in his polite easy said, "See, you so-and-so, this is what you get by going to the American government instead of coming to us."

All right, now Mata'afa's Polynesian sensibilities were seriously offended because to him the answer had come back not from the secretary of state but from the New Zealand commissioner in Apia. So just at that exact time, the *New York Times* correspondent for the South Pacific -- I believe it's Tillman Durdin, D-U-R-D-I-N -- was in Western Samoa, doing a story on the two Samoas. He went in to see Mata'afa. Mata'afa blew fire all over the place and said he had been turned down by the United States for this very simple necessary bit of aid and the United States certainly could afford, and he was going to go to Tokyo or Berlin for help, and if they wouldn't give it to him he was going to Peking or Moscow.

So Tillman Durdin wrote a story which the *New York Times* put in four columns way at the top of page seventy-one. The Australian, New Zealand reporters covering the United Nations -- men covering for the Australian, New Zealand papers -- really had very little to do, and then the papers down there aren't very interested in the average United Nations thing. Here was a big story. So they all filed big stories back to New Zealand whereupon New Zealand sent plane loads of correspondents up to Apia to investigate this great change in the attitude of Western Samoa, wanting to go to other countries than New Zealand or the United States for help.

In the meantime, there was a United Nations Development Fund group working in Apia who were doing useful work, organizing a furniture factory and various other little things. And in this group, as it happened, there were a number of Americans who were

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very much against the Vietnam War. Many Americans in international agencies were the initial group that had come out against the Vietnam War. So one of them apparently got ahold of Mata'afa and said, oh, he had a copy of a *U.S. News and World Report* which had taken the total cost of the Vietnam War so far and a total number of Viet Cong killed, and it said it was costing the United States \$40,000 per man to kill the Viet Cong or \$30,000 or whatever it was. So Mata'afa then told the correspondents in New Zealand that not only was he furious but, if the United States would think about it they'd realize that this was no less than the cost of killing twenty-five Viet Cong.

OESTERLE: The cost of an hour of warfare...

SKINNER: Yes, or something of that kind. So by that time it was a big flap and by this time everyone wanted to calm down. Well the United States did arrange to get some depth chargers dropped off there by a ship coming back from the Antarctic and everybody immediately put on the cooler. And actually in the case of Western Samoa which was a very, very strongly Christian country -- you know, very, very devout Protestant missionaries were there, they go to church twice on Sunday and it has all sorts of blue laws -- the chances of Western Samoa going to Moscow are in my opinion nil. But I tell the story as an example of how a few bad judgments, a little antagonism and a need for economic aid could lead to an agreement with Russia for a harbor and a fishery base.

And so, to come back to my basic theory, there is no communist presence in the Pacific at the present time. I think all the elements are favorable to the western powers for the series of reasons I've mentioned. I should add one more. I think that the fact that in most of the Pacific Island areas the Christian church is very, very strong and they are perhaps more devout in their worship than in the average metropolitan countries that initially settled them or initially took them over and administered them.

OESTERLE: Would you also include the factor of the strategic trust as opposed to a trust territory in terms of the United States administration, especially under navy keeping other powers away from the Carolines, the Marshalls, the Marianas?

SKINNER: Yes. I'd be glad to touch on it. I don't think it affects my basic thesis because I don't think that in all the other areas the communists ever have been

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frustrated by the trusteeship concept. But it is true that in what we call the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which is the Micronesian area less two small outposts -- the Gilbert Islands and Nauru -- that because it's a strategic trust, granted by the United Nations Security Council rather than by the Trusteeship Council, it has been possible for the United States government to keep other nationals out. However, it didn't prevent several trust territory young men from going to Moscow. Thus they were outside the trust territory. But it has kept the communists out, given the right to keep them out.

Now the Australian trust territory of New Guinea is not a strategic trust. Their award stems from the Trusteeship Council; the trusteeship for Nauru, while it was in existence, also came through the Trusteeship Council. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Micronesian Islands which are administered by the United States is to my knowledge the only strategic trust, the only one awarded by the Security Council.

I told this story to give a little bit of credit to the South Pacific Commission for maintaining the climate with which I think the islands and the island leadership have been friendly to the western powers, including the United States.

I would now like to take up a phase of my own participation in the South Pacific Commission bearing on, I think, the American interest. Starting very early and with the help

of the State Department desk officer assigned to the South Pacific Commission delegation of the United States, Miss Frances McReynolds, I began to concentrate on measures to increase the participation of the island people. When I first went on the commission, the commissioners representing the six major powers made all the decisions and adopted the work program, decided what would be done in each territory. There was, every three years, a South Pacific conference composed of representatives of the individual territories who had come together for several weeks of discussion. I participated in one of these in 1962 in American Samoa and came to the conclusion that it was little better than an international folk music festival; that the discussions were desultory; they were not serious; they were not deep. They were discussions in very broad terms by people who were interested in problems to a greater or lesser extent, but with no experts and no conclusions being reached which could be implemented. And I felt that if this continued, it would tend to become an irresponsible representative assembly with no functions except general discussion which could lead to one of two things: either dying completely and therefore losing the value of participation of territories as territories, or becoming a forum for very

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irresponsible, even demagogic political declarations. So I took the lead in urging that the conference of territorial delegates be given the authority and the responsibility for adopting the work program which was all of the basic activity of the South Pacific Commission, all of the projects that we've been discussing.

It moved slowly, but in 1965 at the conference in Lae, New Guinea, we were able to get the conference to establish a so-called work program committee with one member from each territory, which acted on the budget and recommended to the commission what should be done. By 1966, we had converted the conference into an annual meeting which met before the commission meeting, and by, in effect, the voluntary act of the commissioners themselves, we assigned to them the function of adopting the work program, decided what the program would be, and committed ourselves to adopt it exactly as they adopted it. The French again declined to make a formal commitment of that but informally indicated that they would go along if the other five or six members did.

Representing the United States, I spoke to the commission and to the conference and said that they United States considered that the primary value of the commission to American territories and the United States as a whole lay not in the specific work program but in the fact that it was a forum whereby the American territories and the other territories of the Pacific came together and discussed common needs, and the United States was able to understand what the common needs were and participate in helping to solve them, and that as far as the United States was concerned, it would adopt verbatim, without change, exactly the recommendation of the conference. And again I say this was a policy which I communicated to the State Department, but I wouldn't say that; in fact I'd say quite clearly that they did not give it to me. It was my policy. I gave it to them. But fortunately I feel that I had strong interest and strong support from the State Department officers assigned to this problem.

The commission, as I say, in '66 shifted its program so that the conference met annually and adopted the work programs. And I'd say each year until my last year of '69, this

became more and more effective. And also there was an additional derivative benefit. The representatives of territories over these years rapidly became the political leaders of the territories. In other words, the prime minister of the Cooks, Mr. Albert Henry, the chief minister of Fiji, Ratu K.K.T. Mara, the chief legislative officer of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Reuben K. Uatiao, the representatives of the Guam legislature, of American Samoa and of the parliament in Western Samoa. All of them began to represent their territories and the conferences became actually a meeting. I hate to say the word summit because

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there was no reason for a summit, but became an annual meeting in which the political leaders of all the territories of the Pacific spent several weeks together, got to know each other, had a chance informally to discuss their common problems and to find areas in which they could cooperate certainly economically, and socially, and perhaps politically. No political decisions were reached, but it certainly was possible with the friendship established and the basis for a common meeting ground which the conference provided. I did not attend the conference this year because my term had expired as of June 30 this year, but it was held in Fiji and I am informed that again the territories all sent their senior political leadership. This is true of New Guinea also. In this respect, I think the South Pacific commission has given, therefore, an additional service both to the United States and the peoples of the area and providing this forum for the territorial leadership to meet each other and to exchange views.

I'd say one additional benefit to them, perhaps more than United states, is that it served as somewhat of a parliamentary training ground for some of these leaders who, well they were on their own islands, had had little chance to see parliamentary procedures -- Debates, in the resolutions, and motions, and adoption of motions and amendments -- to see how it works. And I was told by a number of the leaders that they felt that this was of great value to them to see how it was handled by the other territories. The chairmanship of the commission rotates among the member governments. I was the chairman in 1964 and I was the chairman again in 1969. The chairman, of course, has authority primarily during the session of the commission although he has certain additional duties if some crisis were to arise during the year until the next chairman is appointed or is elected, or I shouldn't say elected, takes office.

OESTERLE: Would you include a typhoon for instance?

SKINNER: No, not so much, but if there were a major breakdown, say the Secretary General were to die and you'd have to have authority to appoint an interim secretary general. The chairman who had served in the proceeding commission meeting would be responsible for taking action and getting the other countries to agree and appointing the interim Secretary General.

OESTERLE: How about if a type of National Emergency were declared, a health epidemic?

SKINNER: No. that would tend to be a political responsibility. The functions of the commission are very clearly limited to the activity of the commission itself.

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The commission, as I may have said earlier, is.... no, I should go back. I said I was appointed as U.S. commissioner in the summer of 1961. At that time the senior commissioner was an appointee of the Eisenhower Administration, Dean Knowles Ryerson, former dean of the Davis Campus of the University of California and former dean of Agriculture for the entire University. His term expired in '63, and President Kennedy appointed a former colleague of his in the senate, a senator from Hawaii who had been a governor of Hawaii when it was a territory named Oren E. Long, Oren Long had been governor of Hawaii while I had been governor of Guam and was a good friend of mine. I had urged his appointment on President Kennedy, and Kennedy was glad to appoint a former colleague, as presidents who have served in the Senate usually like to appoint former colleagues. Oren Long came to one meeting, the meeting in the fall of 1963, but he was not well at all, really a little bit feeble and quite sick most of the time. And so during the year 1964, he informed me that he didn't feel that he could go to the 1964 session, particularly with the responsibility of the United States being in the chair, so he resigned. By that time of course, Lyndon Johnson was president. And on October 1st, 1964, a few days before I had to leave for the meeting, President Johnson appointed me as senior United States commissioner.

I started to say the commission is headquartered in Nouméa, New Caledonia On grounds which are originally a command headquarters for the US Army in that part of the Pacific during World War II. The building is sometimes called the Pentagon even though it's octagonal in shape. And it is rapidly deteriorating because it was built as a temporary wooden structure and it has problems with termites and rot and so forth. The building was given to the French government after the war and when it was then assigned as the headquarters of the South Pacific Commission. The French government sold it to the member governments of the South Pacific commission with payments required each year to the French government for purchase of the building and grounds. I never researched the project completely but it always seems amusing that we should have to pay for something that's originally been built by the American government anyway. However it could well be that the French government did some restoration before the South Pacific commission moved in.

The commission has about 100 employees, technical experts largely. They are from essentially an international civil service. Very few Americans serve on it because the salary scale is geared to the salary scale in Australia and New Zealand. Some of the programs that it's had have been very effective; One of them is teaching English as a second language because all through the Pacific except for the French Polynesia, New Hebrides, and New Caledonia, people first become

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articulate in their own native dialect, but in order to be able to be educated and have any future at all, they must have a second language which in these other territories is English. So some excellent work has been done on textbooks and methods of teaching English to islanders.

There are other programs that we mentioned earlier -- insect control. There's a very serious pest for the coconut plants for the South Pacific called the rhinoceros beetle, so-called because it has a lump on its nose somewhat like a rhinoceros horn. This has been a five or six year program and it appears to be making good progress. Studies have been conducted in Western Samoa with a large staff there. And in recent years, the trees in Western Samoa have begun to look much, much better and much stronger in the incidence of the disease has declined greatly. We have not been able to prove exactly which of the projects of the rhinoceros beetle control program was a successful one, but since the work is all done in Samoa and the trees are improving in Samoa, we think it was proper to take credit for the improvement. They have programs in health education, programs in dental care, economic surveys are made by staff economists... [Inaudible]

The commission I think can probably be said to have been a very valuable and effective body. some of the programs have been phased out as territories have begun to take over themselves. It's to some degree been a series of pilot projects. I think the commission will continue in existence, but I think it's nature will change in the next few years, primarily because the territories feel that they want more say. Even though they now determine the work program, they want more say in the entire commission. and I think there will undoubtedly have to be a renegotiation of the Canberra Agreement to give territories full say.

It's a problem for the United States and that under our constitution in the Constitutional interpretation by our Supreme court, we cannot have a representative of a territory with the same equal voting rights as the representative of the United States itself. In other words, if you have a body in which there were Commissioners from the United States, one from Guam, one from Samoa, and one from the trust territory, obviously the three island representatives could out vote the United States Representative. And in our various investigations as to how we can increase the territorial participation, it's been frequently suggested that they be given the full power to sit at the same table and equal voting rights with the metropolitan powers, but our lawyers in the State Department have always concluded that this is impossible under

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our form of government. it's led to some hard feelings.

In 1965 and 1966, Ratu Mara in Fiji made several very emotional speeches, saying, "At the United Nations you sit down at the same table with, and vote equally with, people from countries of far less education, far less ability to govern themselves, far less sincerity than the Pacific Islanders and yet you refuse to sit down on an equal basis with us. " Explanations of the Constitutional limitations don't get very far with that kind of an argument. Mara has solved his own problem by becoming independent, by leading Fiji into independence, although it's independence is with the customary British twist in which while they're independent they still have the same queen, legal court cases can finally go up to the

privy Council in London -- a few other things like that which to me make it really a self-government just like Guam. But it is true that Fiji is now independent. Instead of having a British governor, you have a Fijian governor general who is a Britisher. He's the same man who is the governor before but now he represents Fiji.

Oh, let me say about conferences with the State Department. Since I was living in San Francisco it was not easy to have frequent conferences, but I would, whenever I had reason to be in Washington, take a half a day or a day and go into the State Department and I would meet with and discuss the basic problem of the Pacific usually with the head of the Far Eastern Department. I did have two meetings with Secretary Rusk while he was Secretary of State, on both of which I found him well informed on the Pacific, thoroughly sympathetic with the American program in the participation in the South Pacific Commission, and determined that America's activity in the Pacific be increased rather than decreased. He was keenly aware of the need for increasing self-government the Pacific territories and he was certainly well aware and spoke to me about the value of increasing measures of self-government as a means of maintaining an American influence in the Pacific.

OESTERLE: Was there any change between the 50s and the 60s with the new Administration in terms of its design and hopes for the Pacific, especially in light of Defense Department interests and contrast with Interior and State Department?

SKINNER: Yes. While I was not privy to the internal policy statements during the Eisenhower period, I think it could be very easily deduced what they were. The Eisenhower Administration and the Interior Department in that Administration viewed the Pacific Islands as a backwater, one of minor importance and one that could be treated, well, could be ignored, unfortunately.

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Certainly in terms of the trust territory of the Pacific Islands, they did ignore it. The budget to the trust territory during the entire period of the Eisenhower Administration was \$6 million maximum, and then High Commissioner took great pride in returning part of that to the Treasury each year.

OESTERLE: Who is the high commissioner? Was it Goding [M. Wilfred Goding]?

SKINNER: No, Gooding was appointed by Kennedy, but Delmas H. Nucker was a High Commissioner for most of the Eisenhower administration. He came out of the Interior Department. He had been Chief Clerk of the Alaska Railroad and then in, I guess either during the war just after it, he came to Washington as a business manager of the Office of Territories from which post he went out as an assistant High Commissioner to a man named Frank Midkiff who was a Hawaiian businessman who had been appointed by Eisenhower at one point. Nuclear was very proud of the fact that he was able to operate the trust territory unless than 6 million dollars.

During this period, it was a thesis of the Interior Department and the trust territory government that the education in the trust territory should follow the pattern of the United States in that primary and secondary education should be the responsibility of the local community in that they, the islanders, should build the school building, provide the teachers, provide the books and equipment. The net result of this was that say, an island with a thousand people and with 500 children of school age perhaps, they would be expected to build a new modern school, find the teacher somewhere, hire them, and have them prepare these children for high school or for college. It was absolutely ridiculous when the total cash income of a thousand inhabitants might have been less than \$10,000 a year -- \$5,000 a year might be the total cash income. At the present time this Administration is spending about \$60 million a year in the trust territory, and I'm certain that will increase.

OESTERLE: This started increasing during the Kennedy administration.

SKINNER: Yes. The Kennedy administration was very concerned about the trust territory. I think I may have had something to do with that because as soon as Kennedy was elected I undertook to get in touch with the Secretary of Interior as soon as he was appointed. Several days after he was appointed, I telephoned him in Phoenix, Arizona -- This was Secretary Udall [Stewart L. Udall], who'd been a member of the House of Representatives, from Arizona --

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and asked if I could see him in Washington because I was very concerned about the trust territory. I felt it had been badly neglected during the Eisenhower administration, that we were going to have troubles there. When I say troubles, I mean that the people had not had a chance to develop adequately. And I didn't at that time foresee political troubles, but I did foresee serious economic troubles in trying to get them to be able to support themselves in any kind of economic activity. There was a gradual increase in Appropriations during the Kennedy administration.

The appointments of people were perhaps a result of my going to see Secretary Udall. because when I went to see him about the trust territory I took Ernest Gruening [Senator from Alaska] and Oren Long -- Oren Long was still then a senator from Hawaii -- down because they had both been Governors and I had been governor of Guam and they were both now senators. and I felt they could reinforce and they both, I knew, shared my views about the trust territory. But Secretary Udall was concerned then about whom he would recommend the president as governor of Guam and felt he was under obligation -- that President Kennedy had made a commitment, or Bobby Kennedy had made a commitment during the campaign to appoint one William Daniel, who was the brother of the, let's see, the senator from Texas, Price Daniel.

Udall did not want to appoint Daniel seeing that a Texas rancher and businessman, particularly from a former slave owning portion of the state of Texas, was not the ideal candidate to send to be the governor of an area of different race and color. He asked me for a recommendation for director of the Office of Territories, feeling that if he put a Guamanian

in as a director of territories, it might mitigate the feeling aroused by the appointment of Daniel. I recommended to him Richard Taitano who had been my Director of Finance when I was in Guam; he was still Director of Finance even after the Republican administration. And Taitano was appointed and served as director of territories for about 3 years -- 3 or 4 years.

In the process, one Will Goding, who had wanted to be director in the office of territories did not get the post and he was subsequently sent out as High Commissioner of the trust territory. I think that was how he happened to be selected as high commissioner. He had been in the office of territories in the Alaska branch, and had strong support from the Alaska Senators for position in the new Administration and had wanted to become director of territories, but when that post was filled by the Guamanian, he was sent out to the trust territory. I felt that Will Goding did a good, very thorough, workman-like job. I think that it was somewhat lacking and Imagination mostly because he'd had 20, 25 years in

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the civil service in the federal government and that he tended to assume that everything could be handled the way it was in Washington, that he would have the availability of support in his government from experienced people.

Unfortunately, when you're administering a project overseas for the United States government, you cannot assume that you will have a fully competent staff. We don't have a colonial service in some ways it's good that we don't, because it puts a premium, in my opinion, on developing self-government and developing a local government, rather than bringing in expatriates. The British and French, with their colonial services, put a premium on continuing the trained colonial servant: first, because he was more efficient than a local man; second, because the governor or the senior administrator had always appointed people that way and it never would occur to him that he should appoint a local man. Our system, without having a colonial service, picking up people here and there, a lot of us put emphasis on replacing expatriates with local appointees and certainly that facilitated my service in Guam a great deal. By the time I finished my term of office in Guam, more than half of my department heads were Guamanians.

One of the difficulties that I have seen in the trust territory recently is that 20 years later, in the trust territory still not half of the department heads are Micronesian. Actually not quite 20 years -- let's see 1953 -- 17 years later. There are competent Micronesians and they could very well be heading departments in the trust territory government. But only now with the administration of Ed Johnson [Edward E Johnson], appointed by President Nixon as it happens, is progress being made in this respect. But as we said, the appropriations began to rise under Kennedy and still more under Johnson, and I think by the time of the end of the Johnson Administration it was up in the neighborhood of \$25 million, \$30 million.

The High Commissioner appointed in the Kennedy administration was Will Goding. As I say, I think he was very hard-working and I think he was an able man. I think if he suffered, if he had difficulties, they were primarily because he didn't have adequate staff around him and did not immediately recognize the need to develop local people or find strong support outside the Civil Service system, outside what was available to him in the civil service system.

He was succeeded by William Norwood about 1966 or 1967. Norwood had been director of administration for the state of Hawaii and was a political associate of Governor John Burns. Norwood was an extremely well liked administrator, probably still is the best liked

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of the high commissioners. He was slow to make a decision, maybe for perfectly good reasons, but the result was that many things did hang fire and were not decided unless they were decided at a lower level on purely administrative grounds. But Norwood did expand the powers and the authority of the Congress of Micronesia and he laid the groundwork for the present level of economic activity.

He commissioned two surveys I think were very important. One was the Robert Nathan economic survey, and the other was a planning survey, developing a master plan for governmental infrastructure and all the islands: a master plan not only for the governmental services but also for locations for private development. Both of them were absolutely essential I think and valuable.

Now there was at the time that Goding was High Commissioner in that Taitano was director of territories, there was a special commission set up -- I believe my direction of President Kennedy, certainly the White House staff devoted a lot of time to setting it up -- in the head of it was a Harvard [University] lecturer named Solomon. I call him a lecturer because I believe he told me that he lectured there, but he was also in business and was not a full-time member of the faculty. Solomon assembled a group of experts in various categories and spent, I think, several months touring the territory and making studies. his report was never released. I read the report and I think I would concur and not releasing it because it was a report made without any consideration of the needs or interests of the U.S. Congressional committees. I believe Solomon made no effort to get Congressional committee representation on his Commission. I think he viewed it as a solely executive function. I would say this is his major mistake. When I say Congressional committees, I'm speaking of the House Interior Affairs committee [House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs] and the Senate Interior Affairs committee [Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs].

It is not generally realized except by people, perhaps even people who have been Chief Executives for the territory, how directly and how intimately the two congressional committees involve themselves in the work of the territories. I think that perhaps more than any other legislative committee, the two interior affairs committees involve themselves in the internal details of administration of our territories.

I've wondered sometimes; I've tried to figure out why they would take that detailed interest and I've concluded that it's a long tradition in the Congress going back to the fact that roughly you

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could say that out of the 50 states in the country, 37 were once territories. Obviously somewhere like the Northwest Territory where one territory became more than one state. But

the 37 states were once territories or parts of territories. As they came in the Union, they changed the voting structure In the United States Congress, changed the power structure in the whole country. As a result, the United States Congress was always very much involved, very much interested in territorial development because it was leading to a political development which would become a state which would then change the voting power in the United States in which can of course, change the whole course of the United States. All we have to look at is the Kansas-Nebraska Compromise and the various admission of states, territories as either slave states or free states to recognize the intense feelings that the Congress had about territories coming into the Union.

In recent memory, we can recall that it took Alaska and Hawaii something like 8 or 10 years of concentrated lobbying, pressure, agitation, applications to become states. And these are major political battles one when they finally became states. And there was a reason too because we've had the Civil Rights program, the whole problem of desegregation. And obviously when Hawaii came in that was two Senate votes for civil rights in the Southern states which had had power in the senate, with the admission of Hawaii certainly their power was a little less.

And you take a frontier State like Alaska, well it doesn't have a racially mixed population, still as a frontier state it is much more likely to be for civil rights than one of the older states. So, I believe that Congress has always been deeply interested in territorial problems. And I can say right now that the problem of the plebiscite and the trust territory and the determination of the political future of the trust territory cannot be solved until, in my opinion, until the Congressional committees involve themselves in it and until there are negotiations in which the Congressional committee chairman or people authorized to speak for the chairman of the committee and for the majority of the committee can participate. I say that for two reasons: one, I don't think that the Senate or the House will act on a political decision for the trust territory unless these two committees recommended. The Senate and the House are very quick to turn any problem affecting a territory over to those two committees.

As a matter of fact, there's a tiny problem with the South Pacific Commission; we have a legislative ceiling on what the United States can appropriate. several times I had to go up to the Hill

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to defend an increase in the ceiling. and I found that even though I appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House [House Foreign Affairs Committee] and even though the matter came up before the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate [Senate Foreign Relations Committee], that in both cases those committees acted only after Consulting with the chairman of the Interior Affairs committee.

Now I say that I think no decision can be taken for the trust territory until these committees involve themselves. I say it from two sides: one, because the Senate and the House will not act without a recommendation from those committees; the other reason being a little more subtle, that the leadership of the Congress of Micronesia, I do not believe, will arrive at a final commitment of what it will agree to take to the people of Micronesia until it has dealt with the representative of the Committees of Congress. My reasoning on this is that

they are very knowledgeable political leaders and they know very well that if they make an agreement with representatives of the executive branch of the federal government, that that is a lower level; they must still go and make an agreement with the Congressional committee. And they're knowledgeable enough to realize that they can be whittled down if they make an agreement at one level -- like a business negotiation -- if it has to be taken up with another body they can be very well, and the second body say, "Well no, we don't agree to this." So in my opinion we will not get anywhere with determining the future political status of the trust territory until we have a responsible discussion between leaders of the Congress of Micronesia and members or representatives of the two congressional committees in Washington.

OESTERLE: Was the Solomon Commission Report shared with either of the Congressional committees?

SKINNER: I cannot answer whether it was or not. But if you remember, the Solomon Commission Report recommended that the trust territory become an autonomous state or an autonomous territory and that it have an elected chief of state with a High Commissioner appointed by the president of the United States who would exercise certain Broad authority. The reason I say I think that this was done without consulting the members of the Congress -- at that time, I'm certain that the leaders of the House and the Senate, among them Representative Aspinall [Wayne N. Aspinall], Representative Saylor [John P. Saylor], Senator Jackson [Henry M. Jackson], I believe Senator Allott [Gordon Allott] was a senator then -- the senior man on either side would in my opinion have never agreed to this within the American structure of government. this is a pattern which was established

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for the Philippines when the Philippines were to become independent, and they would have seen this as a commitment to independence.

I think times have changed in political developments have come much more rapidly since the Solomon report. Whether such a program could be improved now or not, I could not say. But I did, on reading the report at the time, have the feeling that the congressional committees would have been very angry about it and would have refused to give it any support. As to whether that's the reason it was never released I can't say. I had assumed that was the reason, but I was never so informed officially.

OESTERLE: Another factor might have been that it was prepared for the President and reached him, I guess, about the time of the assassination. And consequently, perhaps there was no one that felt that they had the authority to release a report that was prepared for the president of the United States.

SKINNER: That's very possible. It came up through the Interior Department in the sense that John Carver who was then assistant secretary for Public Land

[Management] which included territories, and I think he felt that the report went beyond what he would be able to persuade the congressional committees to support, and it could well be that Interior asked that it not be released. I had no more involvement. As I say, I met with Solomon for about three or four hours at the Harvard Club in New York before he went out on this assignment, and later in the Interior Department I was given a copy of the report to read. But I never discussed it after it was finished, and I don't believe I ever discussed it with Dick Taitano who did participate as a member of the Solomon Committee.

OESTERLE: Were you aware of any controversy or conflict between branches of the American government in regard to the future of the trust territory?

SKINNER: Yes. I think the State Department, which had responsibility for reporting on trust territory in the United Nations, frequently felt, or certainly officials at the State Department frequently felt that Interior was moving too slowly on this. I think Interior felt that the State Department didn't understand the responsibility to the Congressional committees. I interpret the difference of agreement basically around those two things. I know one time I was in Washington and was taken over to the White House for a meeting on this subject and was asked if I would accept an appointment in the White House as the coordinator of trust territory programs, and I said I could not.

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OESTERLE: Was there ever such a position?

SKINNER: No. This was a, what you might call a brainstorm. I forget who the young man was, or the staff member who is working on it. but it wasn't in the sense of an offer; it was just saying colon we ought to have such a post and if we did we ought to put somebody in it like you.

OESTERLE: This was under Kennedy?

SKINNER: Yes, in the Kennedy period. and I suppose my objection partly was that I was aware of the problems of working with the Congress on the Hill. Second, These posts are difficult in the sense that the authority is never, can never be clearly defined, and you find yourself working on a project and the governor or the High Commissioner is working another way, in the Secretary of Interior and the Director of the Office of Territories is working another way. I, perhaps for my own experience, have more concern about the Congressional committee problem than many people would. and I suppose that if the president had chosen to fund such an office and issued proper executive orders, it could have worked. But I didn't feel that I wanted to take it on at that time. Again, it would have been similar to my accepting a governorship; I would have had to leave my private business and I didn't feel I was in a position to do so.

OESTERLE: That does seem to represent an extraordinary interest on the part of President Kennedy and or at least some of his staff members with regard to the trust territory.

SKINNER: Yes. It's my understanding that President Kennedy asked the National Security Council to make a special study of the problem. There is a National Security Council paper from his administration on this. And whether those files are available to you or not, I don't know. But my recollection is that about the same time that the White House began to be interested in creating a special office to be responsible for the trust territory there was also a National Security Council study.

OESTERLE: One other extraordinary action during this period was that Congress authorized the Peace Corps to go into Micronesia and Micronesia not being a foreign country.

[INTERRUPTION]

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[TAPE II, SIDE I]

OESTERLE: Governor Skinner, how did the Peace Corps first become involved in Micronesia this was the Johnson administration, I believe.

SKINNER: Yes. There had been for some time suggestions by the Peace Corps and by the State Department I think, and by others perhaps not in government, that the Peace Corps could be very effective in social and economic development in the trust territory. It had not been a sign there because the Peace Corps was created to serve in foreign countries and it had no authority to serve within the United States.

As you recall, they created one or more separate bodies -- VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America], and others to serve in the United States. I can't give you the precise dates but roughly about 1966, the Secretary of the Interior, Udall, Agreed with the director of the Peace Corps, who at the time would be Sargent Shriver, Was it not? To accept Peace Corps volunteers in the trust territory for a variety of programs. The quantity of Peace Corps assigned was phenomenally large. I think it was estimated that if the same number of Peace Corps per capita were assigned to India, there would have been 4 million Peace Corps in India. In any case, the initial program was around 800 Peace Corps for a population of about 80,000, 800 to 1,000 Peace Corps for probably about 80,000.

The Peace Corps went in in a number of things; they provided very major support in the educational system in terms of providing teachers particularly in the small outer islands where the children had never had adequate English instruction. Some of the Peace Corps volunteers, particularly the husbands and wives, did a marvelous job. Not only did they teach school, but they were also engaged in community development, organize clubs, sewing

classes, hygiene classes. The men built causeways, built latrines, all sorts of things for which the local people either were not skilled or they were lacking certain simple things like concrete or cement forms or something else.

In some other fields, the Peace Corps has what many people feel is a very questionable record. The Peace Corps volunteers who went there felt, particularly in the trust territory, that they need not be bound by the requirement, that when they were in foreign countries, not to involve themselves in the local politics. And very quickly they began to involve themselves in local politics and to try to

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influence the decisions of the Micronesians. This was both in the district centers, in the outer islands, and the district legislatures, village councils and in the Congress of Micronesia.

OESTERLE: Do you remember any specific examples of ways in which...

SKINNER: Yes. I remember in Yap, a Peace Corps volunteer persuaded an island Council to pass a resolution prohibiting tourists including the district administrator. It was a somewhat misguided effort to protect the Yapese culture. But certainly these Peace Corps Volunteers in Yap have involved themselves in very strongly in trying to persuade the Yapese to go very slowly on tourism. It wasn't very difficult because it's the most conservative of all the cultures anyways. but that's one example; there are others.

The Peace Corps staffs the Congress of Micronesia, and as with Congressional staffs everywhere they very quickly began to write all the speeches. I myself think that a lot of the speeches on behalf of Independence or free association, particularly those which are critical of the United States, are the result of Peace Corps composition -- Peace Corps staff workers. By 1968 and 1969, and 1970, the Peace Corps contained a great many men, men and women who are very critical of the United States policy abroad, particularly the Vietnam War, and who are quite articulate about pointing out abuses, feeling that they were very serious racial discriminations in this country. And they were not at all hesitant to point out to the Micronesian leadership that there were weaknesses and mistakes in their opinion in the American policy and the American administration. In fact, I think it could fairly be said that the majority of the Peace Corps really didn't like their own country -- the ones that I've run into and the trust territory -- and that dislike for their own country was passed on very quickly to the Micronesian leadership.

OESTERLE: Many of the Peace Corps volunteers also started District newspapers and I guess this provided a platform for criticism of trust territory or United States Administration policies.

SKINNER: Yes. Add to that fact that the Peace Corps, not being skilled in government necessarily, would seem mistakes, bureaucratic mistakes,

failures, and were not particularly concerned with the fact that in order to build a power plant or a harbor or a road, that first the Public Works officer had to drop up the project; then he had to put it in the budget, and the budget had to go for approval. then it had to go back to Washington to be adopted by the US budget Bureau; then

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it had to go to the Congress and be voted by the Appropriations Committee. All he could see was that here it was, 15, 18 years after World War II and we still didn't have an adequate road from the village to the reservoir, or we still didn't have an adequate power plant.

So they were very vocal and they stimulated a great deal of the criticism, the result being, as I say, I think that the Peace Corps has been a mixed blessing or a mixed curse, whichever you want to call it. Some of them are very fine, devoted, as I say, particularly the ones who worked in the small outer islands. The ones I think who worked around the district headquarters tended to be irresponsible critics of the administration. and I don't say that the administration didn't deserve to be criticized; obviously it did because in many ways it did have deficiencies and weaknesses. But I think on the whole the job was made more difficult for the trust territory government by reason of these Peace Corps criticisms and complaints.

OESTERLE: Are you aware of any meetings between trust territory administrators and Peace Corps administrators attempting to deal with this problem?

SKINNER: Yes, I know there were such and that the Peace Corps administrators, I think, made a very honest and sincere effort to stay strictly within their volunteer function or their assistance function. But the volunteers, by the nature of the peace corps, we're not controllable by administrators. They were not paid a full salary. They were expected to perform out of enthusiasm. I think maybe that in itself may be one of the mistakes because the people who were sent out were not screened or selected for stability or for experience in working in a multiracial situation. They were selected primarily because of their enthusiasm and their willingness to serve and the fact that they happen to have a skill that was needed such as teaching or law or architecture. I think you'll find that the similar schemes in other countries of the Peace corps, there have been much more careful selection, both in the French overseas volunteer program, in the Australian aid program, the British volunteer program. They're much smaller but the people have been selected with much greater care.

At this point, I think, this calls attention to one of the problems of administration in the Pacific Islands for the United States which is this whole question of working in a multiracial situation. Partly it's a question of discrimination in the sense that if you get an American who comes from a background where racial

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discrimination is natural to him, no matter how well meaning he may be on the surface, sooner or later his spontaneous reaction will reveal a feeling of superiority. And once that

feeling of superiority has been revealed, his effectiveness is very minor. The Micronesians and Polynesians, in my opinion, are very, very sensitive to this. They recognize almost immediately a slight or a slur based on the brown skin. Maybe it makes no reference to color; it may merely be to qualifications. But they can very quickly tell if the qualification argument is being used as a way of saying: you're a brown skin man and therefore you can never qualify for things that white skin men can qualify for.

So I say that it's always been, I think, a problem in the United States with our commitment, our moral commitment to non-discrimination, to have people coming out of a discriminatory background, frequently not even realizing it themselves, but in some situations instinctively or spontaneously reacting in a way which shows that they feel superior. Now when I mention this I don't say that the Peace Corps had a lot of these; I'm sure it had some. but I say that it exists in any form of overseas Administration by the United States, and it's why again I think the overseas Administration deserves to be screened, both the Peace Corps and the non-Peace Corps, very carefully on this whole issue of feelings of superiority or feelings of racial inferiority.

The Peace Corps, I think I started to say, result I think on the whole has been beneficial in terms of educational, and economic, and social development. I think it's been harmful in political development in the sense that people who are not politically experienced, were not politically knowledgeable, were offering opinions on political matters and stimulating and encouraging political positions without really fully realizing the effect on the people themselves, let alone the United States. Perhaps a very simple explanation would be, on the one hand, the United States is investing very large sums in educational programs and in a health program in the trust territory, according to the American commitment of free education for every child through high school with assistance through college, and of the same level of education anywhere else in the United states; That's costing \$20, \$25 million of the \$60 million. It's also fostering a health program in which every trust territory citizen has access to a first class hospital and has Medical Care available.

Now, you cannot separate the economic reality from the political reality when a man with no, with very little

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political and economic experience urges people to be independent and fails to point out that in taking on independence they take on also the support of a high level of education and healthcare in a community which has almost no resources or very few resources, they are, in effect, encouraging them to do something very irresponsible. This is what I thought to the Peace Corps and others who have been advising the trust territory political leaders for. I don't say they're not entitled to offer their views, but if they're going to offer views and encourage a political stand, they should be responsible enough to point out the effect of what they're urging.

I know a great many of the Congressional leaders and, in fact, I've talked with the committee on future political status. I've been very careful never to offer an opinion on what I think they should take as their future political status. But I did try very hard to point out to them what the effect was of the various types of status, One of which is that the United States

Congress is most unlikely to fund at a never increasing level the health and education programs of an independent country. Quite obviously if it becomes independent or something similar to it, the U.S. Congress will continue to make appropriations and grant some aid, but the obvious fact is that they'll determine a level which they think is sufficient and stop at that.

Now it has been said that some of the Micronesian political leaders think that if they become independent they can then lease military base plans and harbors the United States for the defense of this strategic area. I think that's possible, but I think it's not a certainty. Nobody can know what military weapons will be the ones that we rely on 10, 15 years from now. There is some reason to believe that the Polaris missile and whatever develops after that which is based at sea, be it a submarine or a surface vessel, is a far more effective military weapon than air bases in Sea bases in somebody else's territory. So, I think that both the Peace Corps who have been offering views on political development as well as others -- Mr. Harris Freeman From the Center for Democratic Institutions Was out there for a while offering opinions, others have done so, my view is that they have an obligation to be consistent and tell the whole story and point out what will happen if certain political courses are taken.

Now there is one very able man who has been retained by the Congress of Micronesia, Professor Davidson [James W Davidson] from Australia National University. I have a very healthy respect for Jim davidson. He's thoroughly knowledgeable and political science, in forms of

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government, and he is also thoroughly knowledgeable in the effects, the results and the responsibilities. and he, in my experience, is very careful to point these out to local political leadership when they ask him to advise them on how to proceed on political status. Davidson, as you know probably, drafted the Western Samoan Constitution, he drafted the Nauruan Constitution, and did much of the work on the Cook Islands Constitution. He is probably the best single expert on Island political development, but he's quite pragmatic about pointing out to the people he's advising with the result is of the course that they're discussing.

OESTERLE: How would you compare the Peace Corps program in Micronesia with that elsewhere in the South pacific, throughout Polynesia?

SKINNER: Well, of course, it's far more massive in the trust territory. In terms of quality, I think it has been much better handled in the rest of the territories. I talked to Ratu Mara about it in Fiji. He very carefully assigned two or three programs to the Peace Corps and they give him an agreed number of men, 10 or 15 for each program. and he sees that they work outside of Suva. He gets them out of the small towns and the villages and away from the administrative centers. I've heard very good things about their work in fiji. In Tonga they've got a good record. There was one little problem there; three or four of them had to be expelled for alleged smoking of marijuana which the king of Tonga did not want to have introduced into his kingdom. But Western Samoa, I've

heard good things. I think they have not involved themselves politically in the rest of the Pacific. And as you can see from my statements, I feel that their weakness and Trust territory has been their political involvement.

I just happened to clip something from the *Pacific Daily News* the other day, I have it here, signed by a young man Saipan, V. de Leon. It says:

Dear Editor, I have read the letters and your story about Peace Corps lawyers trying to influence the Micronesian people in the decision of their political future. I want to submit this opinion of one small Micronesian boy from among one hundred thousand of Micronesians. We do not want outsiders to force their will upon us, and we think that newcomers and Micronesia especially should keep their mouths closed tight. The Peace Corps lawyer does not know what he is talking about when he says his own anti-American

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feeling is the will of the majority of Micronesia. He was not here last year when the Micronesians and the Marianas District voted 3,166 for joining the United States and only 19 for independence. This is not the will of the minority as the way he wrote it. This feeling is growing stronger in other districts too. Everybody on Saipan knows that the "I had a dream speech" said in the last session of the Congress of Micronesia was written by a Peace Corps lawyer working for the Congress to write their speeches. Maybe it was even this one fellow who was saying now it's such a great speech.

One of my classmates is a bellboy and says he is earning more money than his classmates working for the government, and says he's learning to operate the hotel business so he can get many promotions in the future years. My wife's sister is cleaning rooms in a hotel in Guam and it is an insult to hear her to be put in the low class of people like the Peace Corps lawyers who wrote it. She is a Charmorro and likes her job, and her husband and children are proud of her too. I wonder how the elected Charmorro leaders and businessmen in Guam feel after reading this American who is their fellow citizen says they are only Second class servants in Petty bureaucrats. We have many Americans and Trust territory training and working with Micronesians with good results. We do not need ugly Americans who want to force their personal opinions over onto the Micronesian people. Some use the TV every week for forcing their ideas; some others use the newspaper. It is an insult for us when newcomers think we are not smart enough to understand what is going on around us. It is an insult to be told that the job you are doing is a lousy kind of work and you should hide yourself and be ashamed because you are not educated to something that is white collar. Anyone from another place should be warned that politics and political future is for Micronesians to decide. It is better for us if troublemakers are sent home. V. deLeon. Saipan.

I don't have the other story, but I did read it in the Guam newspaper. This letter is answering a letter from a former Peace Corps lawyer who is saying that the Chamorros in Guam had all been reduced to petty bureaucrats and hotel servants and so forth, and that the people of Micronesia should vote for independence in order to avoid being subjected to this kind of treatment in an American territory with American companies coming in. The

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interesting thing is Guam has a Guamanian governor, has a Guamanian federal judge; it has entirely Guamanian island judges; it has a legislature of 21 Guamanians. They're filling all the responsible positions, and they're filling them just as well as the, maybe even a little better than the people who do the same job in Nevada or North Dakota. As he says here, there's no reason to say as the Peace Corps man writing that one previous letter said, that they'd been reduced to an inferior status. But, you see, it's a stereotype that the Peace Corps lawyer has which he must say in order to support his conclusions.

OESTERLE: To what do you attribute the motivation of the Peace Corps volunteers that turn political activists in terms of their criticism of the trust territory administration?

SKINNER: Well, as I said, this is certainly not all of the Peace Corps, and it may very well not even be the majority of the Peace Corps volunteers. I think we have to recognize that many of the young men who join the Peace Corps did so because they hoped not to go into the army and fight in Vietnam, and therefore they started out with a bias against the United States policy in Vietnam. Second, as I said, they were not particularly trained for this kind of overseas administration. They were really recruited because of their enthusiasm to help others and I think they, as a result, the ones who volunteered for this, had a bit of political evangelism in them. They thought that they knew more about what the American policy should be than the American government leaders did. I think, additionally, many of them, particularly in the recent campaigns, were frustrated because even though they thought they knew what the United States policy should be on Vietnam and other things, when the election was in, they hadn't persuaded the electorate. And this comes back to a problem which we see from time to time, that the intellectual, the university group of professors and students in these young people, frequently feel that they know better than the majority. In fact, as a result, frequently they are anti-democratic.

Just as for instance the so-called Students for a Democratic Society and the more left wing groups in the universities now you will find frequently or anti-democratic in the sense that they are very angry that the majority don't agree with them and they feel they shouldn't have the right to impose their views. A classic example was on the Berkeley [University of California] Campus when there was a recent riot about the right of the Marine Corps to have a recruiting table. The people who broke up the Marine Corps recruiting table and riot said, well, somebody said they should

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have free speech. They have the right to say what they want and people don't have to join the Marines if they don't want to. And the leaders of the riot said, "there's a higher value than free speech." The higher value than Free Speech was presumably the right to destroy the "military-industrial complex."

No, I think to bring it back to the Pacific and the trust territory, I find in some people who want the trust territory to be independent, just as I find in the Australian group that wants New Guinea to be independent, a very interesting facet of possible reverse racism. The most eager supporters of the independence for New Guinea tend to be the Australian liberal labor left-wing politicians who are not unaware that by doing so they happily support the Australia white immigration policy. Because if they were for self-government of New Guinea within an Australian government, that would mean that they would be taking into Australia three or four million Melanesians who are black. So they can have it both ways, you see. They can be heartily for this great liberal principle of Independence for New Guinea and at the same time protect Australia against having to take in colored immigrants.

Now, I don't say that this is the motivation of all of them, but I see among some of these people who would like the trust territory to be independent a feeling that it keeps brown skin people out of the United States, and I see that in these letters which say that the micronesians should not let themselves become workers in a hotel. As this man writing a letter from Saipan, answering the Peace Corps lawyer wrote and said, "What a terrible thing it will be if they all become bell boys and cooks and chamber maids." But you see, the Peace Corps letter doesn't recognize that they could become managers and bookkeepers and owners of hotels, which they can be very well and will. The Chamorro in Guam who's the same racial stock as the Chamorro in Saipan, their judges; their legislators, successful businessmen' they're competing on equal terms with the Anglo-Saxon or the white skin man. But there's an implied feeling here when you talk about independence and any protection of the Micronesians; there's an implication that they are inferior and unable to compete and therefore they need this protection of independence. As I say, this is a minor aspect but I think we cannot ignore the fact that there are some racial feelings in some of the people who are urging independence for Micronesia and urging keeping out of the United States or keeping out of the United States influence. Well, I think that there is some reverse racism.

[I think I've also detected in some of the anti-Vietnam War attitudes a racism, not reverse there. But if you remember

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Walter Lippman said that we should not be in Vietnam because we don't belong in the Pacific; we don't know anything about the Pacific, the inscrutable Asia; we should only be interested in Europe. And this is essentially a statement that we shouldn't be interested in the welfare of yellow skinned people; let them settle their own affairs the way they want to. In the south, for many years, when you had segregation in the southern communities, there was a system by which the courts and the police let the Negro community settle their own problems. And if there was a murder of a Negro by a Negro, they would either ignore it or the murderer would be given a very light sentence. and part of the opposition to the Vietnam

War was the basic feeling that the Vietnam war is a battle between yellow skin people and we're not interested in them. And even if we have an alliance to help protect one yellow skinned people, it's not very important; it's not as if they were white skin people.]

I've tried several times, I know this goes a little afield from our Pacific study too, to get people to focus on what would have happened if Denmark, which is the same size as Vietnam, had been invaded by a communist Germany, and they had been split in half, and one half had stayed with the communists. And if we had made a treaty with the northern half of Denmark which is equivalent to the southern half of Vietnam, and if there'd been an attack across the line as there was from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, would the people who say we have no business in Vietnam at all have said the same thing about Northern Denmark and if they wouldn't, why? The reason would be because we're dealing with white-skinned people. Anyway, to come back, I do think that some of this emphasis on Independence for New Guinea and for the trust territory has a racial origin based on some feelings of superiority.

OESTERLE: That's very interesting. How would you categorize the changing policy towards business investments in the period of the 50s and then later in the '60s?

SKINNER: Well, this breaks down into two portions. Let me deal with Guam first because there I was intimately involved. When I arrived in Guam as governor in 1949, the Navy had not only encouraged, but had prohibited Private Business from establishing. The pretext they used was that no United States citizen could enter a business which was presently occupied by a Guamanian or which potentially Guamanian could handle. As a result, the business facilities in Guam were minimal to non-existent, and most of the sales were in the post exchange and ship's stores and other military resale facilities. It was my conclusion that contrary to the alleged purpose of this rule of helping Guamanians, that it was hurting them for several reasons.

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First, it meant that there was no availability of such things as a drugstore, a 5 and 10 cent store, a concrete block factory, a sand and gravel company, a source of oxygen or acetylene for welding, etc. There were no private contractors on the island, none of the facilities which could support a civilian community and provide very badly needed services for the Guamanian population as well as for the Stateside population in Guam.

The second thing was at a place to premium on finding a "dummy" Guamanian to head a company who would either give his name or sit at the door and get two or \$300 a month and do nothing which was, I felt, insulting to the Guamanian people and a bad precedent to establish. So during this period when I had quite a bit of authority, I dropped this rule entirely and permitted any American citizen to go into business.

The second thing: the Navy rule had prescribed that no Guamanian could sell land to the United States citizen and that no United States citizen could lease land for more than 5 years. To me this resulted in a situation in which any businessman wanting to start a business

would try to get his money out within two or three years because he'd be off the land in 5 years anyway and have to give up his building. And it meant that the price structure would be very, very materially higher than it would need to be if they could make long-term investments.

When Guam got its organic act and the people all became citizens of Guam, they were therefore entitled to buy land in California and equally the Californian had to be able to buy land in Guam. It was a very different situation than if the Guamanian had no right to go to the United States, but once he was a citizen, the same rules that apply to a citizen of California or New York applied to citizen of Guam or resident of Guam; He was a United States citizen. So as a result of this, business and private Enterprise developed steadily to the point now where Guam has a gross territorial income of around three or four hundred million dollars a year. From a period when I was first there I think the gross territorial income, I'm using this equivalent to the gross national product, probably was around 12 or 14 million dollars a year. there are now three banks on the island and there are two or three drug stores and all those service facilities that are needed for modern community.

Now, admittedly Guam has lost some of its ancient flavor but who is to know what it would have lost anyway. Nothing stays the same if there had not been a policy of this sort, it would have changed. in my opinion, the Guamanian people are more able to take

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care of themselves. They have a better education; they are better able to compete in the world today because of this policy, and so I'm proud of it. I don't say that it applies to other jurisdictions but I think it applied there, and I think you'll find that the Guamanian community in the Guamanian businesses and political leadership can take care of itself very effectively. Now surely there are Americans now and business there, but there are also Guamanians in business in the United States. You know, it's like Californians in business in New York and New Yorkers in business in California.

OESTERLE: Did the attitude of the United States in regard to the trust territory administration and for Guam also change in regards to Japanese investments in these areas?

SKINNER: Well, that again I think comes in two parts. Let me deal, if I may, with the problem in the trust territory because it is very different. First, the trust territory being administered under the trusteeship agreement, there's a famous section 8 which says that the United States can give preference to its own nationals in business and in entry to live and also in business, but it cannot give to any other nation unless it gives to all members of the United Nations equally. This is the basis on which the United States has discouraged Japanese investment in the trust territories, saying that if they permitted this, they would have to then permit Afghanistan, Australia, Poland, Russia and so forth in there. As a practical matter they had not fully discouraged it because Japanese are selling very widely there. And I think you could probably find that many of the retail stores in the trust territory have a very, very, very small investment in their stock, in their inventory

-- that it's all really owned by the Japanese supplier who collects only after they sell. So the question of whether it's a Japanese store or a Micronesian store is to me academic. The Japanese have the principal economic interest in the retail store. This isn't perhaps the majority of them, but I think it's very widespread.

The trust territory also is different in terms of the trusteeship agreement. The United States, unless it was prepared to terminate the trusteeship agreement and make them United States citizens, was not able to give them the right of, you know, the United States passport, the right of entry into the United States and so forth. So that to permit indiscriminate sales of land to United States citizens would have been discriminatory, if you follow me.

OESTERLE: Yes.

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SKINNER: Second, admit as a practical fact the people of many parts of Micronesia were far less educated and far less culturally developed than the people in Guam were. Guam had been an American territory since 1898. When I arrived in Guam, there were Guamanian businessmen and political leaders that I dealt with who'd gone to college in California before World War I, graduates of St. Mary's or other schools like that. Admittedly there weren't a great many of them, but there was a significant educated leadership community in Guam.

Trust territory is really just coming into this now because, you see, under the Japanese there was almost no education encouraged for the Micronesians and certainly not under the Spanish or Germans because that was an older period. But in the Japanese days, the Japanese did not consider the Micronesian as eligible for education; he was a South Sea Island native and he wasn't even integrated in the Japanese economy. So I think that business investment by Americans in the trust territory is subject to a very different set of standards. My own feeling is that I like very much the pattern of partnership where the American interest shares the ownership with the Micronesians and shares on a roughly even basis. In that way, the American can bring in the skills, the equipment, the procedures and apply them, and the Micronesian is not just an employee. Of course the Micronesian will be employed, but he's also an owner, and he exercises ownership rights and will have an ownership position continuing; it cannot be changed.

The Trust Territory Congress and the Congress of Micronesia has not supported that theory as strongly as I feel they should have or I would like to see them. They've adopted a foreign investment bill calling for district boards to approve applications from concerns which would be even as little as 1 percent owned by United States citizens. In other words, there's no special category for this partnership group that I feel is desirable. I don't know how well it'll work; it's just gotten into administration in the last six or eight months and they've given a few licenses, mostly for small businesses, a small hotel or a handicraft shop or something like that. There are a few air taxi services in the Marshalls that have licenses like that. Some of these businesses are all United States owned; some are partnerships. I think actually the majority are the partnerships, but they still need this approval from the district foreign investment board. But I feel that the trust territory is making substantial

progress in private enterprise, not as rapid as it would if the Americans could come in and buy land indiscriminately, but I think that the restriction on that is wise, unless the Micronesians reach the point where they wish to be American citizens. Then, if by their own act they wish

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to be, by their own legislative decision they want to have land sold to Americans, why that's their privilege.

OESTERLE: Of course they'd have to come to grips with the land tenure problem which is still not resolved.

SKINNER: Yes. Guam was different in the sense that the Spanish had established land titles somewhere in the seventeenth or eighteenth or nineteenth century; they had established land titles and so people specifically owned or families owned land. There was not the question of traditional land tenure. And in the Marianas, the Micronesians have land titles, but a land title in the Marshall district, for instance, is in the Iroij, in the chief. And actually, I think, we had some very funny experiences where very early on the United States government wanting to buy land in one case, sent the attorney general of the trust territory with a suitcase full of money down to be delivered to a chief in the Marshalls who happily accepted the money although the land was only his by right of his title. You could say maybe it was like the old feudal system when the duke owned the land and the people on it and that's the basis on which they accepted the money. The money was, I'm told, distributed.

OESTERLE: Would you care to describe the administration of the Office of Territories during the Kennedy administration?

SKINNER: I would like to, but there are two things that I think come up from the previous discussion which I would like to touch on, if I may, at this point. One is that in the development of the economy of Guam, I very early made a decision that Guam's economy would be at a price level of San Francisco plus the ocean freight rate west if we kept customs duties. Guam was not within the customs jurisdiction of the United States, but it had its own customs tariff schedule. And while I still had the power to act unilaterally without a Congress, I abolished the customs and made it a free port. And on the record, that seems to have been a very wise move because the economy is thriving in Guam now and it has encouraged the import of supplies, materials, manufacturing goods from the Far East at a freight cost of one-third of the cost from the West Coast and actually at a product cost frequently less than that from the United States.

That policy has never been changed, and Guam is today a free port. And I, at the time, made a speech which is widely reprinted, called "Guam, the Hong Kong of the Future." At that time the island was under navy security control and this upset the navy quite a bit -- they didn't read my speech, they just read the title --

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but security control is off now and entry is like any other part of the United States. And the fact that it is a free port has been a very valuable support for its economy.

The second thing that I wanted to touch on was that land tenure -- I'm glad you raised it -- land tenure is the heart of the understanding of all the Pacific Islands and if you don't have an understanding of the importance of land in the Pacific Islander's life, you could never deal with the Pacific Islands problem. Land is, not only is it property; it is also family; it is social position; it is economic position; it is the right to the products of the land, the right to use the land. It even has, in some cases, a religious connotation. Land being so, so limited, not only in the trust territory but in other parts of the Pacific, it has become the most important single element of existence. It pervades everything else. It pervades marriage customs. It pervades the economy. For instance, not only is land held in traditional fashion, even areas of the lagoon are held the same way. For instance, in some islands the land was divided from the peak of the mountain right straight down into the lagoon and one family could fish over here in their part of the lagoon, but they couldn't fish in this part. If they were caught fishing in this part, that family could attack them.

Anyway, after President Nixon took office, the Interior Department appointed a task force on the trust territory, headed by Edgar Kaiser, Jr., and this was supposed to help implement rapid progress in the trust territory and development -- economic development. [The vice-chairman of it was a vice president of MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], a Professor Paul Cook. I was on an airplane with him one time, and I asked him if he was dealing with this problem. He was really the policy head of the commission. I asked him what his feelings were about land tenure and how they would deal with this, and his comment to me was, "Well, land is property, you buy it and sell it. What do you mean, land tenure?" So at that point I couldn't hold a discussion with him any more. He really had no idea of what land meant to the Micronesian, and it was obviously impossible in the length of time that the airplane would be in the trust territory to explain it to him. We would land in Honolulu and he would be off the plane before I could explain it to him.] But I find this to be true in all the other Pacific territories, that land tenure is the heart of most of the problems. Somehow it comes back to the land. Land is not property in the Pacific Islands; it's a great deal more. All right, I just wanted to say that. Now repeat, please, your question about the Office of Territories.

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OESTERLE: Yes. I wondered if you could describe the administration of the Office of Territories throughout the Kennedy administration.

SKINNER: All right. First let me say the concept of the Office of Territories both in the Truman administration and in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations was that it was a service office, a liaison office between the territories and the Secretary of Interior who was assigned authority over the territories. It

was not intended to be a supervisory body. I am told that in the Eisenhower administration an attempt was made to convert it into a supervisory body and that governors were required to request permission from the director of territories before they took certain actions, even to the extent that the so-called chronological file which an officer of government keeps of everything that he writes in a day, was required to be mailed into the Office of Territories for review by the Office of Territories.

Fortunately, John Carver, who really made the policy in the Interior Department, wholly and totally disagreed with this theory. To him, the Office of Territories was, as I say, a liaison body, a body to facilitate the work of the territories. But the governors of the territories -- in that I include the high commissioner -- were chief executives in their own right, responsible to local legislatures and only responsible to the federal government for the specific things that might be imposed by the federal Congress or by the Secretary of Interior. But they were in no way supervised. I think Dick Taitano, Richard Taitano, who was the first director of territories in the Kennedy administration thoroughly believed in this too.

Sometimes it's difficult to maintain this policy because if someone writes his congressman that this or that happened to him in Guam or Samoa or trust territory, the congressman is frequently likely to write a letter down to the Secretary of the Interior saying, "I demand that you explain why your bureaucrat in Guam did such and such." And when he gets the letter back saying, "Well, he's not my bureaucrat. He's the chief executive of an independent territorial government responsible to the territorial legislature," the congressman doesn't feel that his constituent is happy, and he doesn't accept it. So sometimes you do get the problem of a minor infringement of that basic philosophy. But I think it can be properly said that Dick Taitano and subsequently Ruth Van Cleve both viewed it in this light.

Certainly, I never felt that I was responsible as governor to the director of territories. When I came to Washington I went to

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see the Secretary of Interior who was my boss and he would take me over to the White House when it was necessary to take up a major policy matter with the President. And on several occasions when I was governor, Secretary Chapman [Oscar L. Chapman], who had succeeded Krug, made appointments for me with the President, and we went over and saw the President together. I don't think that the Eisenhower administration considered it in that light at all. I think that they felt that these were positions within the Interior Department, and I think they felt that the director of territories was the supervisor.

I don't recall the name at the moment of the director of territories in the Eisenhower administration, but we certainly changed it in the Kennedy administration. I may have had something to do with it because I talked with John Carver at length about it, and I think he basically believed that way anyway. But I was able to give him the reasoning behind it. Unless you do make a governor the responsible chief executive, responsible to his territorial legislature, you cannot develop a strong government locally. You put them in the position of being sort of welfare clients and the legislature is always saying, "We'll have to appeal to the Secretary of Interior because the governor has no authority."

Now as far as the functioning, I think it functioned well under both Taitano and Ruth Van Cleve. Ruth Van Cleve was appointed at a time when there was emphasis in the Johnson administration on appointing more women to positions. She had been the lawyer within the Solicitor's Office in the Interior Department for territorial matters. Actually, she first came to the Interior Department at the time of my service in Guam when she was appointed as the lawyer for a federal commission on the application of federal laws -- federal-territorial commission on the application of federal laws to Guam. The organic act said that there should be a report within a certain period of time on which federal laws should be applicable to Guam. She did the basic research for that in the Interior Department, and then when Taitano went back to Guam she... Well, Taitano actually went to the trust territory as deputy high commissioner for a year. But Ruth Van Cleve became the director of territories, and I think was a very able one.

OESTERLE: Was there any conflict between the Office of Territories and Interior and the desk officer and the under secretary of the State Department in regard to policy towards the trust territory?

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SKINNER: Yes, I think there was. I don't think you could call it so much conflict between the Office of Territories and the desk officers. I think that they understood; I think that they understood each other very well. The assistant director of territories was a George Milner who had been on my delegation to the South Pacific Commission several times and was very sensitive and very knowledgeable and very able. He and the desk officer in the State Department, Frances McReynolds, kept a very good, healthy liaison, and I think understood each other.

I think the problem came at perhaps the next level, in the sense that the assistant secretaries of state could not understand why Interior didn't take a bolder position, why they didn't go forward with bolder programs for economic and political development. And the Interior assistant secretary and secretarial level personnel felt that the State Department did not understand the very tight rein that the congressional committees put on them and the fact that they could not do these kinds of bold programs without immediately being called to task by the congressional committees for engaging in things that were not authorized by the Congress. And it's my experience that these two positions were not properly understood on either side. I don't think Interior fully understood why State was pushing them for the bolder programs, nor did State ever fully understand that Interior was operating at the very limit of its authority from Congress.

OESTERLE: What role did Secretary Udall and Under Secretary Carver play in regard to policy development?

SKINNER: Well, I think I mentioned to you that I was very concerned about the trust territory and had asked for and received an appointment with Secretary

Udall, and it was his first two or three days in office. And he was at that time, I felt, quite interested. Later he flew to Samoa to open the South Pacific Conference in Samoa in 1962, and also dedicated the new jet airport. But subsequently, and after that time, I found that he did not deal directly or personally with territorial problems and left them almost entirely to Under Secretary Carver who was very able and who understood and liked the field and had a very strong feeling for development of self-government in the territories and tried very hard to advance self-government in the territories. I think Udall became more and more convinced that he wanted to concentrate on conservation. And he did, I think, concentrate on that to the exclusion of a number of other things in the department, personally convinced that that was the important thing for him to foster. He left the territorial aspect, I'd say, entirely to John Carver.

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In the State Department, originally the South Pacific Commission was in the Office of Dependent Area Affairs which had been created after the war to take care of dependent areas of the United States. Along about 1962, this office was abolished and it was proposed to put the Pacific Islands desk and the South Pacific Commission activity in the office of the United Nations affairs on the ground that it was an international body and then also that the trust territory might be involved. Frances McReynolds and I discussed this and we felt that it would be lost in the Office of United Nations Affairs; it would get no consideration or very little. And we concluded that it would be better administered if it were in the geographical area office at the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. And so we went to see Abe Chayes [Abram Chayes], the then State Department counselor, who was in charge of implementing the reorganization and present our argument. He concurred with us, and he did place the function within the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, the Southwest Pacific I guess it was called for awhile. Anyway, the Pacific Islands' desk office with the Australian, New Zealand desk, and so it was that the head of the Australian and New Zealand desk or later country office as it was called, was also in charge of the Pacific Islands' desk. We usually had two or sometimes three people, one working on Australia, one on New Zealand, one on Pacific Island matters.

OESTERLE: Would this have been considered part of the redistribution of the work load under Secretary Rusk?

SKINNER: Well, it was already arranged under Secretary Rusk. It was an entire reorganization of the department, made necessary when the Office of Dependent Area Affairs was terminated, and it was just a question of where it went. Frances and I successfully argued that it belonged in the geographical area. And I think it was the right decision.

OESTERLE: You also had some meetings and dealings with Ambassadors Bell [John O. Bell] and Green [Marshall Green]. Did you?

SKINNER: Yes. They were both sympathetic but it was a very small part of their

responsibility. I'm trying to think who the assistant secretary was who was in charge of Southeast Asia and the Bureau of Far East Affairs. He wrote a book recently in which he took a very anti-Vietnam war position although he had been, every word that I had heard, very strongly for expanding the action when he was in the department.

The assistant secretary in charge of the Far Eastern office

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was William P. Bundy. Oddly enough, I had two meetings with Secretary Rusk, but I never was able to meet with Bill Bundy because he was always too busy with Vietnam and other matters. He did attend one meeting that I had with Secretary Rusk in Honolulu, but he did not ask any questions and to the best of my knowledge showed no interest in the problem. I don't say this in criticism because he had the Vietnam problem in his office and obviously this was enough to occupy him fully.

I've already talked about Dean Rusk. I felt that he had a very clear understanding of the problems in the Pacific, a very broad vision, and certainly I came away with an enormous respect for Dean Rusk as a government servant and a political leader. He had a deep understanding and thoroughly gentlemanly and thoughtful approach to any problem that I talked to him about and a very courteous reception.

OESTERLE: You attended the 1952 and, in fact, the 1960 convention. Were you a delegate?

SKINNER: Let's see. In retrospect, I was a delegate to the.... No, I was not a delegate to the 1952 convention, but I attended it at the invitation of Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman and in my capacity as governor of a territory. I did not participate in it. Although oddly enough the box that they assigned to me as a state, "state" governor, was next to the Kennedy family's box, and I observed the Kennedy family being intensely interested in the convention. In 1956, I was a delegate on the California delegation and participated in the convention, very actively interested. But I was an alternate delegate so that I did not get to vote on the selection of the candidates. In 1960, I attended the convention, largely as a guest of the California delegation based on my friendship with a number of the leading members of the delegation including Senator Clair Engle and Don L. Bradley, the manager, or the paid executive for the California Democratic State Committee. And I also, at that convention, had occasion to deliver a campaign contribution to Lyndon Johnson. I was unable to deliver it to him personally until the morning after he had lost the nomination and Senator Kennedy had won it. By chance, as I was leaving Lyndon Johnson's room, having delivered the check, I was passed by Robert Kennedy going into the room to see Lyndon Johnson and ask him to be the vice presidential candidate. I was not present of course, so I do not know the nature of the conversation, but I did see him go in, and later in the day it was said that Robert Kennedy had acted as the intermediary for...

[Interruption]

[TAPE II, SIDE II]

SKINNER: I was not present in the room of course, but it was the morning after the nomination, and nominations are always very exciting events. The nomination of the vice president was coming up at the session which was starting that afternoon. And the fact that I saw Robert Kennedy going in and then later was informed by newspaper and press that Robert Kennedy had been the messenger who had gone for John Kennedy to ask Lyndon Johnson to serve with him and be the vice presidential candidate, corroborated in my view the fact that it was done at that time. I should say that in my opinion, if it had not been a Kennedy-Johnson ticket it would not have won the election in 1960. The two candidates covered the broad spectrum of the Democratic party and appealed to all facets of the Democratic party and also were able to bring in independents and even some Republicans perhaps who liked one perhaps more than they liked the other.

I think it's interesting to note that in this year of the election, there was a very long congressional session and Lyndon Johnson remained in Washington as Senate majority leader and did very little campaigning. I believe he was entered in only one or two primaries. John Kennedy was entered, as I recall, in seven primaries and won seven primaries. I've always believed that the reason he entered these primaries or that the entry starts back in the convention in 1956 when Stevenson, after achieving the nomination, threw open the vice presidential nomination and said he would not indicate a choice, he would let the convention choose the vice presidential candidate.

At that time, according to press reports then and later, Robert Kennedy had with him a study which showed that the Catholic vote was the swing vote in seventeen or eighteen critical states, and circulated that to support a John Kennedy candidacy for the vice presidential nomination with Stevenson. If you add to that the fact that Kefauver, who was the opponent for John Kennedy for the vice presidential nomination, had previously had a well publicized congressional committee investigating crime in which there had been some reflection on the big city machines which make up part of the Democratic party, it can be seen that John Kennedy got immediately a very sizeable vote. And I think people recalling that convention.... He came very close to being the nominee. And the fact is I was there and watching the state delegations voting.

I myself was of the opinion that at one point John Kennedy had secured more than enough votes to be the vice presidential

candidate, but by the time the votes were announced from the rostrum, Kefauver had caught up. In any case, I have always felt that when that convention was over, Robert Kennedy as the political manager for John Kennedy concluded that next time they would make him the vice presidential candidate and in order to do that you cannot run for vice president, but they made plans to enter him in all the primaries. I believe that the string of successes in the primaries were unexpected and as they began to roll up successful victories in the seven

primaries, the original idea that they would settle for vice presidency was completely gone and they made the big drive for the nomination as president.

My own political reading makes me feel that this was the first time that a candidate for president had won the nomination by the primary route. In previous years I've noticed that the man who won the primaries did not get the nomination. I think I can give you in this case the problem certainly of Stevenson winning out over Kefauver in '52. In any case, Kennedy having an unbroken string of primary victories and proving his great appeal, made the drive to be the presidential nominee.

An interesting aspect that many people forget is that Kennedy did not go into the Los Angeles Democratic Convention as the darling of the liberals by any means. The liberals made a die-hard attempt to nominate Adlai Stevenson, and it was only after Kennedy had been in office for awhile and brought in his brain trust, or his intellectual group of advisors that he began to become the darling of the liberals. At the time of running in the primaries and in the convention, I think he was considered to be fairly conservative. And you will recall that there was a story that he had once delivered a campaign contribution to Joe McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] on behalf of his father. And even though John Kennedy's own convictions were liberal, his voting record in the Senate had not been an outstandingly liberal voting record. And in fact on civil rights, I think there's reason to believe that Lyndon Johnson's voting record was better than John Kennedy. But in any case, his personal convictions were liberal and when he was elected, he surrounded himself with strong liberals and became a leader of the liberal viewpoint.

In the selection of Kennedy and Johnson as the ticket, the Democrats carried out a prediction which Senator Warren Magnuson gave me earlier in the year. In the middle of the primaries, approximately April of 1960, I was invited by Senator Clair Engle and his wife Lou to come to dinner in Washington at their house where they were having John Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline as the

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guests of honor. Additionally in the party were Senator Warren Magnuson whom I'd known and campaigned with in previous years and had known quite well; Graham [Philip L. Graham], the publisher of the *Washington Post* and his wife Katherine Graham, and a columnist for the *Washington Post* and his wife; one or two others. I arrived a few minutes late and Senator Magnuson was helping me to get a drink from the serve yourself bar; since I had been out of Washington for several months, I asked him what our ticket -- meaning the Democratic ticket -- was going to be. And he said, "Oh Carleton, it'll be Kennedy and Johnson and it doesn't matter which one's on top. That's the team that will win for us." And that was interesting to me to see this prediction by a very wise political analyst and prognosticator carried out so faithfully in the convention in Los Angeles.

OESTERLE: What was your impression of Senator Kennedy that evening? Do you recall that conversation?

SKINNER: Yes. He was seated on the sofa, and Mrs. Engle brought me over to greet

him. He immediately made room for me on the sofa, and we chatted for about five or ten minutes. He was very alert, very friendly, very modest, just talked with me instead of talking at me.

OESTERLE: Did he question you at all about...

SKINNER: Yes, he questioned me about.... He remembered me. I had met him at some Democratic affair, and he remembered me and remembered that I was governor of Guam. He asked me about Guam and Pacific problems, and I told him, as I later told Udall, that I felt that the trust territory was in a very bad way under the Eisenhower administration and that we had very serious problems facing us because of the neglect of it. And he seemed very much interested in that. He said, "I hope you'll do something about this if I'm elected," which was really one of the reasons that I made a point of telephoning Senator Udall the minute he was named Secretary of Interior. I did not discuss any international problems other than the problem of the United States influence in the Pacific with him and did not discuss any particular domestic problems with him. So I'd say my first main impression was one of alert friendly interest, a man who would discuss problems with you rather than using you as a listening audience to try his ideas upon.

OESTERLE: In way of summary, I wonder if you would have any remarks on the significance of the 1960's in terms of

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the future political status of the South Pacific -- political and economic status.

SKINNER: Well, at the start of the sixties, I had hoped we could lead the territories of the Pacific in the direction of self-government rather than independence, because I felt and I still feel -- perhaps not to the same extent -- that independence for small territories with a limited population and very few resources can be a dangerous thing, that it can be harmful for the people themselves in the sense that they can be cut adrift without adequate resources and protection. We're living in a world in which -- there is not only one of them -- I know of several major aggressive powers, one of which can feel that they want territory in the Pacific, and I do not believe.... I believe very strongly that the communist form of government is harmful for the people. It denies them not only their economic liberties but particularly denies them their civil liberties and their human rights, and I would hate very much to see a communist government in the Pacific. And so therefore I had hoped perhaps we could use the South Pacific Commission to give the people of the territories an outlet for their political ambitions and use it to encourage, as I say, self-government within the framework of the existing metropolitan powers, somewhat on the pattern of Guam rather than independence. But as the sixties wore on, I could see that the pressures and the influences were all leading the other way.

At this point, my own view is that you will see more independent countries in the Pacific. I think that this is a weakness for the western powers in the sense that if you have six or seven or eight independent small countries, it's possible for the eastern powers or the communist powers to play one against the other and jump into a momentary situation of political embarrassment or economic need on the part of one of these small countries and establish a position for them which will then be harmful to the interests of the United States.

When I say the interests of the United States, I don't mean just that; I mean also harmful to the people themselves because I think that within the Western democracy we have achieved the best chance for human beings to develop themselves to their maximum abilities and to have their rights as individuals protected and respected. And as I see the communist form of government, I feel that it negates all of that and subjects the individual to the will of the state, makes him a cog in a machine taking orders, rather than an individual, self-respecting, participating and

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making the decisions for his own country. When I say this, I don't mean to be critical of the leaders who have gone towards independence as for instance in the case of Nauru.

It was obvious that Nauru had to become independent because Australia flatly refused to discuss a form of self-government which would protect the Nauruans interest socially as to the control of immigration into the Nauruan community and economically working with the British Phosphate Commission to permit them to take an adequate share of the proceeds of their one resource which is the phosphate in Nauru. And until Nauru became independent, they were absolutely unable to get what I would consider their just rights, both politically and economically. I don't have quite the same feeling about Fiji. But as I observed the British system with its heavy reliance on expatriate administrators, I think the Fijians could never have attained the kind of self-government that I think I launched in Guam and which I think is right which is that the people of the territory have the right to choose their own government and all of their officials, both legislative and executive. I saw over the years what was being done in Fiji; I saw a continuing posting of British civil servants and a continued, in effect, denial of the Fijian right to have decisions made by Fijians.

So I think that in terms of political and social development, the independence movements in the Pacific have been good. They have obviously far more self-government in Fiji, Nauru, even Western Samoa than there was before. In terms of their long term future economically, I think that perhaps independence sparks a healthier development economically in these countries. Perhaps the only thing that I don't see is their military protection if there is an adventure by one of the communist powers in the Pacific, and I don't quite see how they can all be protected. I think with Vietnam, we're entering a period of strong isolationism, and I'm not sure that you could persuade the American Congress or the American people to risk our armed forces to defend the independence of Fiji. I think that they would say that Fiji is an independent country. It doesn't affect our interests one way or the other and we're going to stay home for a while and that we shouldn't be losing American lives to protect somebody else. Let's look after our own interests.

And I'm not sure, as I said earlier in this discussion, that part of that isn't a submerged or an unconscious piece of racism. I think we'll find over the years that our government and our people will be less interested in militarily supporting countries

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with dark skinned people than in supporting countries with white skinned people. And I say that not in criticism of my country but just to say to recognize the facts. I think Walter Lippman when he says that we belong only in Europe and not in Asia is voicing essentially a racist position.

OESTERLE: Do you think that the South Pacific Commission will continue to play an important role in the development of the South Pacific?

SKINNER: Yes, but I think it will change and I can't say at this time how it will change. It will change obviously to be controlled entirely by the Pacific Island countries and territories. What the metropolitan position will be is hard to say. My guess is that we will make an annual grant or donation and will not participate in the commission at all except perhaps as an observer. But I see a continuing need for an overall organization which has all of the Pacific countries and territories in it, and I think whether it's called the South Pacific Commission, the South Pacific organization or the Pacific Islands association, it will continue, and I expect will expand. It may well take on certain economic or political functions such as -- a Pacific common market as such doesn't make sense -- perhaps a trade pool where they agree to admit products of another Pacific country or territory free of duty, regardless of what Pacific territory it comes from, even though they may have tariffs or duties against that same product from a metropolitan country.

I see perhaps the wealthier Pacific territories and countries using this to help the poorer ones. When I say poorer, for instance, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands really are a collection of coral rock and lagoons with a few palm trees. In fact the resources of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands are best exemplified by the story that they asked for help of the Australian scientific body, CSIRO, Commonwealth Science Research Organization [CSIRO] in analyzing their soil to see what they could grow; so they shipped off a package of the soil, and they got a telegram back: "Coral rock received. When are you going to send the soil?"

There are areas with very limited resources. Nauru, when phosphate is exhausted will have literally no resources except whatever investments it's been able to make with the proceeds from there. Micronesia, the trust territory, there are some mineral resources, but no one has yet found that they can be developed. There was a bauxite in Angaur that the Japanese took

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out for a wartime economy when they needed a source of aluminum. But it's been looked at by a number of minerals companies and they say it's not of high quality. The principle resource of the trust territory at the moment is tourism. And this is what the Robert Nathan

economic survey reported. It's a little hard on people to condemn them to tourism as their principal industry. But if you're going to support education and health on the American standard, going to support education and health on the American standard, you must have an economic activity, and the principal one at the moment that's viable for the trust territory is tourism. It has some very, very beautiful island and beaches, actually unique, and can be marketed. It is essential however that, in doing so, an effort to be made to keep it from being, from abusing the resources; in other words, tourist-used resources must be developed and encouraged but not abused.

OESTERLE: Finally, in terms of the broader political spectrum, what do you consider to be the legacy of John F. Kennedy and the Kennedy administration?

SKINNER: Accepting the fact that I'm very far from expert in this field, and I did not make a study of Kennedy as a political leader, so I'm giving you the observation of an ordinary citizen who has some experience in government, I'd say that for one thing he and his administration -- because no president is the president by himself; he's in effect the leader of a team who exercise the office of the presidency -- injected into the leadership of the United States government a sense of great enthusiasm, a great sense of confidence that problems could be solved, that no problem was insoluble. He convinced large numbers of very capable people to leave their regular business, academic, professional assignments and come to work for him. He was in this sense the most effective kind of leader. He was able to get people to work and follow him who were convinced of the value of his leadership and of his commitment to solve problems domestic and foreign. I think that his performance as president unfortunately terminated just at the point where he was learning the presidency and learning the job well. It's been said many times that his record in getting legislation through the COngress was not particularly strong, and actually I think it's clear that Lyndon Johnson put through most of his program for him after he was assassinated. I would say that I've stated his greatest contribution which was the reinvigoration of the leadership potential in the presidency and perhaps encouraging and stimulating many people who would have otherwise have rejected politics as a career, encouraging and stimulating them to go into politics as a career.

I think a negative aspect of his incumbency in the presidency

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was because he was not experienced in the executive branch and was learning the job and had a somewhat regrettable tendency to improvise solutions in fields where the ramifications and the eventual results were very, very serious. But the improvised solution took care of the immediate problem and did not take care of the long-term problems. Perhaps, for examples of that I could give the decision to assist in turning West Irian over to Indonesia; in my area that would be one. Perhaps his and his brother Robert's treatment of the steel price increase might be another one. I think that most people feel that some of the measures taken by Attorney General Kennedy in the steel price situation were basically violative of basic rights of individuals and citizens and could lead to further violations of individual rights.

I think, however, that on balance, the country benefited greatly from Kennedy's presidency, from the favorable things I've mentioned and particularly from the fact that throughout the world, everywhere in the world, and I find this even in Micronesia and the Pacific Islands, he was regarded in the very finest way. He was loved and admired and he gave them a feeling of integrity and almost a spirituality in leadership.

To return to the Pacific Islands: in Saipan in a plaza in front of the largest church on the island, there's a bust of John Kennedy; in Guam, there's a John F. Kennedy high school; in some of the other Pacific Islands I find evidences of a very deep regard for Kennedy as a person and as a political leader.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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